THE STIGMA OF SURRENDER

German Prisoners, British Captors, and Manhood IN THE GREAT WAR AND BEYOND

Brian K. Feltman

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For Carrie

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Abbreviations

BEF	British Expeditionary Force
DPW	Directorate of Prisoners of War
NSKOV	Nationalsozialistische Kriegsopferversorgung (National Socialist War Victims' Care)
PWD	Prisoners of War Department
PWEC	Prisoners of War Employment Committee
PWIB	Prisoners of War Information Bureau
RDC	Royal Defence Corps
ReK	Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener (Reich Association of Former Prisoners of War)
UK	United Kingdom
VeK	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Vereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener Deutschlands (Working Group of the Association of Former Prisoners of War in Germany)
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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INTRODUCTION

"The war had entered into us like wine. We had set out in a rain of flowers to seek the death of heroes. The war was our dream of greatness, power and glory. It was a man's work, a duel on fields whose flowers would be stained with blood. There is no lovelier death in the world."[1] Ernst Jünger's recollections of the Great War's commencement fail to capture the range of emotions that accompanied men to the front in August 1914 and throughout the Great War. For every soldier who welcomed the opportunity to face death and prove himself on the battlefield, another trembled at the prospect of not returning home. Nonetheless, Jünger's comments reveal something significant about social expectations in the period before Europe descended into more than four years of conflict. War was indeed "a man's work," and even the most reluctant warrior understood what was expected when he encountered the enemy. Firmly entrenched social mores demanded that men exhibit honor and courageousness on the battlefield. Soldiers, including citizen soldiers, realized that their peers expected them to fight bravely and willingly give their lives in defense of the fatherland. Jünger's search for a "lovely" demise was not exceptional; thousands of young men imagined the Great War in absolute terms of victory or death. But what of soldiers who found neither and fell into enemy hands?

Prisoners of the Great War found neither the triumph of victory nor the glory of a heroic death. Instead, soldiers who left the battlefield as prisoners could face accusations of cowardice, desertion, or treason—regardless of the circumstances leading to their capture.[2] As a result of what George Mosse referred to as the "militarization of masculinity," German men of the early twentieth century based much of their masculine identity on the belief that they served a higher purpose, which was often imagined as a responsibility to defend the fatherland.[3] Willingly sacrificing one's

life was the ultimate expression of heroic manhood. The act of battlefield surrender, however, separated soldiers simultaneously from their frontline comrades and their loved ones on the German home front. Falling into enemy hands did not merely physically remove soldiers from the battlefield; it severed their psychological connections to the higher purpose upon which their sense of manhood depended. In what was frequently their first face-to-face encounter with the enemy, prisoners often suffered physical abuses and the humiliation of plunder at the hands of their captors, making the ordeal even more emasculating.

The millions of soldiers who raised their hands and entered enemy captivity from 1914 to 1918 entered the largest prisoner of war camp system of the twentieth century.[4] Included in this global network of prisoner of war camps were approximately 500 facilities managed by the British War Office in the United Kingdom (UK).[5] More than 325,000 German soldiers surrendered to the British during the Great War. Of that number, at least 132,000 spent some portion of their captivity in the military camps of the UK.[6] This book examines the experiences of the German military prisoners held in the UK from 1914 to 1920. It emphasizes the emasculating stigma of surrender and situates the captivity experience within a broad framework by following prisoners from capture through their attempts at social reintegration following their return to Germany. Recognizing the stigma of surrender is essential to understanding the phenomenon of wartime captivity. The psychological burdens of surrender were a prisoner's constant companion and functioned as the common thread that intertwined the phases and legacies of life in enemy hands.

Although the German prisoners in the UK spoke different dialects and maintained diverse regional customs, they had all failed to meet expectations and the ideal they aspired to as soldiers in the service of a higher purpose. The attempt to come to terms with the implications of surrender was a central feature of the prisoners' lives behind barbed wire. Rather than focus on soldiers who embodied idealized notions of manhood, this study offers innovative perspectives on its social constructions by analyzing the experiences of men who fell short of prescribed standards and chose surrender over a hero's death (*Heldentod*) on the Great War's battlefields. It demonstrates that a soldier's manhood depended upon his status as a defender of the German nation, and his existence as a prisoner was often defined by his efforts to reestablish a place within the national community.

Taking an enemy soldier's gun or flag on the battlefield was a way to "unman him."[7] Appreciating the emotions associated with having been unmanned by the enemy is critical to understanding how

prisoners experienced surrender and captivity. Becoming a prisoner involved separation from one's comrades, and the moment of surrender inevitably brought about an identity crisis. The disgraceful connotations of cowardice and weakness plagued countless prisoners of war. Popular expressions such as "victory or death" or "you'll never take me alive" reveal popular admiration for individuals who refuse to surrender when faced with insurmountable odds. "Please don't shoot, I am your prisoner," evokes a different set of mental images. In an era when soldiers and civilians alike revered sacrificial death as the highest expression of national devotion, society often relegated prisoners of war to the commemorative emptiness between victory and death.

However, the same social pressures that compelled soldiers to view surrender as shameful made it impossible for prisoners to accept their fate and submissively await repatriation. Despite the feelings of detachment and anxiety that characterized life in enemy hands, German prisoners nurtured a camp culture of resistance and redemption. They believed that the manner in which they handled themselves on enemy soil was a direct reflection of their national character. The British may have stripped their prisoners of the conventional weapons of war, but in the camps of the UK, German military captives waged a battle of redemption that emphasized camaraderie, nationalism, and a commitment to Germany's future. The prisoners' organized pursuits were intended to demonstrate that although surrender had separated them from the battlefield, they remained devoted to the higher purpose they had fought for in the front lines. By examining prisoners' responses to life in captivity, we stand to strengthen our understanding of the men who fought the Great War and the ways a soldier's identity rested upon his connection to the front and the nation he defended there.

Neglected History: Prisoners of the Great War

Of the more than 70 million soldiers mobilized from 1914 to 1918, approximately 8.5 million fell into enemy hands. Statistically speaking, between 11 and 13 percent of the men who answered the call to arms shared the experience of life in captivity.[8] Yet the stories of the 9–10 million soldiers killed in action have overshadowed those of the Great War's prisoners. Although the historiography of captivity during the Second World War is well established, historians of the Great War have overlooked its prisoners to the extent that one scholar has referred to the subject as "forgotten history."[9] The appearance of several recent publications on the

Great War's prisoners suggests that historians are increasingly turning their attention to the history of captivity from 1914 to 1918. Nonetheless, scholarly studies of captivity have not revealed the prisoner of war's significance to the history of the Great War. Historians on both sides of the Atlantic have only begun to devote significant attention to the conflict's prisoners. Even those who discuss the Great War in the context of "total war" have often failed to address one of the factors that set it apart from its predecessors—captivity as a mass phenomenon.[10] It is accurate to suggest that military captivity represents what Heather Jones has called a "missing paradigm" for the study of the Great War. As such, analysis of military captivity raises fresh questions about the events of 1914–18 while offering a new lens through which to view its legacies for the twentieth century.[11]

This study aims to contribute to the development of this missing analytical paradigm in several important ways. First, it addresses a significant gap in the historiography of the conflict. The Great War's prisoners have generally received little attention, and perhaps no group has been overlooked to the extent of the German military prisoners held in the UK. With scholars beginning to recognize captivity as a viable field of historical inquiry, a range of studies has appeared in the past decade.[12] Nonetheless, the subject of military captivity in the UK has remained strikingly understudied. This is not to suggest that German military prisoners of the British have been entirely excluded from the historical narrative.[13] Panikos Panayi's recent study of internment in Britain examines German combatant prisoners alongside the civilian internees arrested and detained for the duration of the Great War.[14] Panayi's study sheds considerable light on the military prisoners held in Britain, and his attention to both civilian internees and former combatants offers an intriguing comparative perspective. However, the admirable scope of his project makes it difficult to achieve a comprehensive treatment of the German military prisoners who endured wartime captivity in the UK. Although the following study excludes civilian internees and focuses on the relatively small population of German military prisoners in the UK, it is a comprehensive appraisal. Earlier studies have largely failed to consider how ideas about gender norms influenced responses to surrender and captivity, but this book places the relationship between soldierly virtue and popular conceptions of manhood at the core of its analysis. The stigma of surrender may be seen as the constant that held the phases of the captivity experience together. Correspondingly, this account begins by drawing attention to the sensibilities that distinguished surrender as shameful and follows prisoners as they exited their camps and attempted to reintegrate into postwar society.

The captivity experience did not begin when the first combatants entered enemy prison camps, or even with the declarations of war in 1914. It began centuries earlier with the emergence of the parallel between surrender and cowardice. The feelings of emasculation that accompanied the moment of capitulation, when prisoners were often stripped of personal belongings and military decorations, intensified the emotional consequences of surrender. Whereas battlefield encounters are often excluded from analyses of wartime captivity, this book presumes that the moment of capture is crucial to understanding the prisoners' lives behind barbed wire. Furthermore, the captivity experience did not end with the armistice of November 1918. The general repatriation of prisoners from the UK commenced only in September 1919, and the emotional scars of captivity adversely affected the prisoners' ability to reintegrate following their return to Germany. The struggle for social acceptance was long and laborious. It was not until 1933 that Adolf Hitler offered many former prisoners the recognition they sought by welcoming them as honorable members of the community of the front. Hitler's recognition provided only the illusion of redemption, however, as the Nazis ultimately saw little value in honoring the virtues of life in captivity.

Perhaps most importantly, this study brings the stigma of surrender and captivity to the forefront of the discussion of the Great War's military prisoners. Surrender was the "key to the outcome of the First World War," as it was not combat deaths that crippled the German army in autumn 1918 but rather waves of surrenders that occurred among its troops in the war's final months. The realistic fear of being killed following surrender kept soldiers from raising their hands in many cases. Had it been safer to give oneself up, more soldiers might have sought salvation in enemy captivity prior to summer and autumn 1918.[15] The fear of dying an undignified death following surrender was legitimate, but the fear of losing one's life was not the only force that kept men in the trenches during desperate situations. Many soldiers preferred to fight to the death rather than face the humiliation of asking their enemy for mercy. Resistance to the concept of surrender was rooted in centuries of interaction between captors and their prisoners. Just as surrender is key to understanding the Great War's outcome, an appreciation of the dishonor of battlefield capitulation is essential to appreciating the implications of laying down one's arms. Surrender was not seen as a desirable end to military service for many soldiers who fought in the Great War.[16] Instead, it forced soldiers to bear a heavy psychological burden that most men preferred to avoid. This study seeks to deepen our understanding of the forces that motivated men to overcome their natural instincts and fight on when faced with the perils of the battlefield.

Prisoners of war have existed as long as armies have taken to the field, and falling into enemy hands has rarely been considered a dignified fate for a soldier.[17] The historical degradation of prisoners led to a corresponding understanding that an honorable soldier would do everything in his power to avoid the humiliation of enemy captivity. Death was often preferable to surrender, particularly among men who considered themselves great warriors. Frederick the Great, for example, reportedly carried a vial of poison during the Silesian Wars to ensure that he would die by his own hand before being captured alive.[18] This attitude found an environment in which it could flourish in the decades prior to the Great War. Prewar standards demanded that men exhibit strength and bravery when they donned a military uniform. In an era when the military establishment immortalized men who fought to the death, soldiers who sought salvation in enemy captivity faced allegations of cowardice or desertion. It was not uncommon for prisoners to be viewed not as honorable warriors but as "second-class soldiers."[19]

It has been suggested that military prisoners in the UK often saw captivity as an escape from combat and were thus not inclined to hold a negative view of their time in enemy hands.[20] This was certainly the case for some prisoners. However, this book complicates such an interpretation by demonstrating that it was removal from the front, and all that it represented, that made captivity difficult to endure for many combatants. Surrender represented a personal defeat, and prisoners often struggled with depression as a result of their separation from both the front and the home front.[21] The struggle to overcome the shame of captivity was unremitting. It began in the hazy moments immediately following capture and continued long after prisoners returned to Germany. The stigma of surrender must play a central role in any attempt to determine what surrender meant for the soldiers who experienced it. The German prisoners of the British carried the disgrace of their surrender into the prison camps of the UK. It was there, in enemy captivity, that the values that caused soldiers to view surrender as shameful drove them to embrace a redemptive vision of manhood and transform the prison camp into a new theater of war.

The understanding that proper men served a purpose beyond their individual interests heavily influenced early twentieth-century gender norms. National symbols, icons, and commemorations helped Germans integrate their regional and nation identities and served as powerful reminders of what common soldiers fought for during the Great War.[22] National rituals and symbols took on an even more important function for prisoners separated from the front lines, as ceremonies intended to

foster a sense of belonging were doubly significant for men suffering from an acute sense of detachment. This study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between nationalism and idealized visions of manhood by examining the rituals of soldiers whose loyalty had been called into question by surrender. Armed with their cultural sensibilities and a desire to reconnect with the front, they resisted their captors through acts of disobedience, escape attempts, and the establishment of camp organizations that demonstrated their nationalism and devotion to the fatherland.

Focusing on the emasculation of surrender and the prisoners' efforts to overcome the stigma of captivity allows this study to do more than strengthen our knowledge of the German captivity experience in the UK. Approaching the subject of wartime captivity from this angle makes it possible to integrate the story of the German prisoners and their British captors into the war's broader context and offer new insights into not merely what it meant to become a prisoner of war, but also what it meant to be a man at war. It is my hope that this book will offer a reference point for future comparative studies of wartime captivity. Finding common ground for discussions of how prisoners experienced captivity in diverse theaters of war will be essential as historians begin to examine more closely the Great War's prisoners and the surrender phenomenon's impact on the conflict.

The consequences of surrender were enduring, and repatriated prisoners continued to battle the shame of their capitulation long after they returned home. The struggles faced by former prisoners suggest that the romanticized ideas about battlefield behavior that thrived in the prewar years survived the mechanical carnage of 1914–18.[23] The postwar activities of the leading association of former prisoners of war in Germany, the Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener, and its gravitation toward National Socialism raise compelling questions about former prisoners' susceptibility to extremist ideologies that offered the sensations of national unity, strength, and camaraderie that had been lost at the moment of surrender.

Sources and Organization

This book draws upon a wide range of materials located in German, British, and American archives, including unpublished memoirs, capture reports, camp newspapers, and nearly 1,000 previously unused letters written by prisoners and their families. Relying on materials produced by the men who experienced wartime captivity provides a look at the ordeal from the prisoners' perspective and allows us to reconstruct, at least partially, the

prisoners' "everyday lives."[24] Since many prisoners held in the UK after 1916 were officers, I have made a conscious effort to balance their accounts with those of their rank-and-file counterparts. As with any source, there are unique dilemmas associated with relying heavily on prisoner letters. The British censored prisoner correspondence, and letters considered unflattering to the British were unlikely to reach their destinations without significant editing. Prisoners were also not likely to mention sensitive topics such as sexual frustration to their friends and family on the home front.

Prisoners rarely discussed their feelings of emasculation directly, so analyzing surrender's impact on their manhood requires a bit of reading between the lines. Prisoners often expressed a variety of emotions, such as shame and frustration, which are experienced in countless situations and often have nothing to do with manhood. However, emotions are closely related to cultural expectations, and it is essential that one consider the context within which the prisoners were processing their emotions.[25] When prisoners revealed feelings of abandonment, detachment, or humiliation, they were doing so as men who feared that they had fallen short of the cultural expectations for soldiers in the field. Whereas anyone may experience distress when a letter goes unanswered, prisoners struggled with the worry that the absence of a reply was an indication that they may have been rejected because of their supposed failings as soldiers. Their identity as men was tied to their service to the nation, and maintaining a connection with the homeland was thus a paramount concern. Prisoners may not have always been referring to their manhood in letters, but the words they wrote should not be separated from the environment in which they were written and the circumstances that brought their authors to the UK.

Although German archives hold many letters written by prisoners in the UK, correspondence written *to* prisoners is exceedingly rare. When prisoners departed for home in 1919, British authorities agreed to transport only a limited number of personal items across the English Channel. Collections of correspondence with the home front were likely discarded in favor of items that would be immediately useful following repatriation. Examples of extended correspondence between prisoners and their loved ones on the home front are difficult to find, which makes it challenging to reconstruct in rich detail the long-distance relationships prisoners attempted to maintain with their loved ones.[26] Nonetheless, one of a prisoner's primary concerns was the fear that relatives and former comrades might abandon him in enemy territory. Letters from captivity reveal the prisoners' insecurities and desire for a connection with the world beyond the barbed wire. Despite the shortcomings of working

with wartime correspondence, letters remain one of the most effective sources for determining how soldiers constructed their war experience.[27] Prisoners used correspondence to inform acquaintances of camp activities and express their unconditional devotion to Germany's collective struggle. Wartime letters thus represent a valuable, and underused, media for assessing life in the prison camps of the UK.

The extensive use of prisoner correspondence by soldiers of various ranks and backgrounds is typical of scholarship that utilizes a "history from below" approach, but this study does not ignore the views of military authorities or government officials. Military authorities were largely responsible for nurturing the stigma of surrender, and their perspective is essential to making sense of the captivity experience. British and German communications from foreign office and military officials chronicled the treatment of prisoners immediately following capture and in the prison camps of the UK. When paired with hundreds of reports filed by neutral camp inspectors from the United States and Switzerland, these official dispatches provide a comprehensive view of the structure of the British camps. When read alone, correspondence may lack context, but inspection reports and official communications help fill the voids left by censored writings from captivity. Finally, publications prepared by aid associations whose representatives worked closely with both prisoners and volunteers on the home front offer an additional perspective on the challenges of life in enemy hands.

Although this book is organized somewhat chronologically, its framework may more appropriately be described as thematic. This organizational scheme allows for a progressive analysis of the intensification of surrender's stigma before turning to the prisoners' responses to life behind barbed wire. Chapter 1 lays the book's foundations by discussing the dishonor of captivity against the backdrop of "normative" notions of manhood. To be labeled a coward was synonymous with social exile, and becoming a prisoner threatened a soldier's identity as a member of a nation at war—and therefore challenged his manhood. Even after the war's initial engagements exposed the industrial face of modern warfare, authorities equated death with honor and largely overlooked the sacrifices of soldiers who fell into enemy hands. As large numbers of Germans entered British prisoner enclosures for the first time at the battle of the Somme in July 1916, German officials began to reinforce the prisoner of war's image as a coward, and possible deserter, in order to limit surrender losses. When the German front finally began to crumble in 1918, military officials further distorted the lines between traitors and prisoners, which ensured that

the shame of surrender would endure even as German soldiers entered captivity in unprecedented numbers. Although some scholars stress the Great War's role in destroying traditional social constructs, views of surrender reveal a persistent link between capitulation and shame and suggest the continuity of prewar notions of appropriate battlefield behavior.

Chapter 2 examines the British treatment of German prisoners in the camps of the UK. The battlefield encounter between British captors and German prisoners could be violent, and surrender was not uncommonly accompanied by the humiliation of being physically abused and having one's personal possessions stolen. The British handling of prisoners immediately following capture was often less than humanitarian, but despite the tensions of the Anglo-German rivalry, prisoner abuse remained largely a battlefield phenomenon. Prisoner treatment in the UK was commendable, and the British seemed legitimately interested in working with their enemies to improve standards for prisoner care.

Arrival in the UK virtually guaranteed that prisoners who had not suffered serious wounds would live to see the end of the war, but many men could not see the benefits of their status as prisoners for the shame it entailed. Chapter 3 examines the psychological struggles of life in captivity and argues that prisoner correspondence reflected an acute desire to reestablish ties with former units and friends beyond the barbed wire. Feelings of detachment and uselessness burdened prisoners who preferred duty on the western front to the consequences of being safely removed from it. Surrender brought a soldier's loyalty and manhood into question, but there was a sure path to redemption. The Great War's belligerents generally accepted that prisoners had a duty to attempt escape. Chapter 3 likewise analyzes the value that prisoners placed on escape attempts and concludes that while escapes never threatened to turn the tide of the war, the resulting security increases aggravated a camp system low on manpower reserves. More importantly, escape attempts demonstrated the prisoners' desire to resume an active role in Germany's collective struggle and therefore helped to repair their damaged sense of manhood.

Few German military prisoners successfully fled the UK, leaving the vast majority in search of another road to redemption.[28] With little hope of reaching the front and reuniting with their units, prisoners transformed their prison camps into unconventional theaters of war. Chapter 4 examines the prisoners' organized activities in captivity, which included celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday, the establishment of camp schools, and the formation of competitive athletic associations. For the prisoners, camp

pursuits did not merely constitute a means for relieving the boredom of captivity but displayed an unbroken desire to serve the higher cause. Prisoners strove to express their identity as German warriors through acts of defiance and the establishment of cultural communities that accentuated the merits of the "German spirit." For men battling feelings of humiliation and inadequacy, organized events gave their lives meaning. By preparing themselves for the challenges of postwar life, prisoners believed that they continued to serve German interests.

Frontline soldiers demobilized at war's end, but prisoner repatriation did not begin until after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. Chapter 5 details the postwar captivity experience and contends that delayed repatriation intensified the prisoners' sense of emasculation by threatening their prospects for employment and underscoring the fact that surrender had severed their ties with the soldiers who returned home by December 1918. Postwar prisoner correspondence reveals a growing sense of abandonment and frustration with what appeared to be an endless war. In Germany, relief associations organized efforts to persuade the Great War's victors to commence repatriation, but the fragile German government was powerless to force the return of approximately 800,000 German prisoners from around the world. Failed efforts to expedite repatriation and secure full compensation for prisoners reveal that despite good intentions, the German government's approach to prisoner relief was hampered by the political and economic realities of the postwar era.

In January 1920, the last German prisoners of war left the UK. In the postwar era, the story of the German prisoners of the British merges with that of other prisoners returning from captivity around the globe. Chapter 6 explores the hardships faced by former prisoners as they attempted to gain financial compensation and recognition as honorable veterans in the Weimar Republic. The stigma of captivity remained with prisoners in the years after repatriation and served as an obstacle to full social reintegration. Many observers continued to associate the mass surrenders of summer and autumn 1918 with the German army's defeat and considered former prisoners of war to be second class soldiers.[29] I chronicle the prisoners' battle for respect following repatriation and eventual alliance with Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. Although Hitler's recognition of former prisoners seemed to provide prisoners with the redemption they desperately sought, a closer look into their relationship with Nazism demonstrates the persistence of the sacrificial masculine standard that marginalized prisoners of war.

In accordance with German privacy laws, I have abbreviated the surnames of all prisoners quoted, with the exception of those mentioned in previously published works and newspaper articles. File numbers and other relevant indicators (dates, reference numbers, etc.) make unpublished materials easily accessible in their respective archives. With archival materials located in German, British, and American collections, I have cited all documents in their original language in order to maintain clarity and simplify matters related to translation and identification. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

CHAPTER ONE

BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEATH

As summer 1914 drew to a close, a young Carl Zuckmayer had only one concern as German soldiers mobilized to meet the enemy—he feared that the conflict would end before he saw time at the front. Prior to the outbreak of war, Zuckmayer equated military service with strict discipline and the loss of personal freedoms. He later famously satirized militarism and the mystique of the military uniform in *The Captain of Köpenick*, but in the excitement of the August days, the playwright believed the "straightjacket of the Prussian uniform" was the key to his independence. Recalling his enlistment, he later wrote, "It sounds absurd, but with one stroke, one became a man."[1] As Zuckmayer suggested, the qualities of an ideal man and an effective soldier were often, yet not always, one and the same in the early twentieth century. Aside from displaying strength and courageousness, real men demonstrated selflessness and served a higher ideal, valuing national prosperity over personal safety. In times of war, a man's identity was particularly bound to his status as a defender of the nation and the ideals it embraced. Zuckmayer, for example, saw the Great War as an opportunity to free Germany from the dangers that threatened its existence.[2] In this regard, he was not alone. One of the influential images of manhood that flourished in prewar Germany emphasized martial values and a willingness to die in pursuit of a higher ideal.

If going to war confirmed an individual's manhood, the act of battlefield surrender challenged a soldier's masculine identity and cast doubt upon his commitment to Germany's national struggle. More than 997,000 German soldiers fell into enemy hands from 1914 to 1918, and approximately 325,000 surrendered to the British. Soldiers who were subjected

to the indignity of capture or surrender faced the possibility that their soldierly virtue might be called into question. Surrender threatened a soldier's attachment to a community at war by making him vulnerable to charges of cowardice or treason and damaging his sense of belonging to a larger entity.

As German losses to surrender increased during the Great War, military officials attempted to strengthen the prisoner of war's shameful image and therefore intensified the stigma of falling into enemy hands. The fear of dying at the hands of potential captors prevented many soldiers from surrendering, but the shame of appearing weak or disloyal likewise kept men from asking the enemy for quarter. Prewar conceptions of appropriate battlefield behavior survived through more than four years of industrialized warfare, and the persistence of surrender's stigma complicates our perception of the Great War as a conflict that ruptured traditional social conventions. Within the German army, few military observers failed to recognize that it was not death tolls but unprecedented waves of surrender that led to military defeat in November 1918. In the postwar era, prisoners would be closely linked with the shame of Germany's defeat, regardless of the circumstances of their capture.

Manhood and the Road to the Great War

What does it mean to be a man? Although this question is likely to yield an infinite number of responses, this book proceeds under the premise that most Europeans shared roughly similar conceptions of proper male behavior in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is not to suggest that ideas about manhood were unwavering or unquestioned. Historians and anthropologists have long recognized that numerous, competing masculinities are capable of coexisting within a society. Notions of masculinity fluctuate according to settings and circumstances. In the nineteenth century, diverse expressions of manhood were capable of "dovetailing" in a manner that made it possible for men to emphasize different models of manhood in accordance with the demands of a given situation.[3] Thus, notions of manhood are flexible and prone to "reactionary impulses."[4] It is important to acknowledge these diverse definitions of manhood, as well as their volatile nature, but historians also recognize that certain models of manhood are more influential than others. These "hegemonic masculinities" are embraced by a considerable portion of the population and help to create a benchmark of masculinity for a particular period of time. Hegemonic masculinities perform the dual functions

of attempting to uphold male dominance in society and establishing hierarchical relationships among men.[5]

Hegemonic masculinities likewise rise and fall in accordance with social developments, but it is possible to identify several characteristics that have managed to withstand the ebbs and flows of history and remain relevant to discussions of what men should aspire to be. For our purposes, the most significant of these constants is the correlation between martial virtues and popular visions of manhood.[6] Even as European society became more "civilized" and the need to stay fit for frequent military engagements proved less urgent, soldierly qualities such as physical strength, mental toughness, and courageousness remained at the core of the masculine ideal. The connection between manhood and martial attributes is common in many societies, as manhood is often "constructed around a culture's need for brave and disciplined soldiers."[7] Biologically speaking, men are not natural born fighters. One of the most efficient means of transforming men into effective soldiers is to connect manhood with the characteristics of superior combatants.[8] As social constructionists argue, men are not defined by their biological manhood. Instead, the process of becoming a man requires males to conform to the social norms of their particular culture.[9]

The early years of the nineteenth century were a crucial period for the strengthening of the relationship between martial values and manhood in the German lands. Middle-class Germans had not always welcomed the opportunity to serve in the military as a result of the aristocracy's dominance of the institution. Napoleon's humiliating defeat of the Prussian army in 1806–7 led to an era of reforms that were designed to make military service more appealing to the middle classes and awaken a desire to serve and defend the fatherland.[10] In Prussia, Frederick the Great had earlier attempted to persuade his people that to die for the nation was "to live forever in the remembrance of men."[11] Years after Frederick's death, the thousands of volunteers who answered the call to arms during the wars that swept Napoleon's armies from the German lands in 1813–15 embraced the opportunity to serve a cause above and beyond their individual interests and die a hero's death (*Heldentod*) for the fatherland. Whereas the privilege of dying a heroic sacrificial death had always been available only to aristocratic warriors, the mass mobilization of the Wars of Liberation made the honor of *Heldentod* a possibility for anyone willing to bear arms in defense of the fatherland. The experience of war in 1813–15 led to a surge of nationalism and elevated a masculine model that stressed soldierly qualities and celebrated men who demonstrated a willingness to serve the nation and die in its name.[12]

This sort of hero creation is an effective form of combat motivation that has been practiced for centuries, and it was by no means a German invention. When Pericles spoke to the mourning citizens of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, he portrayed the polis's fallen warriors as heroes who had attained the highest degree of citizenship by sacrificing themselves for their people. All Athenians, Pericles insisted, should strive to exhibit the same level of dedication displayed by the heroes who had given their lives for a greater cause.[13] In the wake of the Wars of Liberation, Prussian authorities likewise elected to tie citizenship to military service by permanently adopting the universal conscription law passed during the conflict. The decision to require able-bodied men to serve in the military meant that all Prussian men would be exposed to military values and expected to develop the attributes of an effective soldier, regardless of their social or religious background. Military service became a common experience that united men and set them apart from the women and boys in their lives. It also provided a set of criteria against which men could judge themselves and their peers. When the situation demanded it, men were expected to also be warriors.[14]

The Wars of Liberation were critical to the militarization of masculinity. The belief that a man served a higher ideal and sacrificed himself for the sake of the nation became deeply embedded in the social consciousness, and the advent of universal conscription in Prussia meant that men from all walks of life would be taught to embrace the concepts of duty, loyalty, and battlefield courage. A man's worth was bound to his sense of nationalism and his skill as a soldier, and men who failed to meet the army's physical and moral standards risked being denied the honor of fulfilling their duty.[15] The militarization of masculinity was evident in the civilian realm as well. The influence exercised by the soldierly model of manhood was perhaps nowhere more evident than in the practices of Germany's university students. German fraternities celebrated the virtues of military sacrifice and encouraged members to keep their minds and bodies prepared for the rigors of warfare. In many student fraternities, military service and heroism were entwined with nationalism and the desire to create a unified Germany. For many fraternity members the social activities and rituals in which they participated reinforced the connections between martial virtues, national service, and manhood. However, student activities also provide evidence of the coexistence of competing masculinities. Fraternity members did not universally accept martial models of manhood, as some students rejected aggressive rituals like dueling and promoted a different form of masculinity based on "enlightened values."[16]

Civilian and military notions of proper male conduct were not mutually exclusive in the German lands but rather reinforced one another through the military's prominent position in civil society. The military's role in the national unification of 1870–71 only increased the institution's influence, and civilians in Imperial Germany looked to the military establishment to provide the masculine standard.[17] It had long been important for middle-class men to present themselves as well-rounded, educated individuals with excellent social skills and interests that extended beyond their professional lives. Following German unification, being a well-rounded man increasingly meant also possessing the skills of an effective combatant. Men of the middle classes came to consider military training a component of their education, and although the militant aggression of the battlefield had no place in business meetings, the language of the barracks was routinely used to describe daily tasks in the workplace.[18] Middle-class men placed great value on earning a reserve officer's commission. As reserve officers they vigorously defended the military and forged the primary bond between the armed forces and civil society.[19] An officer's commission was a valuable key to social acceptability, and men privileged enough to wear an officer's uniform demanded, and generally received, respect.[20]

The adoption of the Prussian model of universal conscription, which theoretically trained young men of all social classes, following German unification further strengthened the bonds between civilian and military life. As recruits, soldiers became students of the military "school of manliness" whose rigors supposedly transformed boys into men.[21] Combat is an excruciating experience, and the human brain responds to the lethal dangers of battle by instructing one to retreat or seek shelter. Military training is designed to teach soldiers to override these natural impulses. This involves praising recruits for learning to tolerate pain and displaying the mental toughness and selflessness that will allow them to function in life-threatening situations. Recruits who excel during training are applauded for demonstrating their value as defenders of the nation, but those who fail to live up to the military's standards are often shamed as a warning to future recruits.[22]

To ensure that the military drew recruits from the most promising segments of the population, the army ultimately conscripted only 57 percent of Germany's eligible males and saw to it that urban centers, where young men were more prone to unpatriotic socialist leanings, remained underrepresented.[23] By blocking the garrison doors to targeted groups, the German army determined who was worthy of bearing arms

and reaping the social rewards of military service. It was never the case that only soldiers could be recognized as real men in Imperial Germany.[24] Nonetheless, the military played a leading role in defining popular conceptions of manhood, and being recognized as a good soldier was a valuable asset in the pursuit to be recognized as a good man. Military service was a defining moment in a young man's life, but for most Germans the peacetime experience in uniform was brief. About 96 percent of all recruits performed less than three years of uninterrupted service followed by reserve duty.[25] Once released back into civil society, however, reservists were required to retain the attributes cultivated during training in order to remain prepared for the possibility of being called to their regiments at a moment's notice.

Visitors to prewar Germany took notice of the permeability of the boundaries separating civil and military society, particularly the degree to which military culture was embedded in civilian life. After detecting a high percentage of men in uniform during a 1901 visit to Germany, an American observer likened the national atmosphere to that of a "military camp" and remarked that in essence, "every German [was] a soldier." The uniform, he declared, made it unnecessary for Germans to judge their fellow citizens' character, "for almost every other German wears his character on his back."[26] Attire alone could not transform an individual into a man, but society expected anyone who wore a military uniform to exhibit certain qualities. Among these qualities was the ability to defend their homeland while demonstrating honor and courageousness in their daily lives. Manhood, like honor, could be lost, and had to be defended when called into question.[27]

The character traits soldiers sought to exemplify became increasingly rigid during the decades leading to the Great War. With universal conscription, men from the middle classes entered the ranks of the military in unprecedented numbers. This demographic shift signaled the decline of the traditional officer class and the corresponding alterations to the military cult of manliness. The ascendancy of bourgeois gender norms forced the officer corps to reconsider the behavioral patterns it modeled for recruits.[28] Although the most prestigious regiments continued to draw a majority of officers from the nobility, by 1913 seven of every ten Prussian officers came from the middle classes.[29] Aristocratic military culture of the nineteenth century had emphasized honor, duty, and self-sacrifice.[30] On the battlefield, sacrifice meant a calculated willingness to die so that those on the home front would survive.[31]

Yet there had also been a more relaxed side of military life that included all-male dance evenings and socialization with women in the barracks. In the decade immediately preceding the Great War, German officers migrated toward a "hardened masculinity" that stressed "toughness" and "endurance." Officers continued to embrace older aristocratic notions of service and duty, but while the softer side of aristocratic manhood did not disappear completely, they purged many things considered "feminine" from their military existence.[32] The entry of middle-class officers into the upper ranks of the military forced their aristocratic counterparts to conform to a revised set of masculine norms. Notions of manhood are situational and fluid, but by the end of the nineteenth century there were perhaps fewer situations in which softer models of manhood were deemed acceptable. This modification legitimized a harder notion of manhood in the eyes of Germans who took cues from men in uniform. In 1914, the Prussian officer corps consisted of around 22,000 active officers. Even when combined with the officers of the smaller German states, this cadre represented a minute segment of the population. The influence the military leadership wielded, however, was out of proportion to its numerical strength.[33]

The belief that a true man must serve a larger purpose had been a key component of the German militarization of masculinity since the early nineteenth century.[34] Even in civilian institutions like the merchant marine, where officials feared that separation from the homeland might lead to undesirable behavior among mariners, nurturing a love of the German nation was believed to be critical to developing the type of men that should represent German interests in foreign ports. The numerous sailors' homes established by the Protestant German Mission to Seamen in the late nineteenth century accordingly attempted to build a "bridge" to the homeland by providing opportunities for sailors to celebrate German culture in the company of their countrymen.[35] Nationalism was seemingly linked to manhood outside of the military barracks, but within the armed forces the highest expression of a soldier's love of nation was to die heroically in its service. In many societies, going to war has historically been a rite of passage that a male must bravely endure in order to be considered a man by his peers. Yet merely serving was not enough. A soldier's performance under fire was a reflection of his character. The mystique that surrounded fallen soldiers reached unprecedented heights prior to the Great War, and by recognizing battlefield death as the model of heroism, military commanders hoped to promote a rigid masculine ideal that depicted falling in

action as enviable.[36] Officers, above all, understood that they were to lead by example by personally welcoming an honorable soldier's death.[37]

The Germans who took up arms in 1914 came of age surrounded by memorials to the wars of unification, and textbooks and youth organizations encouraged young men to consider it an honor to die in defense of the fatherland. Committed soldiers served the nation and willingly fought to the death in its name, and the relationship between one's proficiency as a soldier and his worth as a man was well established.[38] Within this milieu, soldiers who surrendered to the enemy failed to meet military and social expectations and strained their connection to the larger purpose they had defended on the battlefield. To be labeled a coward was to be ostracized, and nowhere did the pressure to act in accordance with masculine standards weigh more heavily upon men's shoulders than in the military. One of the leading masculine models of the decades prior to the Great War portrayed the prototypical man as brave, robust, and active—traits that do not come to mind when one imagines a prisoner of war being led away in defeat. Of all the ways one's manhood could be contested, to be accused of cowardice was the most serious.[39]

A soldier's education in the manly virtues of courageousness and sacrifice was directly related to the demands Germany expected to make of its soldiers in the event of a general European war. With improvements in Russo-French relations in the 1890s, Germany faced the disadvantage of being surrounded by potential enemies.[40] Before retiring from the General Staff in 1905, Alfred von Schlieffen addressed this dilemma with an aggressive war strategy that he hoped would prevent a prolonged two-front campaign. Schlieffen's successor, Helmuth von Moltke the younger, shared his predecessor's objection to defensive tactics. German strategists calculated that their reliance on imports made victory in a protracted war unlikely. The so-called Schlieffen Plan called for the French army to be destroyed in less than a month while limited German forces held the eastern frontier against the Russian army.[41] Immediately following France's surrender, the Kaiser's armies would move east with the full weight of the German military. The Schlieffen Plan's limitations were well known. No one could be sure what role the British would play or how neutral Belgium might respond to a request for passage through its territory. What remained clear was that once the gears of the plan were set to motion, Germany's prospects for victory diminished with every month in the field.[42] Some scholars have described the Schlieffen Plan as nothing more than a "desperate gamble,"[43] but the officers who viewed it as Germany's greatest chance for success rarely questioned its basic components.

Since serious delays would be disastrous, authorities asked a great deal of the officers responsible for the plan's execution. Iron resolve, a willingness to take extreme risks, and a resilient will to victory were required of men on the ground if the plan was to move according to schedule.[44] In the opinion of Gen. Alexander von Kluck, commander of the German First Army in 1914, "innate bravery" was the "greatest of all assets" in an effective soldier.[45] German forces had little time to retreat and await better opportunities to engage the enemy, for the clock was an adversary. The German General Staff relied on its officers' and soldiers' character to overcome numerical inferiority and strategic disadvantages. In 1910, for example, Friedrich von Bernhardi wrote that Germany would have to compensate for its statistical shortcomings with the "mental and moral strength of the individual," which remained the best weapon.[46]

To an extent, the German army depended on the power of the *Heldentod* legend to overcome its strategic disadvantages. German strategists, like their adversaries in France and England, touted the superiority of offensive warfare despite the obvious advantages granted to the defender.[47] The viability of the offensive depended on the morale of soldiers willing to continue fighting as their comrades fell around them. Devotees of the cult of the offensive understood that soldiers would die in large numbers in the next war, and planners accepted the prospect of heavy losses. Bernhardi predicted that the infantry could only serve as a potent weapon if it was determined "to shed streams of blood, and if it is possessed of the iron will to beat the enemy, cost what may."[48] Commanders did not encourage their men to embrace *Heldentod* simply for the sake of dying, as an army of suicidal soldiers would be hopelessly ineffective. Military officials did so in hopes of persuading their soldiers to continue fighting during the "critical moments" when a stalled advance or the surrender of even a small number of men could set off a rout. These are the pivotal minutes when offensives succeed or fail and lines of defense hold firm or collapse.[49] All battles include these critical moments that have the capability to determine a war's outcome.

Soldiers needed to accept their expendability, which required them to construct an identity as warriors who fought as a part of a larger whole. An individual's death was meaningful as long as the greater unit survived. Military culture not only promoted acts of courage and sacrificial bravery; it demanded these qualities from soldiers in the field.[50] A majority of the men who donned the German field gray uniform in 1914 had never seen combat, but they understood that the concept of surrender had no place in military culture. They had been indoctrinated from an early age to welcome *Heldentod*, and their education in heroism had been deliberate.[51]

Manhood and the Test of War

War represented the ultimate test of manhood, and many young men longed for a conflict that would allow them to demonstrate their willingness to serve the nation unselfishly.[52] Since unification, German troops had seen action only on a limited scale during the Boxer Uprisings in China (1900–1901) and in German Southwest Africa (1904–7). The absence of a forum in which to realize dreams of glory left many would-be warriors frustrated. When the United States went to war with Spain in 1898, several enthusiastic German officers reportedly stormed the American Embassy in Berlin to volunteer for duty in Cuba.[53] It was during the stretch of relative tranquility between 1871 and 1914 that Bernhardi penned his famous treatise on the dangers of pacifism, *Germany and the Next War*. He warned his readers that "an intellectual and vigorous nation can experience no worse destiny than to be lulled into a Phaeacian existence by the undisputed enjoyment of peace."[54] For Bernhardi, war was an intrinsic element of the natural world that allowed individuals to reach their highest potential through submission to a greater cause. His observations resonated with individuals who sought the test of battle.[55] War was not merely the means to a political end. Conflict was valued for the experiences soldiers stood to gain in the heat of battle, but those anticipated moments did not encompass the experience of personal defeat and surrender.

When conflict appeared imminent in summer 1914, emotions ran high across Europe as crowds swarmed the streets of major cities to express their patriotism and await the latest news. For the moment, feelings of national sentiment spanned social divides. In Berlin, the Kaiser claimed to no longer recognize political parties, but only Germans. His optimism appeared justified by the Social Democrats' decision to join their political rivals in the Reichstag in approving war credits. Nonetheless, there were limits to war enthusiasm. Some Social Democrats organized protest marches that drew participants by the thousands, and the working classes generally accepted the war and hoped for the best rather than passionately supporting German involvement. After the novelty of the war faded and its realities came to light, the realization that domestic tensions had only beaten a temporary retreat replaced expressions of national unity.[56]

Nonetheless, even unenthusiastic Germans feared the consequences of an invasion of the homeland, and most Germans readily reported for duty when asked to do so.[57] The soldiers who mobilized in 1914 were bound together by the social expectations they had internalized long before reaching the front. The Great War was an "invitation to manliness,"[58] and

despite reluctance among many men from rural backgrounds and those of the working classes, the volunteers who responded to its call came from diverse walks of life.[59] The droves of untried volunteers arriving at recruiting stations made such an impression on Reichstag deputy Matthias Erzberger, Catholic Center Party politician and future war critic, that he estimated 1.3 million men had registered for duty in only a few days. He pointed to the range of social classes represented as proof of the unity the war had inspired: "The registrations came from all walks of life: sons of the nobility, students, young farmers, merchants, workers! No class wanted to stay behind. Every young man mourned if he was rejected. No region of the fatherland excluded itself, including the territories of Alsace and Lorraine; even there the rush was noticeably strong. If the lists had to be closed in certain cities, the rejected withdrew with tears in their eyes and the telegram inquiries went out from regiment to regiment searching for an open position."[60]

Erzberger drastically overestimated volunteer turnout, but his observations bear witness to the enthusiasm that gripped Germany in the wake of war declarations. An estimated 185,000 Germans volunteered for duty in August 1914. Students and businessmen and other professionals surpassed blue-collar workers in their eagerness to serve, and volunteers signed on for a variety of reasons.[61] Owing to the fact that the German army never actually possessed the troop strength demanded by the Schlieffen Plan, middle-aged reservists accompanied young volunteers and enlisted men from the onset.[62] The thread that ran through all of their motivations was a sense of patriotic duty to defend their fatherland in its time of need. This was the case even among volunteers from the working classes.[63] Ernst Toller, who would later become a revolutionary and one of Germany's most important dramatists, was one of the young men compelled to enlist shortly after war was declared. Both the infantry and cavalry turned Toller away, but he persisted and was finally taken by the Bavarian artillery. In his autobiography, Toller recalled that he felt a sense of pride as he slid into his uniform. He was "a soldier at last, a privileged defender of the fatherland."[64]

For many young men like Toller, the Great War offered a reprieve from the perceived stagnation of civilian life and an opportunity to participate in an event that would serve as a defining experience in their lives.[65] Numerous masculinities may have coexisted in Imperial Germany, but the requirements of the situation in August 1914 demanded that the martial model of manhood take center stage. In times of war, "normal" life away from the front lines becomes feminized, and even hesitant warriors had

no desire to be considered weak or cowardly once they joined a regiment.[66] As volunteers and reservists answered the nation's call, many likely imagined victory parades or contemplated how their "beautiful death" might be commemorated, but few talked about the prospects of being taken prisoner. Military commanders prepare soldiers to kill the enemy or defend a position efficiently, but field service manuals offered little advice on how to properly capitulate.

Despite pockets of pacifism and reluctance, numerous Germans welcomed the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. The intellectual community, disaffected by modern life and its apparent preference for financial profit over cultural enlightenment, saw the promise of rebirth in the coming conflict. Like their counterparts in England, France, and Russia, German intellectuals praised combat's virtues and, echoing Bernhardi, saw conflict as part of the natural world. From the ashes of war they hoped to retrieve the influence they had once enjoyed in German society.[67] Death was ever present in their speeches and propaganda tracts. Academic giant Max Planck exploited the *Heldentod* legacy and observed that men absent from the front were envious at being denied the chance to die for "the highest of all earthly ideals."[68] Not to be outdone by his erudite professors, Kaiser Wilhelm II reminded soldiers of his expectations when he assured them that "in each of you lives the burning, unconquerable will to victory." Each of you knows, he continued, "if it must be, how to die like a hero."[69]

Sacrificial heroism, soldierly virtues, and manhood were so intertwined that the Kaiser might have achieved the same effect by reassuring the troops of his confidence that each of them knew how to die like a man. The soldiers' vigor for war was both communal and personal. As individuals they embodied the normative values of a national community that celebrated selflessness and courage, even if their virtues might be recognized only through the commemoration of their deaths. It was apparently possible to die "like" a man/hero, but was it also possible to surrender like a man? There was a significant distinction between soldiers who fought until the last possible moment before surrendering, or were captured while unconscious, and those who capitulated at the first sign of danger, but in the eyes of military authorities, prisoners were at least initially suspected of cowardice.[70]

Prisoners' failings as combatants made them immediate outcasts. The act of surrender was so emasculating that one scholar has argued that soldiers "experienced capture by the enemy as a metaphoric castration."[71] This "metaphoric castration" severed prisoners' ties to the identity they had constructed as soldiers in the service of a higher cause, as well as the

bonds of comradeship that had been formed during training and under fire. Soldiers of a given unit had sweat and bled together, comforted one another after the loss of a comrade, and relied upon one another in battle. Additionally, they shared the expectation that each member of the group would fight to the end for the sake of the men beside him. In short, they depended on one another for mental and physical survival. Surrender not only meant failing as an individual warrior; it necessitated an exile from one's comrades and the cause for which they fought.

Falling into enemy hands threatened to erase everything soldiers had accomplished by joining their units in the nation's time of need. While many men went to battle to demonstrate their manhood and fulfill their civic duties, they also did so to avoid the shame of not participating and having their loyalty questioned. In order for men to view war as a test of manhood, there had to be consequences for poor performance. Surrender implied that prisoners lacked the courage necessary to make the ultimate sacrifice or valued their personal well-being over that of the nation. Even worse, prisoners were often viewed as potential deserters or traitors. Battlefield death was heroic, but desertion was an act of criminality.[72] The relationship between appropriate male behavior at war and the bestowing of political rights was so entwined that falling short of social expectations endangered one's existence as a legitimate member of the national community.

Many soldiers viewed the war as a large-scale duel for the defense of personal and national honor. Honor was judged by one's willingness to fearlessly accept any challenge, making courageousness one of the central characteristics of an honorable man.[73] Even after the war's early engagements exposed the industrial nature of modern warfare, military authorities nostalgically equated death with honor and ignored or belittled the sacrifices of those who fell into enemy hands. The realities of mechanized warfare buried expectations of valiant hand-to-hand combat under the debris wreaked by heavy artillery.[74] Soldiers found the death they sought in abundance, but their opponents remained hidden. Yet the industrial, impersonal nature of the Great War did not entirely alter popular conceptions of what it meant to be a man on the battlefield. Society revered soldiers who fell in action, and according to one scholar of military culture, in Germany "heroic death became a philosophy of life."[75] As Germans commemorated their fallen soldiers, prisoners of war struggled to come to terms with their capture.[76] In an environment that celebrated bravery and sacrificial death, there was little time to honor prisoners who ostensibly chose safety in enemy captivity over the opportunity to become a national hero.

The Stigma of Surrender: Intensification and Continuity

Surrender was an emasculating ordeal that robbed prisoners, at least on the surface, of the manly virtues that characterized an effective soldier and separated them from a homeland at war. The pain of surrender and captivity may have been even more acute for German soldiers captured by the British. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Anglo-German relations were often strained. Anglophobes argued that in order for Germany to flourish, conflict with Britain—the guardian of the standing order—was inevitable.[77] When British troops arrived on the Continent following Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality, ordinary Germans reacted with indignation, and a cloud of anti-British sentiment settled over Germany. The British alliance with the "uncivilized" Russians appalled the German press, which reported that British deception was to blame for the war. Hatred for the British quickly surpassed animosity toward other belligerents, and *Gott strafe England* (God punish England) quickly became a rallying cry on the battlefield and home front. The British had allegedly entered a quarrel in which they had no business, and they had done so solely to prevent Germany from reaching its "place in the sun." Perhaps a line in Ernst Lissauer's notorious song of hate best captured feelings of German hostility for Britain: "We have but one and only hate, we love as one, we hate as one, we have one foe and one alone: England!"[78]

Germany's most hated foe arrived on the Continent to face an army on the offensive, and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) deployed in the war's first months consisted of only five divisions totaling roughly 100,000 soldiers.[79] Limited troops and early troubles in the field made it difficult for the British to take significant prisoners in 1914, a year considered by many to be a "shattering defeat" for the BEF.[80] In the first five months of combat, just over 100 German officers and 6,266 soldiers surrendered to the British on French soil.[81] In comparison, more than 8,000 British troops fell into German hands in August alone, making up more than half of the BEF's casualties for the war's first month.[82] One year after the onset of war, in excess of one million prisoners taken from all Germany's enemies populated the country's prison camps.[83] In contrast, the British continued to have little success with prisoner taking. On the eve of the battle of the Somme in July 1916, the BEF had captured little more than 13,600 soldiers and 229 officers in France.[84]

For the comparatively small number of German soldiers who entered British captivity in 1914, the combination of industrialized warfare and falling into enemy hands was sometimes difficult to bear. After British

soldier Percival Charles Cobb encountered a batch of German prisoners in September 1914, his diary entry for the day noted that many of the prisoners seemed relieved to be out of the war on account of the privations they had suffered. One prisoner, however, went mad following capture and had to be confined in a straightjacket. The following morning, guards discovered that he had managed to remove the jacket and had hanged himself with a muffler.[85]

Germans who surrendered early in the war often did so after being cut off from reinforcements. The German army's rapid advance in the war's opening months created gaps in its lines and made it difficult to supply troops. As a result, soldiers were sometimes stranded in forward positions.[86] In September 1914, a British company isolated Lt. Eduard R.'s men and cut them off from reinforcements around the Marne. Pushed to the point of exhaustion and out of supplies and ammunition, the thirty-six-year-old teacher from Berlin was forced to choose between fighting to certain death and appealing to the enemy for mercy. He concluded that further resistance would have led to a "useless slaughter of all the men," and in his capture report, Lieutenant R. noted that his entire company recognized the futility of its situation. He claimed to have personally witnessed a soldier on his left flank raise a white handkerchief, but he maintained that he was unable to remember any other details of his capture.[87] Lieutenant R.'s account is telling in several respects. His insistence that he was no longer in a position to defend himself reveals a desire to clarify that he believed surrender to be a last resort. By mentioning that someone else had raised a handkerchief as a gesture of surrender, the lieutenant was able to shift attention to another, unnamed, soldier. Although Lieutenant R.'s company was apparently no longer capable of resistance, its decision to enter captivity suggested a reluctance to make the final sacrifice and cast a shadow of doubt upon its members' bravery. Many early German prisoners were likely taken under similar circumstances.

As early prisoners endured the emasculation of surrender to a hated foe, the German Higher Command scrambled to transform an army schooled in the virtues of the offensive into a defensive force occupying entrenched positions. This process involved applying the dogma of the "cult of the offensive" to defensive warfare and maintaining faith that the moral qualities that motivated soldiers to advance under fire would now enable them to defend positions to the last man. Trench lines were to be held at all costs and, in the event of a breakthrough, retaken without delay. Gen. Erich von Falkenhayn, who replaced Moltke as head of the Oberste Heeresleitung (German Supreme Army Command) after the battle of the Marne, recalled

that asking soldiers to hold ground rather than retreating to a tenable line of defense was counterproductive. According to Falkenhayn, demanding that soldiers fight to the last breath led to heavy losses of the "gravest sort," namely voluntary surrenders. Soldiers who had lost hope of being reinforced but feared retreat, he surmised, generally grasped for the prospect of survival offered by voluntary surrender to the enemy. "Premature retirement," Falkenhayn concluded, may have saved the lives of individuals but was "ruinous for the whole front."[88] Indeed, in 1918 it would be mass surrenders that crippled the German army rather than deaths.

Notwithstanding Falkenhayn's postwar recognition of the risks associated with ordering troops to fight to the death, he demanded that his men hold their ground against overwhelming displays of force. In 1915 Falkenhayn assured an American journalist that if Germany "shall go under in this war . . . then we shall do so with honor, by relinquishing not a foot of territory and fighting to the last man."[89] Apparently, fighting with honor entailed refusing to surrender when faced with defeat. In the great battles of the following year, Allied armies tested the resolve of Falkenhayn's troops as never before. On the morning of 1 July 1916, more than 500,000 British and commonwealth soldiers and an additional 200,000 French troops attacked a German force of 300,000 on the Somme.[90] After a prolonged Allied bombardment intended to destroy the German positions, German machine gunners emerged from deep bunkers to inflict heavy casualties on Allied troops crossing no-man's-land.

The battle of the Somme not only stands as a benchmark in the history of modern warfare; it represents a turning point in the story of the German prisoners in British captivity. The slow trickle of prisoners being captured by the British prior to the Somme swelled into a stream of 6,000 men in the battle's first five days.[91] By 17 July, the Somme offensive had resulted in the capture of 179 German officers and almost 11,000 soldiers.[92] The taking of numerous prisoners indicated that despite the legendary losses suffered by the BEF on the Somme's opening day, British forces experienced a degree of success in July 1916.

Falkenhayn and his subordinates realized that the "premature retirement" of thousands of men jeopardized the stability of the entire German front. In an attempt to stem the flow of prisoner losses at the Somme, German authorities reminded officers of their duty to hold the lines at all costs and simultaneously reinforced the stigma of surrender. In an official communication captured by the British in July 1916, Gen. Fritz von Below of the Second Army responded to the increase in surrenders by informing his subordinates, "Every Commanding Officer will be held

responsible if the units under his command do not fight to the last man in the sector allotted to them. Any infraction of this order will immediately render the officer concerned liable to Court-Martial."[93] American journalist Frederick Palmer accompanied the BEF at the Somme. From conversations with German prisoners, he learned that German authorities warned soldiers that the failure to hold out would result in the leveling of their hometowns by British and French guns. Other officers played on the soldiers' sense of national pride and dislike for the British. Prussian officers reportedly asked their men if soldiers of the British New Army should defeat Prussians. "No! Die first!" was the unequivocal answer the officers provided.[94]

According to Palmer's account of the Somme, the best soldiers fought harder as they spent time under fire. In the journalist's opinion, battle was therefore an experience that brought out a man's best virtues. Palmer claimed that members of the German machine gun corps took an "oath never to surrender." Consequently, they were sometimes found strapped to their machine guns, "probably by their own request," to make it impossible for them to desert their posts. Other "natural fighters" refused to abandon trenches or faced certain death for the opportunity to inflict damage before falling in action. Even after spending more than a year at the front and witnessing the horrors of the Somme, Palmer clearly held the greatest respect for soldiers who refused to accept defeat.[95] British correspondent Philip Gibbs reported that the British soldiers he interviewed at the Somme likewise had the highest admiration for Germans who chose death over surrender. According to one Northumberland Fusilier, the Germans at Fricourt "stayed on when all the other men had been killed or wounded, and would neither surrender or escape." In his opinion, they were "wonderful men," and it would not have been sporting to deny it.[96]

Despite the prevalent admiration for soldiers who refused to give in and the German command's best efforts to minimize surrenders, the British captured 832 officers and 39,375 men in the six months following the first engagements on the Somme—an average of more than 6,700 men per month. The battles of the ensuing six-month period resulted in similar losses. In the first twenty-four days at Arras in April 1917, the Germans lost an astonishing 18,125 soldiers to the British in the form of surrenders.[97] Even though prisoners passed into British captivity in ebbs and flows until the armistice, the battles of 1916 and early 1917 symbolized a distinct shift in prisoner losses.[98] However, the stigma of surrender only intensified as captivity developed into a mass phenomenon.

This development was potentially related to alarming rates of desertion during approximately the same period that Germans began to surrender in high numbers for the first time. Between 1916 and 1917 desertion rates nearly tripled in the Bavarian army, and if these figures are representative of the German army as a whole, some soldiers had apparently begun to question whether military victory had slipped beyond reach.[99] Casualty reports often listed prisoner losses under the general category "missing or captured." A soldier labeled as missing could have surrendered, fallen in combat, or deserted to the enemy. Desertion was a criminal act in all of the German armies, and military courts reserved the harshest penalties for soldiers who deserted to the enemy or gave up their positions to an advancing force.[100] As the war entered its final years, military authorities would attempt to strengthen the implicit connection between prisoners and deserters.

Although deserters overwhelmingly came from the ranks of enlisted soldiers and almost never from the officer class, it is difficult to establish a firm profile of the typical deserter. Industrial workers tended to desert more often than farmers, but soldiers of all backgrounds were compelled to desert for any number of reasons.[101] There was some basis for officials' concerns that soldiers who entered captivity were actually deserting. Just before attempting to desert in January 1917, one German reservist informed his comrades that it was "not possible" for officials to keep track of which soldiers in enemy hands had deserted and which had been taken prisoner. Many soldiers likely shared the reservist's confidence that it would be impossible to distinguish deserters from prisoners. However, seeking asylum in enemy trenches was unquestionably the most dangerous means of deserting, and the reservist paid for his attempt with his life.[102]

A prospective deserter had no guarantee that the enemy would accept his surrender after a risky journey across no-man's-land, and deserters had to also consider how their comrades might interpret the decision to flee the trenches. When snipers from Adolf Hitler's Bavarian regiment identified a German soldier who had surrendered to the British in the enemy's trenches, they shot and killed their former comrade for having seemingly abandoned the men of his company.[103] On another occasion, a Bavarian soldier held his fire when he saw a fellow German soldier being escorted into the French trenches, as it was unclear whether the man had deserted or been legitimately captured. Soon after the occurrence, authorities instructed soldiers to fire upon any comrades seen with the enemy. Only several thousand of the 90,000–100,000 German soldiers who deserted prior to July 1918 sought shelter in enemy captivity. Most deserters

preferred to cross into neutral territory or simply hide out behind the front.[104] Nonetheless, deserters who sought relief from the front in enemy hands damaged the prisoners' collective image, as well as the reputation of the army as a whole.[105]

Desertion and surrender increases indicate that war weariness intensified in 1916–17. Yet even after the horrors of the Somme, German soldiers remained willing to hold out and die for the sake of victory. In an October 1916 letter, Karl Gorzel revealed that as the British bombarded his position at the Somme, among his comrades there was only "one thought in every mind: 'They shan't take us alive!'"[106] Another Somme veteran, Hugo Frick, consoled his mother in February 1917 by assuring her, "If I fall, I'll die a beautiful hero's death for the fatherland!"[107] There were certainly soldiers who welcomed the opportunity to desert and escape the war, and the *Heldentod* ideal lost its luster for many veterans as the war dragged on.[108] But by and large, years of brutal warfare had failed to destroy many concepts associated with the "militarization of masculinity" and the *Heldentod* ideal.[109] Even disgruntled soldiers still spoke of "duty," a word that signified their continued belief in a responsibility to serve their homeland.[110] Trench newspapers had commonly popularized tales of heroic manhood and reminded soldiers in the war's early years that fulfilling their duty meant, among other things, "to die fighting." In the war's final phases, soldier newspapers continued to echo these sentiments. The *Kriegszeitung der 4. Armee*, for example, declared as late as June 1918 that "loyalty meant dying for the Kaiser."[111] In summer and autumn 1918 other publications began to specifically warn soldiers to resist temptations to surrender to the enemy, a subject that had been scarcely covered in previous years.[112] The persistence of an idealized notion of manhood and the veneration of sacrificial death helped sustain the prisoner of war's image as a broken and helpless individual who had allowed the enemy to "take him alive."

As captivity developed into a mass phenomenon shared by millions of soldiers, the stigma of surrender endured. Recalling his capture by the British, Bavarian soldier Georg S. expressed the sentiments internalized by most prisoners when he confessed, "It was without a doubt a very unpleasant and humiliating feeling that we had to raise our hands and, so to say, beg for our lives. Anyone who has gone into war captivity will confirm that."[113] Neutral observers also described prisoners in less than heroic terms. Just days before Georg S.'s capture on the Somme, a representative of the International Red Cross wrote: "In the course of this war, the vast number of combatants has produced a class of unfortunates of an almost novel type, for, if that class existed before, it never attained its present

proportions. We refer to prisoners of war. These, too, are powerless, incapable of resistance, delivered to the tender mercies of the enemy who has compelled them to lay down their arms and plead for their lives."[114]

Men did not plead for their lives, they fought for them, and the popular perception of the prisoner as defeated and powerless undeniably influenced soldiers' decisions to fight on in moments of doubt. Holding the lines at all costs and avoiding entry into the "class of unfortunates" remained a point of pride with many soldiers. In a letter from early 1918, Walther P. proudly informed his father that as long as his unit had been in its position not a single one of its number had fallen into British hands. "That is an enormous achievement that you in Germany could not appreciate enough," he wrote, concluding, "Our men hold out magnificently."[115] Although the Red Cross was correct to draw attention to the unprecedented number of prisoners in enemy custody by 1917, prisoner losses had not yet become a critical factor in the German army's capacity to wage war. Even in the face of rising desertions throughout the final months of 1917, there was no lack of confidence in the trenches as the spring offensive of 1918 approached.[116]

Under Falkenhayn's successors, Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg, the spring offensive began with impressive German gains and corresponding manpower and artillery losses for the enemy. For a fleeting moment, it looked as if the army's goal of knocking the British out of the war was within reach. In time, the Allies regained their composure and mounted counterattacks that exposed the German army's exhaustion and stalled the offensive short of its objectives. German soldiers had been optimistic about their chances for success, but many considered the spring offensive a final attempt at victory. Sensing the enemy's despair, Allied aircraft showered German trenches with pamphlets inviting soldiers to cross the lines.[117] Although the illusive victory German soldiers had anticipated did not transpire, neither did the waves of deserters the Allies hoped for. The BEF netted fewer than 10,000 prisoners between 19 March and 1 July 1918.[118] In the interwar years Gen. Hermann Joseph von Kuhl, former chief of staff of Army Group Crown Prince Rupprecht, pointed out that in the battles of March–July 1918, the numbers of German dead and wounded exceeded those of the missing and prisoners, implying that the soldiers' willingness to bleed and die for the fatherland had not waned.[119]

German authorities nonetheless considered losses to surrender a serious threat and remained suspicious of prisoners of war. In a March 1918 memo sent to communities within its district, the VII Army Corps in Münster stressed the importance of keeping a close eye on returning prisoners of war and civilian internees. Based on past experiences, the

corps warned the home front to prepare for the possibility that individuals among the returning prisoners were guilty of some sort of treason or working with enemy intelligence services. The implication, of course, was that the men had deserted their posts or provided the enemy with sensitive information. Repatriated prisoners were to be closely monitored to prevent any further subversive acts.[120] The VII Army Corps' measures were likely aimed at prisoners returning from Russia, as it was easy for officials to imagine that these prisoners might have been indoctrinated with Bolshevik ideology. Nonetheless, the memo did not single out any particular group, and its circulation did little to encourage Germans to view prisoners as men who had served their country with honor.

Within the armed forces, officials similarly installed measures to discourage soldiers from surrendering. In May 1918, the Kriegsministerium (War Ministry) issued an order that required former prisoners to submit an explanation of capture to determine whether disciplinary measures were necessary. Although the requirement was supposedly not intended to gauge loyalty, the Kriegsministerium considered the reports a top priority and argued that the "honor of the entire army and the individual demand[ed] a statement of the nature of the capture."[121] If determined innocent of cowardice or treason, former prisoners would receive a certificate attesting that they had entered captivity under honorable circumstances. The Kriegsministerium hoped to soften the order's accusatory tone by claiming that it was often the most courageous soldiers who found themselves in enemy captivity—on account of their refusal to retreat. Officials reasoned that capture reports would benefit repatriated prisoners by allowing the men to defend themselves against "unfounded suspicions and slander."[122] The army's platitudes failed to conceal its distrust of soldiers who surrendered, and the explanatory reports it demanded revealed an unwillingness to assume that prisoners had entered captivity with honor. Long after surrender became common on the western front, allowing himself to be taken alive cast doubt upon a soldier's integrity. Prisoners were suspected of cowardice, and thus sacrificing their manhood, until proven innocent.

The return of former prisoners following new exchange agreements and the collapse of the Russian war effort in 1917 placed the German army in a precarious situation. While needing public assistance to support former prisoners, military officials seemed to legitimately believe that returning prisoners could be a danger to domestic stability and national security. Publicly depicting the men as traitors could simultaneously discourage Germans from lending financial support and encourage former

prisoners to work against the military effort. Therefore, the military had to balance its suspicion of prisoners of war against the need to successfully reintegrate them.

In July 1918, the commander of the Prussian army's prisoner of war branch (*Unterkunftsdepartement*), Maj. Gen. Emil von Friedrich, appealed to German mayors for support in welcoming home returning prisoners. He assured local leaders that "the old view of war captivity as a blemish (*Makel*) on a man's character had been broken with long ago." The prisoner of war, he contended, "had looked the enemy in the eye, and with few exceptions, fell into enemy hands while at his post and against his will."[123] Friedrich's letter is revealing in several respects. Although it was intended to portray prisoners positively, the letter confirms that prior to the Great War, time spent in war captivity could tarnish a man's reputation. Furthermore, Friedrich's need to defend returning prisoners suggests that he suspected the negative view of prisoners remained prevalent in German society.

At the front, military authorities were more concerned with controlling the damage associated with prisoner losses. As the German lines showed signs of breaking, officials finally acknowledged the need to train soldiers for the possibility of surrender. However, they did so in a manner that solidified the correlation between surrender and desertion. In summer 1918, the British acquired a copy of a German conduct code for soldiers captured by the enemy. It reminded soldiers, "For a man to allow himself to be taken prisoner by the enemy without having defended himself to the utmost is a dishonourable act equivalent to treachery." The code conceded that it was possible for a brave soldier to be captured "without it being his fault," but most soldiers probably understood that defending oneself to the "utmost" meant fighting to the death. In the event that soldiers chose surrender over death, the code stressed that prisoners were obligated to observe the oath of loyalty taken to their country and comrades. Once a soldier was captured, this meant his refusing to provide the enemy with details of troop strength, orders of battle, or conditions on the home front.[124]

The code alleged that prisoners had previously provided the enemy with accurate intelligence at the expense of frontline soldiers. German authorities insisted that in the final stages of the war, prisoners must "feel more than ever the shame and infamy of such unprincipled conduct."[125] Captors held little admiration for cooperative prisoners, the code declared, but an honorable soldier's refusal to betray his homeland would earn the enemy's respect. Here again, the authorities' handling of the surrender phenomenon demonstrates an inherent distrust of prisoners. It should

have been a given that a man of honor would know how to handle himself in captivity, but the code's drafters obviously assumed that anyone who allowed himself to be taken might need further guidance, as his personal code of conduct had already been proven insufficient by his capture.

Understanding that interrogation almost always followed capture, German officials instructed prisoners to claim that they had recently joined their units or returned from sick leave and thus possessed no useful intelligence. The order reminded soldiers that it was not difficult to trace the source of damaging intelligence and warned that prisoners who neglected "duty and honour" would face criminal charges. Additionally, relatives of talkative prisoners would suffer for their association to a suspected traitor. As a final warning, the code ensured soldiers that treason was unforgivable. As far as the army was concerned, traitors' names "were branded, their homes and property lost forever!"[126]

The German navy harbored similar concerns for the prisoners' potential as a source of intelligence, particularly in regard to the submarine campaign. Naval officials were certain that the British had collected damaging intelligence from captured sailors and submariners, and in late June 1918 the German submarine command circulated its Ten Commandments for Prisoners of War. The commandments instructed submariners to destroy their boats, weaponry, and machines if capture seemed likely, even if doing so costs them their lives. It was better for one to die the death of an honorable soldier, the bulletin claimed, than to allow a vessel to fall into enemy hands through any fault of one's own.[127] Much like the army's code of conduct, the commandments outlined the guidelines for acceptable behavior in captivity and similarly threatened to punish sailors who forgot their loyalties. Prisoners who proved to be "weaklings" would suffer the harshest penalties allowed or be banished from their homeland. In closing, the commandments claimed that while captivity was a misfortune, it was not shameful for those soldiers who entered custody without guilt and remained true to the fatherland.[128] This approach was likely more effective than threats of exile, as it gave prisoners hope of redemption rather than merely casting doubt upon their sense of honor. In any case, the commandments reinforced several key principles: a soldier's life was secondary to the war effort, and treason irrevocably alienated soldiers from their people.

Orders issued by higher officers make it clear that military authorities sought to associate surrender with desertion in order to prevent losses, but it is difficult to determine exactly how effective the orders were in terms of influencing the attitudes of common soldiers. A study of Bavarian soldiers has shown that the frequent reading aloud of the articles of

war, along with penalties for disobedience, had a very "intimidating effect" upon soldiers. In addition, soldiers faced pressures from family members on the home front who feared that they would be looked down upon or even punished if their relatives in the front lines failed to comply with military orders. Soldiers who attempted to avoid service in the trenches often found little support from relatives who encouraged them to continue doing their duty to avoid bringing shame upon the family.[129] It appears, therefore, that orders regarding surrender and behavior in captivity likely had the ability to impact a soldier's view of surrender.

Responses to surrender increases demonstrated that officials were well aware of the devastating effects of prisoner losses. Efforts to link surrender and desertion were almost certainly intended to discourage soldiers from choosing surrender as a means to an end in a conflict in which victory seemed unobtainable. In reality, the German army punished suspected deserters or traitors with its harshest penalties rather infrequently. From 1914 to 1918 military tribunals sentenced only 150 German servicemen to death, and only 48 sentences were actually carried out. Even fewer soldiers were sentenced to death specifically for desertion, and tribunals eventually pardoned all but eighteen of those offenses. The British and French convicted and executed far greater numbers of their own men.[130] Since the German army was reluctant to make examples of soldiers by punishing them with the severest penalties, one could argue that officials considered shame more effective than punishment when it came to keeping soldiers at their posts. At the front, soldiers were embodiments of sacrificial nationalism and manly virtues of courage and honor. But the army's scare tactics suggested that they could be transformed from valiant defenders to potential criminals with the simple act of raising their hands.

The Point of No Return

On 8 August 1918, a day General Ludendorff later referred to as the "black day" of the German army, the British broke through and achieved gains from which the German forces never recovered. Some historians argue that Germany's defeat had been assured already in spring 1918.[131] In terms of morale and prisoner losses, the weeks following the "black day" signified a point of no return in the soldiers' inability or unwillingness to continue.[132] During the week of 6 August, British forces in France captured 19,533 German soldiers and 612 officers. The following week saw a sharp decline in German surrenders, but total captures for the period 6 August–2 September surpassed 1,700 officers and 63,000 enlisted men.[133]

Commanders unable to comprehend the looming defeat struggled to explain massive prisoner losses. Some found scapegoats in pacifists and socialists, and German leaders' reflections on summer and autumn 1918 blurred the lines between defectors, deserters, Bolsheviks, and prisoners of war. The Kaiser's son, Crown Prince Wilhelm, lamented that the reinforcements he received in 1918 were infected with revolutionary ideology and determined "to hold up their hands at the very first opportunity."[134] According to the heir apparent, the resulting effect on morale was disastrous. Soldiers who had no desire to continue the fight labeled brave veterans "war protractors" and "blacklegs."[135] One rumor that circulated among the officer corps alleged that when twenty Germans surrendered to just two British soldiers, an observing German officer fired on the captors. His men were determined to give themselves up, and they responded to his rescue attempt by verbally abusing the officer.[136] German commanders feared that the ideology of the Russian revolution might spread westward. They were well aware that the waves of desertions inspired by the revolution of 1917 made it impossible for the Russian army to wage war.[137] The German army's habit of punishing home-front strike leaders by sending them to the trenches bolstered its fears. Following the widespread munitions strikes of January 1918, there was no shortage of embittered former labor activists on the western front.[138] It seemed plausible to German officials that Bolsheviks had infiltrated the army and were instigating surrender en masse in order to end the war. It was true that a number of left-leaning soldiers had used desertion to the enemy as a means of escaping a fight they did not support. A Bavarian deserter taken early in the war who identified himself as an "ardent Socialist," for example, declared that he had deserted because of his "hatred of German ideals and Prussian militarism."[139]

Ernst Jünger, on the other hand, was among the soldiers unwilling to yield even as his comrades surrendered by the thousands. In the war's final months, Jünger realized that Germany could not prevail, yet he remained resolute in his conviction that the "enemy should know that he fought against men of honour."[140] For Jünger, maintaining his identity as a man of honor meant fighting to the end and demonstrating courageousness under hopeless conditions. As British soldiers surrounded his regiment in August 1918, he urged his comrades to "fight it out to the death" rather than concede defeat. When ordered to lay down his weapon, Jünger recalled, "there was left only the choice of being taken or being shot. And now the moment had come to show whether all that I had often said to the men when on rest about the fighting spirit was more than empty phrases."[141]

He clearly associated surrender with hypocrisy and believed that even when encircled, soldiers were left with the choice of dying with honor or capitulating in disgrace. Jünger opted to fight on and killed a British soldier who attempted to block his escape. Soldiers like Jünger, who did not consider surrender an option, set a high standard for their comrades and cast a heavy shadow upon soldiers who failed to follow their example.

Behind the lines at command headquarters, segments of the German High Command preferred risking the complete destruction of the German army to negotiating with the enemy. The concept of *Endkampf* that developed in the last months of the war proposed that Germany continue fighting through any means necessary and accept total defeat rather than surrender. *Endkampf* required that an individual's readiness to perish be extended to the corps and the army as a whole.[142] The army's hesitation to negotiate was the product of a military culture that included deeply embedded conceptions of honor and encouraged radicalization in difficult situations.[143] The military's attitude toward surrender was an outgrowth of this aspect of military culture. At times, members of the German Supreme Army Command envisioned a terminal battle that would require soldiers, and also civilians, to fight to the last man for the sake of German honor.[144] Even as the German army fell to pieces and any prospects of victory vanished, high commanders expected soldiers to fight on. In his postwar memoirs, Paul von Hindenburg recalled that in the war's last days, the orders passed on to frontline troops often consisted of little more than instructions to hold out to the last man. To inspire his men to continue with the fight, the military icon claimed to have consciously fulfilled his duty by remaining at his post until the end.[145]

The extent to which *Endkampf* exemplifies the continuity or exceptionality of German military ideology remains debatable, but certain high-ranking officers considered it a viable option in autumn 1918. In fact, some of the Kaiser's top generals attempted to persuade him to depart for the front in order to lead his men on the battlefield. If the Kaiser fell in battle, his death would provide the basis for a legend of German heroism that would inspire future generations. Many of the Kaiser's older officers saw a heroic end on the field of battle as infinitely more desirable than the shame of abdication, which amounted to an admission of defeat, and demonstrated that they were prepared to join him on his "death ride."[146] The Kaiser balked at the suggestion that he undertake what amounted to a suicide mission, and many of his officers were likely somewhat disappointed that their leader chose to turn down an opportunity to display his own willingness to fight to the last breath.

Like their Kaiser, the men in the trenches did not see the benefit of a suicidal final stand. Approximately 420,000 German soldiers were killed or wounded between mid-July and November 1918, but it was not these statistics that revealed Germany had reached its breaking point. An estimated 750,000 to one million soldiers "shirked" military duty in the last months of the war. The loss of an additional 340,000 prisoners of war and missing soldiers testifies to the breakdown that occurred in the war's final days.[147] With October coming to a close, the British could boast at having taken more than 180,000 prisoners on the western front in 1918.[148] These losses, not death statistics, indicated that the German army was at its end.[149] Perhaps most telling was the fact that many of the prisoners taken after August 1918 entered captivity without significant battle wounds.[150] Already on 14 September, the Third Army's Gen. Karl von Einem lamented that he had lost 13,000 soldiers to surrender. If the trend continued, he predicted, the German army would die from exhaustion. The surrenders perplexed Einem, and he correctly deduced that the war could not be won with soldiers who "give themselves up as prisoners."[151]

In the war's final three months, the British suffered casualties of more than 4,225 officers and 59,311 soldiers, compared to substantially lower figures of 1,540 and 26,688 for their German adversaries. In terms of combat deaths, the German army continued to kill more soldiers than it lost when facing the British. It was the battle to prevent soldiers from surrendering that the Germans lost decisively. Commanders could only watch in dismay as entire units surrendered and sealed the army's fate.[152] In the end, Einem was correct. Wars cannot be won with soldiers who give themselves up as prisoners.

The home front had not stabbed the army in the back, as many military authorities contended. The German army had failed to evolve as effectively as its enemies, and when combined with mounting material and manpower disadvantages, the poor decisions made by German commanders placed soldiers in increasingly desperate situations in the war's final months.[153] With legitimate prospects for success dwindling, many soldiers at the front seem to have simply lost the will to die for a cause in which victory was unattainable. Perhaps when it became clear that their deaths could not save Germany from collapse, the power of the *Heldentod* myth finally, albeit temporarily, lost its influence. Civilians on the home front likewise lost the will to suffer in the name of an unobtainable victory, and the ties that "bound" the home front and front unraveled.[154] Massive surrenders continued to weaken the German army as the war neared its conclusion. In October, Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria confided to his

father that he had only unpleasant news to report regarding the mood at the front. He noted, "Repeatedly major divisions and also officers have voluntarily given themselves up."[155] Ludendorff, too, realized by late September that his "troops [could] no longer be relied on."[156] In the end, a sense of despair set in even among the officer corps. Junior commanders frequently relieved their men from the moral dilemma of surrender by leading them into enemy hands as a unit.[157] As the British major general Sir F. Maurice recalled, by the signing of the armistice, the Germans had been routed and "the morale of the troops was gone."[158]

Ernst Jünger proved to be the exception rather than the rule. One might expect that as Germans gave themselves up by the hundreds of thousands, the stigma of surrender would have correspondingly diminished. Yet commanders' comments on the surrender phenomenon promoted and reinforced the image of the prisoner as dishonorable or even treasonous. In his postwar musings on the stab-in-the-back myth, General Kuhl suggested that "numerous shirkers, deserters, and defectors" were among the prisoners and missing of late 1918.[159] Ludendorff argued that shirking, desertion, and large prisoner losses greatly compromised the army's effectiveness in autumn 1918. After painting prisoners and deserters with the same brush, the former chief of staff admitted that not all prisoners were corrupt, as "very often it was the best" who fell into enemy hands. The worst soldiers apparently fled to the rear while their brave comrades held out to be eventually overrun by the enemy.[160] Suffering defeat in the Great War was emasculating for Germany as a nation. By discussing prisoners alongside deserters and traitors, commanders ensured that prisoners would carry a significant share of the blame for the army's failures.[161]

In addition to associating prisoners with cowardice and desertion, many commanders spoke in terms that tied prisoners to communist leanings. Crown Prince Wilhelm insisted that many of his troops had been taken prisoner only after "contaminated elements," meaning internationalists and pacifists, allowed the German flank to be turned.[162] Postwar analysis of this nature made it difficult to distinguish between prisoners who had been overwhelmed by the enemy after intense fighting and "corrupt" soldiers who capitulated with little resistance. Prisoners remained open to accusations of desertion or Bolshevism despite the fact that a majority of the German prisoners taken in the closing months were veterans who may have withstood years in the trenches before finally surrendering. Surrenders were a critical factor in the German army's disintegration, but the prisoners taken late in the war were not, as the crown prince suggested, new recruits determined to throw up their hands at the first opportunity.[163]

Commentary that depicted prisoners as revolutionaries fresh from the home front belied the reality of the situation. Nonetheless, the image of the prisoner of war as a cowardly and disloyal soldier persisted.

Historians of the Great War often stress its transformative qualities and the destruction of traditional social customs the war engendered. However, the perseverance and intensification of surrender's stigma points to the continuity, and even reinforcement, of prewar perceptions of appropriate battlefield behavior.[164] Military authorities not only identified prisoners as having played a key role in the army's defeat, but by hinting that captives taken at war's end may have been socialists or communists, authorities tied prisoners to the stab-in-the-back myth embraced by many Germans in the interwar years. Ernst Jünger's refusal to surrender may have been the exception to the rule, but he would be celebrated in the postwar era. Prisoners, on the other hand, continued to serve as symbols of defeat and carried the stigma of "second-class soldiers" for having not demonstrated the soldierly/manly virtues expected of men in uniform.[165]

■ During the Great War, soldiers were expected to perform with courageousness and willingly sacrifice their lives for the war effort. German military officials nurtured the *Heldentod* tradition largely because they realized that they could not successfully wage war without soldiers who accepted their expendability. Soldiers whose battlefield experience ended in surrender were often suspected of cowardice or treason, crimes that defied prevailing conceptions of appropriate manhood and threatened a soldier's bonds to his homeland. Thus the shame of surrender served as an important source of combat motivation. Few soldiers wanted to be considered weak or unmanly by their peers and countrymen.

The terror associated with the great battles of 1916 and beyond proved incapable of destroying the notion that a man's merit was related to his willingness to serve a higher ideal and die in its name. Even as Germans surrendered to the British in large numbers for the first time, many veterans of the trenches remained determined to not be taken alive. German commanders attempted to further strengthen their soldiers' resolve by blurring the lines between prisoners, deserters, traitors, and ultimately Bolsheviks. The orders issued by commanders regarding surrender were clearly intended to remind soldiers of their manly duties, and as we will later see, prisoners' responses to life in captivity demonstrate that the model of manhood promoted by military officials resonated with the men in the trenches. It is no exaggeration to claim that surrender was the key to the outcome of the Great War.[166] If it had been safer to surrender in

1917–18, more soldiers would have likely done so, and the war would have come to an earlier conclusion. We must also consider the possibility that soldiers remained in the trenches not only in fear that a bid for surrender might end in death but also because of the stigma associated with appearing to be unwilling to fight on.

The conditions that led to Germany's defeat hold an interesting paradox. The army collapsed when surrenders made it impossible to continue. In the last months of the war, neither the shame of surrender nor the fear of death prohibited Germans from giving themselves up in large numbers. Apparently, when it became clear that the German army was outmatched, the humiliation of raising one's hands in defeat was not enough to keep men in the firing line. When a soldier's personal refusal to retreat could no longer affect the outcome of the war or Germany's survival, the *Heldentod* ideal lost much of its influence. Nonetheless, commanders' observations on surrender would inextricably link prisoners to military defeat and bolster the image of the prisoner of war as a traitorous coward. In this regard, the story of surrender during the Great War seems to be one of continuity. Despite the collapse of the Kaiser's Germany, the battles of the Great War left intact many aspects of older, idealized notions of what it meant to be a man at war. However, the German military's suspicion of soldiers who entered captivity was only one of a new prisoner's many concerns. In most cases, a prisoner could only speculate as to what awaited him behind enemy lines.

CHAPTER TWO

IN BRITISH HANDS

Anglo-German Encounters

Surrender or capture represented only the initial stage of the captivity experience, and the decision to capitulate was the beginning of a humbling relationship with the enemy. This chapter examines the British treatment of German prisoners in the camps of the UK. Like other combatant nations, Britain was ill prepared to care for large numbers of enemy prisoners when war began in 1914. The camp structure developed by the British during the war was flexible, and War Office officials altered the scheme in accordance with developments at the front. The British handling of prisoners behind the lines could be less than ideal, but prisoner treatment inside the camps of the UK was rather admirable. Away from the adrenaline and pressures of the front, prisoner abuse was almost unheard of across the English Channel. The following examination of British prisoner treatment deepens our knowledge of the complicated nature of the Anglo-German rivalry and the management of violent conflict among Europeans. Although the Anglo-German antagonism may have contributed to prisoner abuses in the heat of battle, it had no perceivable effect on prisoner management in the UK.

Behind the Lines: Initial Encounters with the Enemy

Few soldiers seriously considered that their service might end in captivity. Recounting his capture at the Somme, a Bavarian reserve captain recalled that until it transpired, the prospect of falling into enemy hands never crossed his mind—not for even an instant. As he came to realize, soldiers often faced the "desperate choice to either be entirely uselessly shot down

Sir William Orpen, Four German Prisoners by a French Village, 1917.
© Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK / The Bridgeman Art Library.

or to give up."[1] Training conditioned men to welcome a soldier's death, but survival instincts frequently caused men to capitulate rather than fight on, placing soldiers in an uncomfortable situation they had scarcely prepared for. The anguish of captivity crept into a prisoner's psyche before he could fully comprehend the consequences of surrender. Former Olympian Karl Ritter von Halt fell into British hands in September 1918. For Halt, surrender represented an inglorious end to years of comradeship and honorable service. In the moments following capture, he found it difficult to cope and began to "cry like a small child" in front of his captors.[2] The strain of capture was noticeable to neutral observers as well. After observing a group of German prisoners at the Somme, American correspondent Frederick Palmer remarked that although the prisoners had perhaps fought with iron discipline minutes earlier, "now they were simply helpless, disheveled human beings."[3] Looking back on his surrender after war's end, Hermann Schmidt poetically remembered that soldiers had no idea what a new day might bring. In his case, Schmidt recalled, the day of his surrender ended with "shame, pain, and dishonor (*Schande, Schmerz und Schmach*)."[4]

Soldiers could fall into enemy hands as individuals, as members of a small group, or as part of an entire unit. For those who entered captivity with their fellow soldiers, the trauma of surrender was probably diminished by the knowledge that they were less likely to be accused of desertion or treason and would have numerous witnesses to attest to the circumstances of their capture. Yet, regardless of whether soldiers surrendered alone or with a group, a prisoner's initial contact with his captors further stripped away his previous identity as a courageous warrior. Both The Hague Convention of 1907 and the British *Field Service Regulations* of 1909 prohibited captors from seizing a prisoner's personal property.[5] Nonetheless, the British regularly plundered German prisoners behind the lines and further emasculated soldiers whose manhood had just been damaged by surrender. "Souvenir" hunts provided British troops with the opportunity to collect physical proof that they had seen action and withstood the test of war.[6] At the same time, souvenir hunts bolstered a captor's manhood by forcing the enemy to hand over intimate links to his former life. When captors robbed prisoners of military decorations, they deprived the former owners of the reverence associated with the commendations. For pillaged prisoners, the experience underscored the extent of their powerlessness.[7]

Attempting to establish the prevalence of souvenir hunts among British soldiers in the Great War's first battles is problematic. German officials alleged that British troops began robbing prisoners on a large scale in the war's opening months, but other evidence suggests that many German officers were treated with generosity after falling into British hands.[8] Regardless of when pillaging began, it seemed to become more common as the war continued. Rumors of abuses spread among troops on both sides of the lines, and German soldiers were sometimes particularly wary of falling into British hands. Before surrendering to the French in July 1916, Lt. Carl Kersting had the opportunity to give himself up to the British. Kersting believed the French to be chivalrous, but he had always heard *Gott strafe England* (God punish England) and assumed he would receive better treatment in France. Influenced by propaganda, he opted not to surrender to Germany's most hated enemy.[9]

According to German accounts, souvenir hunts increased significantly as the British encountered large numbers of prisoners in July 1916. Numerous Germans captured during the first days of the battle of the Somme reported that they were violently robbed following surrender, often in the presence of British officers. British troops reportedly took jewelry, military decorations, and photographs from Germans at the Somme,

and physical abuse and death threats often accompanied demands for prisoners' personal property. The British Foreign Office routinely denied allegations of theft and abuse, but postwar British reports confirm that high-ranking officials were familiar with the frequency of abusive souvenir hunts among British troops.[10]

Plunder was emasculating, but watching one's comrades murdered served as an even more acute reminder of the disempowerment of the transition from soldier to prisoner. Surrendering on any of the Great War's battlefields was dangerous, as soldiers had no guarantee that their enemies would accept a bid for surrender.[11] Prisoner killing was not uncommon on the western front, despite the fact that issuing a "take no prisoners" order was a violation of The Hague Convention. However, soldiers learned from experience that casually approaching potential prisoners could be a lethal mistake. It was thus essential to treat potential prisoners as combatants until they had been effectively disarmed and searched. Prisoner killing was the exception rather than the rule, and there is no evidence to suggest that the BEF, or any other army, preferred to kill potential prisoners rather than accepting surrenders.[12]

Nonetheless, prisoner killing took place more often than historians have traditionally acknowledged. German prisoners taken in July 1916 reported that prisoner killing was routine when the British stormed German positions. Prisoners who survived the encounter with their captors claimed that British troops often gunned down Germans who had exited their dugouts to surrender. At other times the British simply dropped grenades into pillboxes filled with Germans who had agreed to surrender without further resistance. In more isolated cases, British soldiers on the Somme allegedly participated in more calculated, personal murders. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that many prisoner killings took place in the "heat of the moment" when the preoccupation with self-preservation made it difficult to differentiate between a soldier attempting to surrender and his comrades who had opted to fight to the end.[13]

British accounts substantiate German claims that numerous atrocities transpired on the Somme. Prisoner killing continued throughout the war, and although there is no evidence that the British high command sanctioned prisoner killings, officials were responsible for allowing the development of a military culture that tolerated and accepted violence against unarmed prisoners of war.[14] The British tolerance of prisoner killings was regrettable, but the behavior of British soldiers in this regard was by no means exceptional—prisoner killing occurred in virtually all of the Great War's armies.[15] The shooting of prisoners was not uncommon in the moments following capture, but it is important to remember that an

overwhelming majority of the Germans who surrendered to the British successfully entered captivity. Nonetheless, British commanders tolerated the crimes committed by a marginal number of officers and soldiers and cultivated an atmosphere in which soldiers understood that they would likely escape punishment for crimes committed against the enemy. The British army's negligence in this regard greatly increased the likelihood that prisoners would suffer violence or death at the hands of their captors.[16]

Prisoner killing may not have been systematic, but the emasculation of plunder and the sense of helplessness associated with witnessing the murder of one's comrades compounded the shame of surrender for Germans captured by the British. Prisoners who survived the moment of capture faced a humiliating journey to staging areas away from the front. After clearing prisoners from the trenches, the BEF herded the men into divisional holding facilities before transferring them to enclosures, often consisting of barbed wire, farther to the rear. American frontiersmen developed barbed wire to enclose fields and maintain cattle, and being confined to a barbed-wire enclosure could have a dehumanizing effect.[17] Falling into enemy hands not only threatened a soldier's manhood; it endangered his sense of humanity. In an August 1916 conversation with a British counterpart, a newly captured German officer offered insight into how quickly a soldier's identity could shift following capture: "Yesterday I was a gentlemen, to-day I am a monkey behind iron bars."[18]

As prisoners destined for the UK moved away from the war zone, they left behind the identities they developed there as defenders of the front lines. Physical separation from the battlefield led to psychological detachment from everything the front represented: camaraderie, duty, and service. Prisoners carried their feelings of shame and emasculation across the English Channel, but upon arrival they discovered that the worst of their ordeal was behind them—at least in terms of physical abuses or hardships. Although the British plan for dealing with prisoners may have been piecemeal, the prison camps of the UK effectively evolved throughout the war and typically surpassed international standards for prisoner maintenance. Ultimately, the management of prisoners in the British Isles provided a stark contrast to the harsh treatment German prisoners sometimes experienced immediately following surrender.

Across the Channel: Early Camps and Administration

If not for the intervention of Sir John French, the army's commander in chief in 1914, the BEF's early prisoners may have never left continental Europe. The initial British plan for dealing with prisoners from the western

front entailed merely handing them over to French authorities. General French recognized that this arrangement violated The Hague Convention and would have prompted the retaliatory transfer of British prisoners to Germany's allies in Austria or Turkey. Furthermore, General French considered the proposed transfer a tactical error. He believed Germans were more likely to surrender to the BEF than French soldiers and would be less inclined to give themselves up if they expected to be handed over following capture.[19] The French army was willing to take responsibility for the BEF's prisoners, but after considering General French's objections, British officials opted to hold on to the BEF's captives.[20]

With the decision made to look after its own prisoners, the War Office needed a plan for their maintenance. British authorities had reason to proceed with caution. Their last experience with wartime internment, during the Boer War of 1899–1902, severely damaged Britain's international reputation and led to unrest on the home front. At least 25,000 Afrikaner civilians died in British "concentration camps" as a result of poor sanitation and overcrowding. The poor management of the camps in South Africa led to continued animosity after peace proceedings. British officials were thus aware that the mistreatment of internees could have lasting consequences and draw unwanted attention from the international community.[21] Nonetheless, in 1914 British officials were scarcely equipped to deal with even the small numbers of prisoners taken prior to the battle of the Somme. This is not to say that the military had not previously considered how prisoners might be handled in the event of a major European war. In 1906, an interdepartmental committee on the custody, maintenance, and treatment of prisoners of war drafted a confidential blueprint for prisoner management. It considered the suitability of various ports for landing prisoners on British soil and delegated responsibility for transportation and care among various branches of the armed forces. With an eye toward maintaining discipline, it also established standing orders for prisoners interned in the UK. Although the committee's guidelines predated The Hague Convention of 1907, its work bore remarkable similarities to the agreement.[22]

During the war's first two years, the BEF shipped all prisoners captured on the western front to facilities in the UK, where they joined naval prisoners taken at sea. After being moved to the rear, undergoing interrogation, and receiving medical attention, the first German prisoners captured on the western front departed from port cities like St. Nazaire and Le Havre in France. As they awaited transfer, some prisoners remained convinced that they would never succeed in crossing the English Channel. When

Barclay Baron attempted to comfort a wounded German in November 1914, the prisoner recoiled in horror at any attempt to switch on the lights. Baron later learned that the prisoner's superiors had convinced him that the British routinely murdered captives. The wounded German was sure that medical staffers only wanted to turn on the lights in order to cut his throat. Although certain British officers enjoyed harassing Germans as they awaited transport, Baron reported that medics assigned to prisoner ships generally cared for their patients with diligence and compassion.[23] Both wounded and healthy prisoners usually arrived at the southern port of Southampton after less than two days at sea.[24] In France and Germany, civilians often greeted enemy prisoners of war with frenzied excitement that sometimes erupted into violence.[25] Similar incidents occurred in Britain, but in general civilians there seemed rather indifferent to the German prisoners' arrival.

When Lt. Eduard R. landed in England in September 1914, the public "took absolutely no notice" of his group and left them in peace.[26] Civilians derided, spat upon, and threw horse feces at Paul L. of the Twenty-Second Reserve Pioneer Battalion as his prisoner convoy passed through Belgium. However, the civilians he encountered in England treated him with respect and left him unmolested.[27] German prisoners occasionally received an unexpectedly warm welcome to the UK. W. P. B. Spencer, who had family ties to Germany, was a cadet at the Royal Military College in Camberley when approximately 2,200 German soldiers and civilians arrived in Surrey. Not content to leave the prisoners to themselves, Spencer spent a day with the captives and enjoyed himself so thoroughly that he promised "to go over to Berlin after the war and drink a bottle of lager with them." Although Spencer noticed that the prisoners were unkempt from their journey to England, he concluded that they were "a gentlemanly lot on the whole."[28] Spencer's benevolent curiosity in prisoners is especially noteworthy when one considers that by late August 1914, isolated attacks on German property had occurred in several English towns and cities.[29]

The task of officially documenting the prisoners' arrival in the UK fell to the Prisoners of War Information Bureau (PWIB). Article XIV of The Hague Convention required belligerents to establish a bureau for processing inquiries regarding enemy prisoners. The British set up the PWIB in August 1914 under the direction of Sir Paul Harvey, chief auditor of the National Insurance Department. Harvey's staff initially consisted of fewer than fifteen employees, most of whom he borrowed from existing government agencies.[30] The PWIB maintained lists of combatants held in the British Empire and documented the condition of wounded prisoners.

The agency's most important functions were responding to inquiries from individuals and aid associations and forwarding parcels and correspondence to prisoners whose exact location was unknown.[31] Processing mail could be an especially time-consuming task. Even in the early days of the war, the PWIB processed as many as 400 inquiries per day.[32]

The War Office also founded its prisoner affairs branch, the Directorate of Prisoners of War (DPW), in the war's opening months. Under Lt. Gen. H. E. Belfield, the DPW maintained and controlled all military prisoners in British custody, regardless of their location. It operated a separate division that attended to British prisoners in enemy hands. At the outset of the war the DPW determined which civilian aliens required internment, but by May 1915 the Home Office had taken up oversight of enemy civilians. The War Office, then, dealt primarily with military prisoners and issued all orders pertaining to their treatment. Accordingly, War Office officials set up and managed the facilities that German prisoners in the UK would call home.[33]

Like other belligerents, the British had no existing mechanism for managing prisoners when war broke out in August 1914. The Hague Convention charged governments with the maintenance of prisoners in their possession and mandated that captors treat prisoners humanely. Belligerents were to intern prisoners in a "town, fortress, camp, or other place," but the laws of war provided few further specifics.[34] The guidelines developed by the Interdepartmental Committee in 1906, which do not appear to have been closely consulted, were equally vague. Since the BEF and Royal Navy took relatively few prisoners in the first year of the war, it was easier to accommodate the military prisoners that arrived after early confrontations at sea and on the western front.

In the absence of a concrete plan, the British divided prisoners by rank and nationality and with few exceptions kept army and naval prisoners in the same camps. Whereas combatant prisoners and civilian internees were eventually held in separate locations, enlisted men and civilians often occupied the same spaces early on, including empty military barracks, large factories, and passenger ships.[35] The laws of war permitted captors to draft prisoners, excluding officers, into the labor force under the condition that workers were safely removed from the front and not employed in armaments production. British officials did not take advantage of this stipulation until 1916. The War Office's reluctance to employ prisoners of war in the UK was a result of the labor unions' defiant opposition to the use of prisoner labor.[36] In the first years of the war, prisoners resided in larger facilities and generally had no specific responsibilities outside the camp.[37]

Postcard showing prisoners marching from Frimley Station to the prisoner of war camp at Frith Hill, Surrey. Original in author's personal collection.

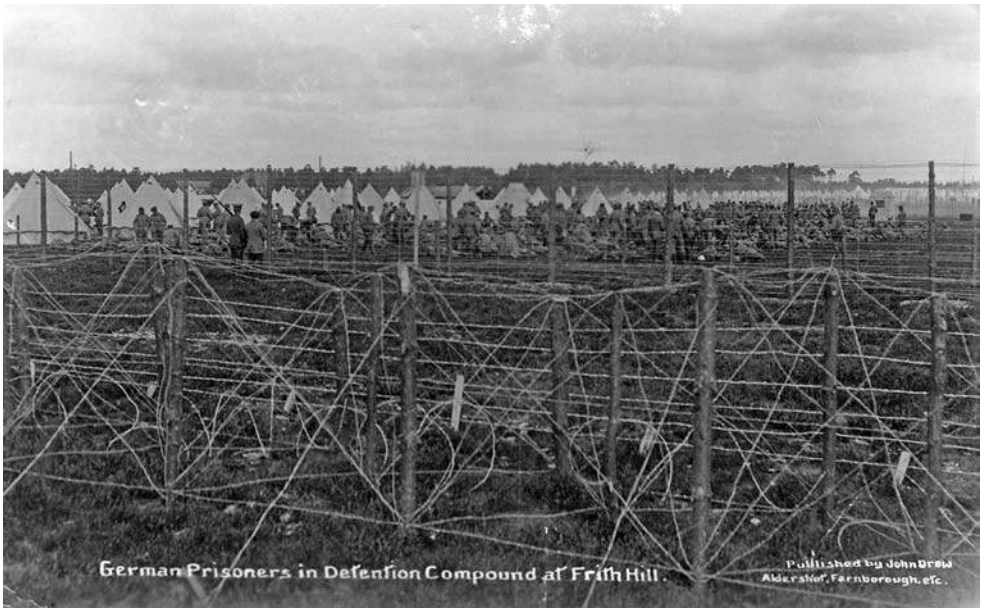
Camps were always under the authority of a commandant, and while a facility's needs depended largely on its size, the staff usually consisted of an interpreter, a medical officer, a quartermaster, an adjunct, and a cadre of civilian employees.[38] Despite the War Office's early efforts at prisoner management and the restraint displayed by British civilians, German allegations of prisoner mistreatment in Britain were numerous. The American ambassador in Berlin, James W. Gerard, consequently arranged for one of his representatives to inspect the camps of the UK. He chose John B. Jackson, a former American minister in the Balkan States and secretary in the Berlin embassy, for the task.[39] By early 1915, Jackson and other American representatives routinely visited and reported on conditions in prisoner of war camps in both the UK and Germany.[40]

The first permanent quarters for enlisted men materialized in an army camp in Dorchester that was capable of housing 2,500 civilian and combatant prisoners.[41] Jackson visited Dorchester in early 1915 to discover that the camp had been cleared of civilians and held approximately 900 soldiers.[42] A converted army installation, Dorchester was a logical site for a prisoner of war camp. Another early camp at Leigh in Lancashire, however, demonstrated the improvisational nature of other preliminary

facilities. At Leigh, more than 1,700 military prisoners occupied an unused factory divided into six sleeping quarters where prisoners slept on straw mattresses with three blankets each. Up to 500 prisoners shared access to clean toilets and showers with hot and cold water. Electric lighting illuminated the facility, and more than twenty cooks prepared meals in the camp kitchen. As early as January 1915, Leigh's prisoners worked in recreational garden plots and studied in a library of 2,000 German and English volumes. In addition, prisoners participated in choral ensembles and a variety of academic and technical courses taught by members of the camp population.[43]

Among other locations, the War Office established similar camps at Handforth in Cheshire, Frith Hill in Frimley, Frongoch in North Wales, Shrewsbury in Abbey Wood, and Stobs in Hawick, Scotland, in 1914–15. The War Office also interned civilian and military prisoners on passenger ships beginning in December 1914 but halted the practice because of sanitation concerns and the financial strain of confining men on vessels needed elsewhere. Regional circumstances gave each camp a unique atmosphere, but as a general rule, prisoners found similar accommodations and restrictions regardless of their place of internment. The British divided larger camps for enlisted men into compounds of approximately 1,200 prisoners and allowed German noncommissioned officers to maintain discipline among the men. Local military authorities supplied camp guards, yet the War Office provided no regulations for prisoner oversight. Camp commandants therefore enjoyed some latitude in the administration of their facilities.[44]

Although prisoners benefitted from some independence in camp governance, two standard six-feet-high rows of barbed wire separated by ten feet of coiled or loose wire made it difficult to forget that they were in enemy hands. From a psychological standpoint, the barbed wire had a profound effect on the prisoners' mental health, as will later be discussed in detail. Guard posts, an additional wire fence, and lamps marked the boundaries beyond which prisoners were not allowed to pass without explicit permission. Inside camps, authorities expected captives to obey standing orders designed to prevent disturbances and escapes.[45] Since common soldiers received no pay and initially had no opportunity to work in the UK, they depended on their captors for food and clothing. In accordance with The Hague Convention, the British offered early prisoners a "liberal scale of rations" and issued clothing and toiletries to those in need of assistance. Large camps included hospitals capable of handling routine



Postcard of the Frith Hill prisoner of war camp with a clear view of standard barbed-wire enclosures. Original in author's personal collection.

and emergency cases, and the number of beds at a given time equaled approximately 2 percent of the camp population.[46] Prisoners often had access to athletic facilities, educational opportunities, and a variety of other cultural activities.[47]

As was the case in camps set up by most of the Great War's belligerents, enlisted soldiers had little contact with officers who shared their fate as prisoners. The British reputation for relying on class as an organizational principle is renowned. In this instance, the separation of officers and enlisted men corresponded with the stipulations of The Hague Convention, which required that captors provide lodgings equal to those for men of the same rank in their own armies.[48] Upon arrival in Southampton, officers underwent processing at Bevois Mount while enlisted soldiers registered at Shirley Rink, a large wooden-floored skating facility. With common soldiers in larger camps, the War Office housed officer prisoners in "country houses or houses supplemented by huts or tents" and provided orderlies from the ranks of enlisted prisoners. When not granted private quarters, senior men of rank shared accommodations with a small contingent of fellow officers. Article 17 of The Hague Convention ensured that

officers continued to receive a salary equal to that of officers in the army by which they had been captured. The War Office paid German officers half the rate earned by their British equals until it became clear that the Germans would observe Article 17 as well.

In addition to recognizing officer privileges, Britain and Germany reached an agreement that separated ensigns and noncommissioned officers from enlisted prisoners and granted them the rights afforded to officers. This measure kept future officers or men of special status clear of situations that might "lower them in the eyes of those who [would] subsequently be their subordinates."[49] The agreement protected cadets from transfer to "uncivilized countries" as well as involvement in activities unbefitting men of their status.[50] Officials at the DPW considered recognizing another class of combatant prisoners who, while not officers, were capable of paying for higher quality food and accommodations.[51] These higher quality camps for military prisoners never materialized, but when considered alongside the special handling of prospective officers, it becomes clear that social standing could significantly impact a prisoner's experience in the UK.

The War Office founded one of the earliest officers' camps at Dyffryn Aled in Wales.[52] When the camp began operations in September 1914, its guests were unimpressed with their lodgings. A year after the camp's opening, the senior German officer complained to the American Embassy that the structure had been in total disrepair upon his arrival. An old country home, Dyffryn Aled had to be fitted with closets, a water supply, and gas lines with the first prisoners already in residence. The camp's staff saw to the most urgent repairs within several months, but problems stemming from a leaky roof, rotting floorboards, and serious draughts plagued the camp throughout its first year.[53] Nonetheless, in June 1915 twenty-nine servants looked after sixty-nine officers at the country-home-turned-prisoner-of-war-camp.[54] Since officers continued to receive salaries, the British required that they purchase food and supplies.[55] As was usually the case at officers' camps, officers at Dyffryn Aled oversaw the preparation of menus of their choosing.

When John B. Jackson visited the site as part of a thirteen-camp inspection tour in February 1915, he found little cause for concern and concluded that as a general rule, the British were treating prisoners "as good as could be expected under the present circumstances."[56] On the same tour, Jackson inspected the most famous British camp for German officers, Donington Hall in Derby. Opened in February 1915, the castle

at Donington Hall held only twenty officers and a few civilians during Jackson's inaugural visit.[57] By the time a second American representative, William H. Buckler, inspected the camp in August of the same year, its population had expanded to 118 officers and 40 orderlies. An ancestral castle with a "magnificent view,"[58] Donington Hall was considered one of the best camps in the UK, and it held a number of high-profile prisoners, including the infamous spy Franz von Rintelen.[59] The estate had been uninhabited for years, and the War Office spent thousands of pounds on furnishings, drainage repairs, and the installation of an additional boiler.[60] Situated on 1,000 acres of parkland, Donington Hall offered ample opportunities for tennis, soccer, and hockey. Although German newspapers and war-related materials were forbidden, officers also spent their time reading British periodicals and books donated by charitable organizations.[61]

Prisoners at Donington Hall sometimes secured private quarters. Others shared rooms measuring thirty-five by twenty-four feet with up to thirteen other officers. The War Office supplied a wardrobe and washstand for every two prisoners, and officers had access to a hospital, a large kitchen, a canteen, exercise yards, and arts and crafts. In short, officers at Donington Hall enjoyed many of the luxuries they were accustomed to in Germany. Aside from three daily meals, prisoners chose from a wide selection of items at the camp canteen. Buckler's August 1915 inspection report revealed that the canteen stocked numerous brands of tobacco, toiletries, and vanity items like cologne, lanolin lotion, pumice stones, and manicure tools. Finally, officers supplemented their meals with condiments, cheeses, and eight varieties of chocolate.[62]

Not all Britons appreciated the effort, or money, required to transform Donington Hall into a respectable officers' camp. Many politicians believed the estate's accommodations were extravagant and complained that the War Office coddled German officers while British prisoners made due with far less in Germany. Public anger over the amenities at Donington Hall even spawned a satirical Tom Wootwell skit on spoiled prisoners and a Leslie Elliott tune titled "Dear Old Donington Hall."[63] During parliamentary discussions on camp expenditures, Representative M. Hogge asked how many country estates the War Office planned to "rebuild for the comfort of the German prisoners." His colleague, Representative W. Thorne, was greeted with a chorus of laughter when he sarcastically asked if as a consequence of the hospitality extended to the officers, "any of those gentlemen will ever want to go back to Germany again."[64]

Postcard image of the officers' camp at Donington Hall in Derby. Original in author's personal collection.

Allegations that the War Office coddled prisoners at Donington Hall were almost certainly overstated. One of the castle's Austrian prisoners, Konstantin Maglic, remembered that the landscape surrounding the estate was magnificent, but the junior officers' quarters were so poorly heated that water in washbasins froze solid on cold nights.[65] Lt. Karl Spindler was captured at sea while attempting to supply the Irishman Roger Casement with weapons for the Easter rebellion of 1916. Following his release, Spindler wrote that Donington Hall "deserved the name 'Castle' only when regarded from a distance." The interior, he recalled, was more like a "tenement."[66] Furthermore, even though the canteen was well stocked, purchasing luxury items required funds that officers did not always have at their disposal. In rare cases, German officers were even forced to appeal to British acquaintances for financial support.

On numerous occasions, Officer Otto V. of the Seventh German Field Artillery Regiment asked a British family, the Wardles, to lend financial assistance.[67] Otto V.'s father owned a German dye works and had befriended the Wardle family during prewar business ventures with Joshua Wardle & Sons in Leek. Wardle felt obligated to assist his friend's son, but he understood the need for caution. When Wardle sent the requested funds to Donington Hall, he assured the commandant of his "hope that we are not doing anything against your wishes."[68] Otto V.'s financial difficulties were embarrassing for the officer, and he promised to repay the loans with

interest.[69] Wardle seemed more concerned with maintaining his image as a patriotic Briton than securing repayment. Following the fulfillment of a request for funds, Wardle explained his financial generosity to Donington Hall's commandant with the following: "Although I'm British to the backbone & condemn the actions Germany [*sic*] at War. I cannot forget the kindness I have received from his father. I of course wish to do nothing which in your eyes is disloyal to my country."[70] The commandant did not question Wardle's loyalty, but he informed him that Otto V. spent more money than "almost any other prisoner" at Donington Hall. Therefore, the commandant did not think it would be necessary to send further remittance for the time being.[71]

Otto V.'s relationship with the Wardle family offers insight into the complexities of the Anglo-German rivalry. Wardle was careful not to aid the prisoner in any way that might be considered disloyal or treasonous, but he remained willing to assist a German acquaintance despite the antagonism between England and Germany. Even with British troops dying at the front, the pervasive anti-German sentiments that gripped wartime Britain could not sway Wardle's loyalty to an old friend. Although many Britons may have questioned Wardle's willingness to aid a captured enemy, average citizens showed restraint and did not allow anti-German sentiments to affect prisoner treatment.[72] In a telling November 1914 letter, British pastor I. H. Oldham assured a German minister that even if Britons felt a sense of "bitterness" against the Germans, authorities were making every effort to ensure that German prisoners were treated well. England, Oldham professed, felt that it was "fighting in the interests of humanity" and would do nothing to open the nation to "criticism from the civilized world."[73] There were significant outbreaks of anti-German violence in 1914–15, but as Oldham suggested, the British seemed determined not to allow emotions to interfere with impartial prisoner treatment.

In the first years of the conflict, the War Office likewise demonstrated a commitment to looking beyond resentment for the enemy and providing prisoners with a level of care that usually exceeded international standards. Anglo-German hostility was not imagined, but it seems to have had little negative impact on the handling of early German prisoners. The War Office struggled with the lack of ideal facilities for prisoners, but camp visitors generally agreed that British authorities treated their German guests as well as circumstances allowed.[74]

Perhaps nothing better demonstrates this point than the British treatment of captured submariners. In February 1915, Germany declared the waters off the British Isles military zones. By September of the same year

German submarines had sunk nearly 800,000 tons of shipping. Although shipping losses never threatened to knock Britain out of the war, Britons viewed submariners with particular disdain owing to the civilian casualties that accompanied the sinking of merchant vessels.[75] In March 1915, British destroyers sank two German submarines, the *U-8* and *U-12*, in separate engagements and rescued approximately thirty-nine sailors from the floundering vessels. Rather than sending the submariners to join the more than 1,000 naval prisoners already in the UK, Winston Churchill's Admiralty detained the crews at the Chatham and Devonport detention barracks.[76] British officials justified the special detentions by declaring submariners unfit to "mingle with other prisoners of war" on account of the dishonorable crimes they had allegedly committed against merchantmen and civilians. The Admiralty planned to prosecute the submariners at war's end and maintained that they would be held under special restrictions until legal proceedings commenced.[77] However, while they awaited trial, the submariners—who were commonly viewed as murderers, war criminals, and pirates—were granted suitable lodgings and provisions similar to those found in other British camps.

At Chatham, the British lodged submariners in eight-by-thirteen-foot rooms with ample ventilation, and recreation facilities were located on site. Edward G. Lowry of the American Embassy in London inspected the barracks in May 1915. The quarters were originally constructed to hold British sailors guilty of disciplinary infractions, and Lowry considered the lodgings to be comfortable. He noted that although the prisoners had few complaints, they resented the fact that the facility was designed to house criminals.[78] The Admiralty did indeed consider submariners war criminals, but the prisoners were confused by their treatment. The *U-8*'s commanding officer, Lt. Cdr. Alfred S., insisted that his men had fought an "honourable battle up to the end in accordance with the orders of His Majesty, the German Kaiser." He complained that his crew's lodgings were an insult to the honor of servicemen who had simply followed orders and had not been provided even a preliminary trial.[79]

Germany fully supported its submariners and threatened to imprison one British officer for every submariner detained in detention barracks.[80] The British responded by declaring that German reprisals would result in British vessels no longer rescuing submarine crews.[81] As promised, the Admiralty's failure to transfer the submarine crews to prisoner of war camps prompted German officials to place a number of British prisoners under "officers arrest."[82] When the British imprisoned the crew of an additional vessel, the *U-14*, the number of men under special arrest in

Germany climbed correspondingly higher. In the end, German reprisals achieved the desired effect. In June 1915 the British Foreign Office announced that the Admiralty would henceforth hold submariners under the same conditions as other prisoners and quickly scattered the crews among several camps.[83] The transfers were not the result of any new respect for the tactics the submariners employed but rather the realization that holding submariners as criminals was not justifiable if British officers suffered as a result.

Although submariners saw imprisonment as an insult to their honor as fighting men, their handling provides further evidence of Britain's ability to treat its most hated enemies with humanity. The crews of the *U-8* and *U-12* complained bitterly of the injuries to their pride and honor, but they made no accusations of abuse or neglect. The quality of care provided to the most detested men in British hands exceeded international standards. In view of the favorable conditions in the camps of the UK, a postwar German report concluded that notwithstanding the restriction of individual freedoms and the mental pressures of life in captivity, the experience was at least bearable for the German prisoners of the British during the war's first two years.[84] Initial plans for accommodating prisoners in the UK were far from perfect, but British authorities made the most of available resources and managed to provide prisoners with a comfortable standard of living. As the war progressed, labor concerns and a growing prisoner population posed new challenges that would alter the structure of the camp system for prisoners who found themselves in the UK after spring 1916.

Captivity Reconsidered: 1916 and Beyond

In early 1916 the British began preparations to fell timber and quarry stone in France in order to limit shipments of materials across the English Channel. As a result, the War Office reevaluated its position on prisoner labor and decided to employ German prisoners at work sites on the Continent. Gen. Douglas Haig, who replaced John French as the BEF's commander in chief in December 1915, had reservations about using prisoners as a labor source.[85] Although the German army began employing prisoners on the western front in 1915, it relied exclusively on Russian prisoners of war and enlisted no British captives in its labor companies until spring 1917.[86] The British use of German labor, then, could potentially lead to the employment of British prisoners behind the lines. Additionally, Haig held the opinion that prisoners had little incentive to perform their tasks

efficiently and were more likely to escape work sites than proper camps. As the British labor shortage deepened, however, Secretary of State for War Horatio Herbert Kitchener persuaded Haig to make use of prisoners in France on an experimental basis.[87]

The first German prisoners to work for the BEF left the UK for France in April 1916. At the same time, the British sent additional prisoners to the Continent to work under French supervision in the northern ports of Le Havre and Rouen.[88] Prisoners found this arrangement puzzling and reasoned that having been captured by the BEF, they should only answer to British authorities.[89] The prospect of having prisoners of the British work under French supervision seemed little better than earlier schemes for handing prisoners over outright, and the move prompted the Germans to send British prisoners to reprisal camps on the eastern front.[90] Consequently, the British soon assumed direct control of their working prisoners in France.

The experimental labor groups sent to France in April 1916 proved invaluable to the British war effort, and German prisoners accounted for more than 40 percent of the BEF's labor supply by the war's conclusion.[91] As thousands of German soldiers surrendered to the BEF during the battle of the Somme, the British abandoned the practice of transporting all prisoners to the UK and began holding the majority in working camps in France. This decision appears to have been part of a larger labor strategy. In summer 1916 the War Office also agreed to employ thousands of Chinese laborers in France, and by August 1916 the British had implemented a recruiting scheme in China.[92] Following capture, German prisoners generally transitioned into the workforce swiftly. In one case, a British officer recalled that a group of Germans was busy with roadwork only three days after capture.[93] Officers, who were prohibited from working, and the seriously wounded comprised the better part of the prisoners sent to the UK after summer 1916.[94]

The use of foreign and prisoner labor on the western front was not the only experimental measure tested in 1916. In the spring, the War Office began assembling prisoners "who although captured as enemies, belonged to the races whose national aspirations could be fulfilled only by the victory of the Allies."[95] At a special "friendly" camp at Feltham in Middlesex, captured Alsatians, Schleswig-Holsteins, Czechs, and Poles were free to express their political aspirations without fear of reprisal. Of the UK camps founded after the war's first year, Feltham was the only facility where civilian prisoners consistently lived alongside combatants.[96] Many prisoners feared that relatives in Germany might suffer as a result of their

treasonous transfer to Feltham, and the British made a concerted effort to keep the camp's friendly status secret. American attaché Boylston A. Beal inspected Feltham only six weeks after the camp's opening, and his report suggests that he had no knowledge of its special standing. Beal's write up, which the Americans forwarded to the German Foreign Office, made no mention of Feltham's purpose and revealed only that a majority of the camp's inhabitants were Roman Catholic.[97]

The Feltham experiment was largely successful. Only months after the camp's opening, the War Office went a step further and began to transfer Alsatians and Lorrainers, at their request, to France. Eventually, the British handed over German prisoners from Alsace and Lorraine without even documenting the prisoners' capture. The French likewise sought the transfer from the UK of "prisoners of true Polish national sentiment" to contribute to the formation of a Polish brigade to fight on the western front under French command.[98] The War Office initially declined to provide Polish prisoners for the scheme, but late in the war the British agreed to assemble prospects for enlistment at Feltham. In exchange for their willingness to join the Polish brigade or a similar unit, prisoners regained their freedom.[99]

The War Office was sometimes overzealous in its efforts to recruit prisoners into the friendly population. Some prisoners vigorously protested their transfer to Feltham, insisting that they were nothing but German and could not relate to the camp's sentiments. Prisoner Johann P., for example, implored the Swiss Legation to halt his transfer on the grounds that he had "not the slightest sympathies with Polish ideas" and had been born in Germany to German parents.[100] His resistance to moving to Feltham was not unique, and it revealed that the camp's disposition was not as confidential as its inhabitants, or British authorities, may have liked. German military officials ultimately became aware of the subversive activities at Feltham, making a prisoner's association with the camp a liability for his family in Germany.[101]

Notwithstanding Feltham's sympathies with the Allied cause, the British subjected the prisoners there to the same regulations as other prisoners in the UK.[102] Following the successful use of prisoner labor on the Continent, those regulations increasingly included compulsory employment. Preliminary requests for prisoner labor in the UK surpassed the number of men available for work, but the British hesitated to make use of prisoners on a large scale away from the front. By September 1916, the War Office had assembled an advisory committee to discuss how prisoners might be used in the UK. Officials later decided to integrate prisoners

into the national economy, resulting in the December 1916 establishment of a Prisoners of War Employment Committee (PWEC) to review labor requests.[103] The PWEC consisted of representatives from the War Office, Home Office, Ministry of National Service, Ministry of Munitions, and Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. Even after the PWEC's foundation, the British employed German prisoners quite sparingly, using them only after other labor sources had been depleted.[104]

In March 1917 approximately 7,000 military prisoners worked in the UK, but a multitude of British agencies eventually made use of more than 65,000 military prisoners in land reclamation, quarrying, construction, forestry, agriculture, and more specialized tasks.[105] Laborers came from the lower ranks of the German armed forces, as even noncommissioned officers could only be put to work as volunteers. Working prisoners earned wages and put in the same number of hours as Britons employed in similar tasks. They received one day of rest per week, and a new scale adopted in February 1917 offered increased rations to offset the calories laborers expended.[106]

A growing prisoner workforce required the British to restructure the camp system to accommodate labor parties who could not return to one of the larger established camps on a regular basis. The War Office set up numerous working camps that often held fewer than 200 prisoners and later employed migratory gangs of ten prisoners to assist farmers with the harvest. To a lesser extent, private employers took on the responsibility of maintaining groups of fewer than three prisoners. Working camps and migratory gangs were generally affiliated with one of the larger permanent facilities known as "parent" camps.[107] Roughly ten parent camps (Handforth, Blandford, Dorchester, Leigh, Frongoch, Pattishall, Brocton, Catterick, Shrewsbury, and Stobs) indirectly managed hundreds of working camps scattered across the UK.[108] This arrangement could strain the resources available to parent camps, which were responsible for processing mail and parcels intended for men in affiliated work camps. At times, a single parent camp oversaw more than 160 work camps and thousands of prisoners. Dorchester, for example, carried tens of thousands of prisoners on paper, although the facility was capable of accommodating only 3,800 men.[109]

Even so, the War Office maintained a working environment in parent camps and satellites that exceeded expectations. In September 1916 the parent camp at Leigh held fewer prisoners than it had the previous year, but the camp's staff supervised an additional 475 working prisoners outside its boundaries. Despite housing fewer men, Leigh offered separate living

quarters to noncommissioned officers and had expanded to seven dormitories that included bathing and laundry facilities and accommodated several barbers. American inspectors found the camp's accommodations to be clean and well kept, noting that prisoners bathed and did laundry at least once a week. Physicians looked after prisoners at a hospital located on the grounds, and British and German dentists were available if needed. As part of the British labor scheme, prisoners at Leigh worked as bookbinders, bricklayers, carpenters, butchers, and tailors. With funds earned or received from relatives, prisoners could purchase "practically anything except alcoholic beverages" from the canteen at the same rates offered to British soldiers.[110]

Dorchester, the first of the British camps, underwent significant changes as the war progressed. By June 1916 Dorchester's population had nearly doubled, and a majority of its prisoners busied themselves making mailbags, digging drains, and constructing roads or huts. Private firms employed other prisoners at sawmills, sewerage farms, gas works, and coal stations. Inspectors acknowledged the camp's healthy atmosphere and suggested that its prisoners benefited greatly from the work they performed. If prisoners sought more physical activity, Dorchester included nine acres of recreational fields and a small gymnasium. Just as at Leigh, prisoners could purchase goods from a camp canteen and received a standard ration that included eight ounces of meat and a selection of vegetables, coffee, condensed milk, and bread.[111]

The work sites associated with parent camps like Leigh and Dorchester generally lacked expansive facilities, but satellite camps operated according to the same high standards as larger camps. In the absence of on-site medical services, local British physicians cared for prisoners employed in their region.[112] With prisoners earning wages for their labor, working camps with suitably large populations operated canteens as well.[113] One of Leigh's dependents, Harperly, was typical of many satellite camps. Harperly consisted of well-insulated heated dormitories with wooden floors, asbestos lined walls, and tarred felt roofs. Prisoners shared sleeping quarters with twenty-seven other men, each man having been issued a straw mattress and four blankets to protect him from the winter cold. Harperly's prisoners worked principally in stone quarrying and received extra rations for their labor. Cooks prepared meals in the kitchen's two roasting ovens, and the camp included spaces for recreation and regular religious services.[114]

At another work camp, Henbury near Bristol, 400 prisoners occupied ten dormitories similar to those at Harperly. The latrines, drying

rooms, and showers at Henbury were reportedly "all very well-built and arranged," and inspectors approved of the camp's adequate water supply and drainage. In the absence of a proper dining hall, prisoners took meals in their dormitories. When the United States severed diplomatic relations with Germany in February 1917, representatives of the Swiss Legation in London assumed responsibility for neutral camp inspections. The Swiss inspector who visited Henbury in May 1917 concluded that the camp, "as far as situation, drainage, water supply, housing, etc. are concerned, is all that could be wished."[115]

Prisoners in both parent and satellite work camps nonetheless faced increased hardship when shipping losses to German submarines prompted a reconfiguration of the ration scale. The modified scale guaranteed working prisoners only what was "absolutely necessary" and required that unemployed prisoners live at a level of "bare subsistence." By March 1918 British authorities regularly substituted beef with horseflesh, "Chinese bacon," or pickled herring, but prisoners generally suffered no worse than the average British citizen.[116] Even under these circumstances, prisoners in the UK were better nourished than millions of German civilians who felt the impact of the British naval blockade only months after the war began and survived on a diet of 700–900 calories per day during the winter of 1916–17.[117]

As a general rule, neutral inspectors agreed that the British treated prisoners in parent camps and their satellites well. Still, there were occasional allegations of abuse, and certain commandants were known for demanding strict discipline. Lt. Col. Sir Arthur Grant of camp Brocton in Staffordshire was the most notorious commandant in the UK. Several prisoners accused Grant of slapping, punching, and verbally abusing the men in his charge, and he does not appear to have held his prisoners in the highest esteem. When asked to compile a short history of Brocton, Grant felt compelled to include some generalizations of the prisoners who passed through the camp: "The German has a liking for lewd photographs which when found have been destroyed. I have found him a good and hard worker but without much sense of shame or honor. He will pilfer from his comrades with the thoroughness of an English soldier playing football. He will always lie if he thinks he can gain anything by it. He will give away his comrades even to the British authorities, for a few cigarettes or a loaf of bread. On the other hand, in the mass, he is well conducted and obliging, giving very little trouble, realising as he does that every care has been taken to treat him reasonably and humanely."[118]

Rumors of Grant's abuses prompted a British investigation into his disciplinary techniques. Rather than confirming the commandant's guilt, the

resulting report cited prisoner insubordination as the basis for his harsh tactics and cleared him of any wrongdoing.[119] Swiss representatives visited Brocton in August 1918 and acknowledged that Grant was a "strict disciplinarian." However, they maintained that Brocton was one of the best prisoner of war camps and concluded that its staff treated prisoners favorably.[120]

British and Swiss investigations into Grant's alleged abuses indicated that the charges against the commandant were exaggerated, but his comments on the men in his custody suggest that he viewed Brocton's prisoners with disdain. As far as many prisoners were concerned, Grant represented the worst of what the British camp system had to offer. Nevertheless, according to both his own assessment and that of neutral inspectors, Grant and his staff treated prisoners well. Although there has been no in-depth study of working conditions or violence against working prisoners of the British held in France, former German members of British labor companies sometimes complained of harsh treatment on the Continent.[121] Recent scholarship has likewise shown that the Germans and French often exposed their labor companies to dangerous working conditions and violently mistreated prisoners.[122] If Grant's strict, sometimes callous, discipline represented the worst that the UK's camps had to offer, then it is safe to assume that the English Channel acted as a barrier to the violent atmosphere of the front and made conditions and treatment in the UK preferable to those on the Continent.

The distinction between working camps at the front and in the UK was of little consequence to German officers protected from being drafted into the workforce by international law. The utilization of prisoner labor did not significantly affect life inside the officer camps of the UK. Yet much like common prisoners, officers suffered as a result of British shipping losses to German submarines. Whereas enlisted prisoners relied primarily on their captors for rations, officers prepared menus based on supplies from privately managed canteens. As food and indulgences like tobacco became scarce in 1917, the British placed tighter restrictions on the variety of items available to officers.[123]

For prisoners in transit from the western front to the UK, tobacco shortages were only the beginning of the problems posed by unrestricted submarine warfare. Days after surrendering at Arras in April 1917, Reserve Lt. W. M. of the Twenty-Fifth Bavarian Infantry Regiment boarded the HMS *Lanfranc* in Le Havre. As the *Lanfranc* headed for Southampton carrying wounded British soldiers and 167 prisoners, a German torpedo struck the engine room and sank the vessel. W. M. survived his experience

with friendly fire, but not all of the prisoners aboard the *Lanfranc*, many of whom were already severely wounded, fared as well.[124]

It was not unheard of for officers who made it safely across the English Channel after July 1916 to encounter camps filled to near capacity. Donington Hall, for example, held around twenty German officers in February 1915. In October of the following year, more than 385 men crowded the same facility.[125] With prisoner numbers multiplying, the War Office supplemented estates like Donington Hall with ordinary huts similar to those used for accommodating enlisted soldiers.[126] Overcrowding was the chief complaint issued by Donington Hall's prisoners in summer 1917. A Swiss inspector who visited the castle on several occasions agreed that its living quarters were "somewhat too small for so many."[127] Even as captives, officers at Donington Hall and elsewhere considered it beneath their dignity to share accommodations with numerous men or to sleep in wooden huts no better than those offered to common soldiers.[128] Quarters were almost certainly cramped at Donington Hall, but British estimates placed the camp's capacity at more than 400 officers and 121 servants, so officers' complaints likely stemmed from their belief that the scarcity of personal space was an affront to their status.[129] Apparently, the British were not alone in their obsession with the preservation of class privileges.

Although many officers were frustrated with their close quarters, by spring 1916 the British had already negotiated an agreement that had the potential to reduce the number of prisoners held in the UK. Using an existing Franco-German accord as a template and working through American representatives, the British Foreign Office expressed interest in the mutual transfer of wounded and invalided prisoners to neutral Switzerland.[130] Britain and Germany had negotiated a treaty in January 1915 for the direct repatriation of prisoners whose injuries made further military or administrative service impossible, but the requirements for release were stringent.[131] Following months of discussions, German and British representatives agreed in March 1916 to relocate prisoners suffering from an extensive list of maladies, including deafness, syphilis, limb loss, and afflictions of the nervous system, to Switzerland.[132] Although the agreement applied to German prisoners of the British held in both France and the UK, those selected for transfer came almost exclusively from the latter location. Because the British removed wounded captives from the Continent, few eligible prisoners remained in France.

In order to secure transfer, German prisoners went before a traveling review board of Swiss physicians and British medical officers. Prisoners selected for consideration underwent an additional inspection by a control

board that held final authority to approve or reject candidates. The Swiss interned selected prisoners in the name of captor nations and could release individuals only in consultation with those powers. Since German prisoners in Switzerland were considered invalids, the Swiss Medical Service governed their lives there.[133] Invalided Germans found accommodation in Switzerland's Vierwaldstättersee region, and German prisoners with lung ailments recovered at Davos im Bündnerland. The prisoners' home governments covered expenses associated with maintenance and lodgings, which usually took the form of hotel rooms or pensions.[134] Prisoners in Switzerland enjoyed significantly more freedom than the War Office allowed in the UK. The Swiss employed no guard details and usually allowed prisoners to receive visitors and travel outside of areas designated for their internment. Be that as it may, prisoners were subject to Swiss military law and forbidden to attempt escape. If a prisoner were to flee successfully, British and German officials promised to return him to Switzerland.[135]

The transfer of prisoners into Swiss custody was a successful undertaking that provided a higher quality of life to a number of wounded men. Approximately 21,500 German prisoners of the British and French recovered in Switzerland.[136] Nonetheless, the departure of invalids for neutral internment could not offset the number of prisoners entering British camps. As the prisoner population of the UK expanded, so too did the bureaucracy responsible for its management. The PWIB established under Sir Paul Harvey with a handful of borrowed employees in 1914 eventually swelled to include 475 staff members under Harvey's successor, Sir J. D. Rees.[137] Although the PWIB was well-organized and efficiently run, communication problems between the other departments of state proved problematic. Upon the outbreak of hostilities, British officials neglected to delegate responsibilities or establish a hierarchy of authority. Increasing numbers of prisoners in the UK only complicated this matter. It was generally recognized that the War Office had the largest investment in prisoner affairs, but when departments of state could not reach consensus, there was no apparatus for resolving differences of opinion.

To settle disputes, the British War Committee founded the Prisoners of War Department (PWD) in October 1916. Under the control of Thomas Wodehouse Legh, the Second Lord Newton, the PWD oversaw the organization of an interdepartmental committee of representatives to sort out disagreements and take irresolvable issues before the War Committee. As head of the PWD, Lord Newton answered all questions related to prisoner affairs in the House of Lords. The PWD effectively replaced the Foreign

Office's Prisoners and Aliens Department and communicated with foreign governments in the name of the secretary of state for foreign affairs.[138] Lord Newton's agency provided a forum for the expression of dissenting views, but the events leading to the department's formal establishment revealed the primacy of the War Office and Admiralty in policy development and implementation.[139] The PWD streamlined the bureaucracy of captivity in the UK and alleviated much interdepartmental friction, but Lord Newton lacked the authority to make executive decisions and was forced to place contentious issues in the hands of the War Committee.[140]

Despite its shortcomings, the PWD played a significant role at the June 1917 Anglo-German conference at The Hague, where a British delegation headed by H. E. Belfield of the Directorate of Prisoners of War and Lord Newton met with its German counterpart to discuss prisoner treatment. Maj. Gen. Emil von Friedrich, director of the of the Prussian Kriegsministerium's Unterkunftsdepartement (Department of Accommodations) from its inception in 1914 until his September 1918 death, led the German delegation. Friedrich was responsible for the majority of the prisoners in German hands and thus the country's leading voice in prisoner affairs.[141] During negotiations, representatives agreed to a more extensive catalog of disabilities to qualify prisoners for Swiss interment. The most notable feature of the new list was the inclusion of "barbed-wire disease," a depression stemming from the mental strains of life in captivity. Modifications to earlier agreements also made commissioned and noncommissioned officers with no mental or physical disabilities eligible for neutral internment after eighteen months in captivity.[142]

At the same conference, delegates forged an agreement for the internment of 16,000 prisoners in the Netherlands. In many ways, the blueprint for internment in the Netherlands followed the precedents already established in Switzerland. The arrangement was unique in that Dutch authorities agreed to accommodate British and German prisoners but did not reach similar agreements with France or any other belligerent. Additionally, the treaty covered both civilian and combatant prisoners. Of the 16,000 available slots in the Netherlands, 7,500 went to invalided combatants, 6,500 to officers and noncommissioned officers, and the final 2,000 to invalided civilians. Prisoners were transferred to the Netherlands based on their time in captivity without consideration of nationality.[143]

As in Switzerland, prisoners in the Netherlands lodged in hotels, private accommodations, or special barracks. Most Germans were located in Rotterdam, Dieren, Wolfheze, Hattem, Arnhem, and Noordwijk. The number of internees in the Netherlands fell short of the proposed population of

16,000 because of the difficulty of transporting prisoners, as well as supplies for their upkeep, across waters teeming with German submarines. Dutch civilians saw prisoners as a drain on already scare resources, and officials in the Netherlands feared that supply shortages would make it impossible to maintain the standard of care demanded by international law. In the end, the Dutch accepted 4,500 German and 6,000 British internees, a population that officials felt they could adequately maintain.[144] The Hague meeting on prisoner affairs was an unusual undertaking. Representatives of warring nations did not typically meet in person to discuss anything other than peace negotiations. Upon Lord Newton's return from The Hague, he discovered that his colleagues, as well as the king, were more concerned with whether he had shaken hands with the Germans than the terms of the treaty. In fact, he recalled in his memoirs, the delegations parted ways with formal bows.[145]

Overcrowding continued to represent the most significant problem facing prisoners during the war's final year. The War Office closed the camp at Frith Hill, for example, in November 1916 because of unsuitable conditions and the widespread use of tents rather than proper barracks.[146] By late March 1918 the camp was once again operational and slated to accommodate 5,000 military prisoners. A Swiss inspector concluded that the arrangement of the camp's tents was acceptable, but he expressed concern at overcrowding and "sanitary danger."[147] At a second conference in summer 1918, Newton and Belfield met with a delegation led by Friedrich at The Hague to refine the imprecise provisions of The Hague Convention of 1907. Perhaps most importantly for prisoners in the UK, the resulting agreement created accommodation standards for officers and enlisted men. Barracks were recognized as standard housing for common soldiers, with each man receiving a minimum of three square meters. The agreement required captors to provide officers with quarters befitting their rank and assured lieutenants and captains six square meters of personal space. Delegates also agreed to reserve between eight and ten square meters for majors and colonels and promised private rooms of at least twelve square meters for higher-ranking officers.[148]

The second Anglo-German agreement was a comprehensive document that reflected the experience of the men responsible for its drafting. Delegates overlooked few details and established standards in camp construction, prisoner clothing, heating, lighting, recreational facilities, punishment, nutrition, and sanitation. Without question, the agreement could have served as a touchstone for the future governance of prisoners of war. For prisoners who complained of overcrowding and unacceptable

living arrangements, the changes it promised were surely welcomed. The Anglo-German accords represented a legitimate effort to alleviate the suffering of life in captivity. Unfortunately, the agreements failed to realize their potential. Upon the signing of the armistice in November 1918, all existing Anglo-German treaties on prisoners of war became null and void. The victorious Allies quickly determined that the repatriation of German prisoners was a matter to be addressed at formal peace proceedings.[149]

Had the British attempted to honor the second Anglo-German agreement in the months following the armistice, it would have been difficult to conform to the document's provisions. Between the treaty's signing on 14 July 1918 and the armistice, British forces captured more than 188,270 prisoners in France, including approximately 4,770 officers. German soldiers and officers made up an overwhelming majority of these numbers, as fewer than 11,000 Austrians surrendered to the British on the western front through more than four years of fighting.[150] The BEF assigned most of the Germans captured during this period to labor battalions in France, but officers and severely wounded soldiers traveled to the UK to await repatriation.

The British could not have known that Germany's defeat would result in a doubling of the prisoner population inside British camps in France and the UK, and the sudden influx of prisoners must have been overwhelming. The BEF's military success in the months after the second Anglo-German conference required the British to provide the throng of officers arriving in the UK with thousands of square meters of additional living space conforming to the standards set out by the agreement. To make matters worse, construction in Britain dropped sharply during the war. At the time of the armistice there was a shortage of more than 60,000 houses, making lodgings of any sort a valuable commodity.[151] The armistice mandated that Germany release all Allied prisoners immediately, and with little fear of reprisals, the British War Office had no incentive to continue with improvements to its camp system.

■ In his comparative study of captivity in the Great War, Richard B. Speed argued that the British camps, along with those of the Americans, came closer to attaining the "prewar ideal of captivity than did those of any other European belligerent."[152] An examination of the British treatment of prisoners immediately following capture complicates this characterization. German prisoners were sometimes plundered, abused, or even murdered by their British captors. Although these incidents were exceptions to the rule, their occurrence demonstrates how the violent atmosphere of the

front could affect the prisoner/captor encounter. However, away from the front, the British managed to look beyond the Anglo-German antagonism to treat prisoners in the UK with a standard of care that generally exceeded international standards. More recent research has confirmed that working prisoners of the British were indeed far less likely than those held by the French and Germans to be exposed to extreme violence during captivity.[153] This study of the camps operated by the War Office in the UK suggests that the commendable treatment that German prisoners experienced as laborers in France was an outgrowth of the standards established in the camps across the English Channel.

American and Swiss representatives filed hundreds, if not thousands, of inspection reports detailing their visits to the camps of the UK. Only rarely did reports indicate serious concerns about the British handling of the men in their custody. During the Great War, British national identity was shaped by a belief that 'Englishness' and "masculine 'decency,' moral rectitude, and martial virtues" were one and the same. Englishness and "Germanness" supposedly stood on opposite ends of a cultural spectrum in which German barbarism contrasted with British morality.[154] This perception was apparently carried over into the British treatment of German prisoners. The British population believed that Germans abused the British soldiers who fell into their hands. In response, British representatives filed numerous complaints with international organizations but continued to provide Germans prisoners with commendable care.

Physically speaking, prisoners in the UK probably enjoyed a higher standard of living than many civilians on the German home front. Prisoners of the British rarely faced serious threats of starvation or exposure to the elements, if at all. These favorable conditions resulted in a high survival rate for prisoners who lived through their battlefield encounter and entered British captivity. Although available statistics vary, the death rate for German prisoners of the British appears to have been less than 4 percent. Death rates among German prisoners in France, by contrast, approached 6 percent, and more than 9 percent of the Germans who fell into Russian hands died in captivity. Thus, German prisoners stood a better chance of survival in the UK than prisoners in the custody of other Entente powers. Somewhat surprisingly, death rates in German camps remained below 5 percent, and among British prisoners the number dropped to 3 percent.[155] Death figures would have surely been higher if not for the food parcels that the Western powers regularly shipped to their prisoners.[156]

A critical factor in the admirable management of the British camp system was the fairly small number of prisoners it held.[157] Even after the BEF

captured in excess of 185,000 prisoners in the last months of the war, which pushed the number of Germans captured to over 325,000, British prisoner totals paled in comparison to those of other belligerents. At least 2.5 million prisoners passed through the German camp system, and more than 2.3 million soldiers spent time in Russian captivity. Even Britain's closest ally, France, held approximately half a million prisoners. In other words, the small size of the UK's prisoner population made its administration notably less complicated. The limited number of prisoners in the UK attributed to the War Office's ability to clothe and feed captives sufficiently, but the size of the prisoner population does not account for the absence of any significant maltreatment by camp personnel. Because it was not uncommon for British soldiers to abuse prisoners on the western front, it was certainly possible that such mistreatment could have occurred in the camps of the UK. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that intentional mistreatment was commonplace.

If the detention barracks temporarily occupied by German submariners or Commandant Sir Arthur Grant's tenure at Brocton represented the worst aspects of captivity in the UK, then British success in the management of German prisoners is incontestable. Distanced from the violence and tension of the battlefield, the British broke with the legacy of the Boer War and rarely mistreated prisoners in their custody. This not only suggests that British prisoner abuse, when it occurred, was largely a battlefield phenomenon. It demonstrates that the British rarely allowed hatred for the enemy to compromise their commitment to the sense of morality that citizens constructed as a cornerstone of their wartime national identity. Still, even in the relative comfort and safety of the UK, prisoners faced a constant struggle for emotional survival. While the British saw to the prisoners' physical needs, camp authorities could do little to help prisoners with the feelings of failure, isolation, and shame that assaulted their senses on a daily basis.

CHAPTER THREE

SEPARATION

The Psychological Struggles of Captivity

Surrender shook a soldier's identity as an honorable combatant to the core. As prisoners, soldiers became subject to the perception that they were cowards, deserters, or traitors. Under military law, the latter two designations marked them as criminals. Prisoners of war lived in a state of emotional and physical limbo that has been appropriately described as "neither at the front nor at home, but 'elsewhere.'"[1] In the camps of the UK, prisoners had ample time to contemplate how their battlefield experience might have ended differently. They fought to come to terms with the emasculating implications of their capture, an event that challenged their status as brave soldiers and thus their merit as men at war. The emotions of abandonment, uncertainty, and regret are common reactions to any number of situations for men that often have no relationship to one's sense of manhood. For prisoners of war, however, these emotions compounded the feelings of shame and detachment associated with having allegedly failed as a soldier. The exceptional treatment prisoners received in the UK proved incapable of counteracting the feelings of humiliation and isolation that characterized life in captivity. Regardless of the conditions under which prisoners lived, the English Channel separated them from the struggle upon which their identity as soldiers rested.

Although arrival in the UK virtually guaranteed that a soldier would survive the war, many prisoners could not see beyond the shame of their situation and their inability to contribute at the front. This chapter examines the mental struggles of life in the camps of the UK, as well as the prisoners' efforts to redeem themselves by escaping their captors and

returning to the front. The expectation that soldiers die a hero's death may have been idealistic propaganda, but the sensation of seclusion experienced by those who fell short of that masculine standard was very real.

An Uncertain Existence

The moment of capture was traumatic, but it was inside the confines of enemy prison camps that prisoners began to fully comprehend the consequences of surrender. Although still technically a soldier, a prisoner's military service at the front had ended, and with it his status as a defender of the homeland. Many soldiers shared the view of Karl Ritter von Halt, who claimed that he would have preferred to die than experience a disgraceful (*schmachvolle*) capture.[2] The barbed wire that once protected soldiers in the trenches separated prisoners from the only two places that mattered in times of war—the front and the home front. Soldiers are accustomed to strict routines and commands from superior officers, but following enemy orders is a different matter. Without a commandant's permission, prisoners were forbidden from communicating with camp employees, and the standing orders codified by the War Office in 1917 required prisoners to obey camp personnel and salute all British officers. Along with more practical restrictions, the British also prohibited prisoners from using derogatory language when discussing the king or leaders of any Allied nation.[3] Camp authorities determined when prisoners woke, assembled for roll call, took meals, and turned in for the night.[4] The scheduled certainties of camp routines resembled regimented military life, but it was the uncertainties of the camp existence that weighed most heavily on prisoners' minds.

Prisoners of the Great War had no way of knowing when their captivity might come to an end. In earlier conflicts, belligerents customarily released prisoners on their word of honor, or parole, not to take up arms again. The practice began to disappear during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71.[5] Even though The Hague Convention of 1907 provided for prisoner parole, captives were not obligated to accept the offer.[6] European powers generally frowned on parole because it relieved captors from the responsibility of guarding and providing for their prisoners, rendering parolees militarily useless. As one prewar observer noted, although accepting parole allowed prisoners to return to their families, it also necessitated that the former combatants "stay home with women, children, and old men" while their comrades marched against the enemy.[7] In short, accepting parole destroyed any remnants of a prisoner's worth as a soldier.

Neutral internment provided opportunities to escape British captivity, but supply shortages limited slots in the Netherlands and injured prisoners could not count on being selected by Swiss review boards. With direct exchanges between Germany and Britain reserved for the severely wounded, the length of a prisoner's time in the UK was directly related to the war's conclusion, which could come in days, weeks, months, or years.

The unknown length of confinement contributed to a sense of powerlessness and stagnation among prisoners. Following his famous escape from Donington Hall in 1915, Gunther Plüschow reported that the mood in the camps of the UK was dismal. Inactivity and a sense of uselessness, he contended, bore down upon men who had ample time to ruminate over their situation.[8] Before his prolific military career during the Third Reich and later as inspector general of the West German Bundeswehr, Adolf Heusinger spent time in British captivity from 1917 to 1919. Heusinger's wartime correspondence reveals that he was plagued by the frustration of no longer being able to contribute to the war effort and disheartened by his inability to fight for his homeland.[9] With no set release date and little control over their surroundings, prisoners like Heusinger found it difficult to define progress in the camp environment. According to one prisoner, camps were "treadmills," where hours, days, and weeks bled together and men lost the ability to distinguish one day from the next. The one thing prisoners could count on was that each day in captivity began with "sorrow and worry" and ended in the same fashion.[10]

The endless cycle of sorrow and worry all too often resulted in the onset of barbed-wire disease. As a Swiss camp inspector, physician A. L. Vischer toured the camps of the UK and Western Europe speaking with prisoners about their anxieties. He contended there was no connection between prisoners' mental state and the treatment they received from their captors. Barbed-wire disease was as likely to affect prisoners in the UK as their counterparts interned under significantly harsher conditions in Russia or Germany. A lack of privacy, worries about prospects for the future, and sexual frustrations contributed to the onset of barbed-wire disease, and prisoners who suffered from the condition often reported a constant urge to rail against the wire that surrounded them. Vischer suggested that military prisoners regarded captivity as an escape from the strains of the battlefront and therefore viewed their ordeal more positively than civilian internees.[11] More recent work has followed Vischer's lead and concluded that military prisoners often appreciated their removal from the battlefield and were less likely to suffer from barbed-wire disease as a result of the discipline and routines of life in military camps.[12] This chapter

challenges this interpretation by revealing that while some prisoners may have welcomed the distance from the front, others struggled immensely with the consequences of their removal from the battlefield.

Barbed wire is intended to maintain separation and draw distinctions between "inside and outside."[13] In prison camps, wire separated prisoners from the community to which they wanted to belong while simultaneously forcing them to remain members of a community of exiles. The stigma of captivity weighed heavily upon prisoners whose confidence and manhood had been challenged by surrender. Even prisoners who were grateful to have survived the war expressed their contentment carefully. In a November 1917 letter from the Colsterdale officers' camp, Adolf H. confessed to his aunt that his situation could have been far worse since he considered his survival to be a miracle. Nonetheless, he insisted that he was surprised that fate had led him into enemy hands, as he never expected that he would be met with such "bad luck."[14]

Prisoners feared that their separation from the war and life on the home front would make it easy for the outside world to forget them. They wrestled with a wide variety of emotions, including loneliness, boredom, and fear, that they would have felt in many peacetime situations and that men at the front surely experienced on a regular basis.[15] However, prisoners were forced to process these emotions while also dealing with the possibility that their reputation as soldiers and men had been wrecked when they entered enemy custody. Prisoners were unsure how acquaintances would react to news that they had fallen into enemy hands. Would friends and comrades understand the nature of modern war, or would they be ashamed that a friend or relative had chosen surrender over *Heldentod*? Worse still, would friends entertain the notion that a captive soldier was a deserter or traitor? Accordingly, prisoners reached out to comrades, friends, and relatives in the world beyond the barbed wire in hopes of receiving confirmation that they remained loved or respected outside the confines of the camp.

The standard correspondence sheet given to prisoners in the UK contained approximately twenty-three lines.[16] Since correspondence cards were the only reliable channels of communication with the home front, prisoners valued them—and the responses they generated—above all else. Correspondence cards represented a lifeline to the time and place where a prisoner's manhood, honor, and nationalism had been secure. As prisoners in exile, soldiers needed to be convinced that they still had a place in that world. In Lt. Iwan Crompton's published recollections of British captivity, for example, the submariner stressed the importance of contact with

the home front and reminded his postwar readers, "Every reader that has an acquaintance, relative or a friend that must suffer the hardest fortune for a soldier—captivity—I beg you: Show him that you remember him, send him a postcard, a letter or a book, and even if it is only a few lines, only a pamphlet, the prisoner is so grateful! Never have you seen more joyful, or unfortunately also bitterly disappointed, faces as at ten o'clock in the morning, the hour of the day when the mail is distributed!"[17] From Stobs in Scotland, Sgt. Heinz G. similarly informed his parents that "to watch the mail come and go" without receiving something was the worst thing that could happen to a prisoner.[18] Another captive officer observed that it was easy for prisoners to become jaded and unresponsive. But the mail, he wrote, was "the star in our darkness" with the power to resurrect the weariest and most battered prisoner's mind.[19]

It would be difficult to underestimate the significance of communication with the outside world. Postal restrictions and the censor's all-seeing eye limited freedom of expression, but letters from captivity remain one of the most poignant records of the prisoners' struggles—as well as their fears of being abandoned in enemy territory. The British War Office allowed prisoners to write two letters per week and to receive unlimited mail and packages, and items addressed to or sent by prisoners carried no postage. Censors examined all correspondence, and the War Office required prisoners to use Latin characters when possible, avoid the use of coded language, and write only on the lines provided.[20] The Postal Censorship Department returned letters that contained complaints about nutrition or poor treatment to commandants and forwarded letters including serious complaints to higher authorities.[21] Commandants were not above revoking correspondence rights as a disciplinary measure.

Nonetheless, British authorities allowed even detained submariners to correspond with the home front. Several weeks after the March 1915 sinking of the *U-8*, Lt. Capt. Alfred S. explained in a letter to his family that as his vessel disappeared into the depths, "All that remained for me was the choice between the eternal captivity of death or captivity through the enemy. I chose, thinking of my men, the latter: a decision that has become very difficult for me." His reference to death as "eternal captivity" suggests that he did not see sacrificial death as a cathartic release, yet he was clearly troubled by his decision to surrender. Alfred S. regretted that Germany's struggle continued without his men, but he took solace in the fact that they "did [their] duty to the end." His need for a connection with the home front becomes clear when he assures his family that when "the morning sun briefly casts its rays in my room, then I know that

these rays also illuminate all those who think of me and my brave men."[22] Through his correspondence, the detained submarine captain formed a bond with others who shared the sun's light and linked himself to the world outside his detention cell. By speaking of his crew's bravery and insisting that they fought to the end, Alfred S. addressed suspicions of cowardice and asserted that the men under his command had entered captivity with honor.

Letters like those written by Alfred S. served a vital function, but they were ultimately intended to elicit a response. On rare occasions, responses from home verified a prisoner's worst fears. When August Heider asked a fellow prisoner at Kegworth in Sutton Bonington why he never wrote home, he learned that the young man had stopped writing after sending only one letter to Germany. The prisoner's father informed him that he was embarrassed that his son had allowed himself to fall into enemy hands. While other soldiers made their families proud by coming home as recipients of an Iron Cross, the young prisoner's father felt ashamed when asked by local villagers whether his son had fully attempted to defend himself from the enemy. In reality, Heider related, the soldier was a veteran of the worst of the fighting at the Somme and had surrendered only after being cut off from supply lines.[23]

Unanswered mail could cause prisoners great distress as well. After receiving only one letter from his wife in more than seven months, prisoner Albert T. asked Red Cross representatives in Solingen to provide information concerning her well-being. By his own admission, the absence of letters from his wife caused Albert T. considerable anxiety. From the working camp at Larkhill he urgently requested any details that might alleviate his concerns.[24] One can only imagine what sort of developments Alfred T. feared had resulted in the lack of letters from home—adultery, abandonment, or even death? In some instances prisoners' fears were in fact realized when tragedy struck on the home front. While Richard S. languished at Handforth near Manchester, for example, his wife's death left his two small children without either of their parents. Regardless of circumstances on the home front, prisoners without severe wounds were not allowed to return to Germany. Even as his children became temporary orphans, Richard S. remained absolutely powerless to assist them. His only recourse was to use correspondence privileges to protest to the home front that the war "had already gone on too long" and articulate his desire to be with his children.[25] Richard S.'s separation from his grieving family and his inability to care for his children doubtlessly damaged his perception of himself as a man, and protective father.

With their confidence already diminishing, prisoners probably assumed the worst when they failed to hear from acquaintances. As a result, they rarely concealed their desire that letters be answered in a timely manner. Following his 1917 surrender, Ludwig G. wrote his sister from a hospital bed in Belmont, Surrey, to explain that regulations permitted him to write two letters per week. After assuring her that his wounds were healing nicely, he told his sister, "It would give me great pleasure if you would also send me a letter or even a package in the near future. It takes 4 to 8 weeks to receive a letter from the homeland, and 10 to 20 days for a package, given that, you can imagine how pleased one is to once again receive mail. Please send current news."[26] When weeks passed without any response from his family, Ludwig G. grew uneasy. From his new camp at Blandford, he reminded them that he waited "every day with yearning for mail and packages."[27] He later repeated his concerns and explained, "Now I wait every day with longing for news and packages from you, but unfortunately all my waiting is in vain. It has already been a quarter of a year that I have been in captivity."[28]

More than five months after his capture, Ludwig G. finally announced, "I can joyfully share with you that on the 17th of the month I received your first letter dated 26 November. I thank you in the best sense. It pleased me exquisitely when I once again received news from the dear homeland after such a long time."[29] Ludwig G.'s early writings from captivity revealed his insecurities and separation anxieties. The tone of his correspondence changed dramatically when he established contact with relatives. The letters he received proved that unlike August Heider's fellow prisoner at Kegworth, Ludwig's family would not turn its back on him as a result of his surrender. Upon receiving a reply from his sister, he exclaimed, "You can imagine the joy I had when I received such a joyful message from you after such a long time and such a far distance from you." Hoping to receive letters more often, he closed by reminding her, "You are permitted to write and send to me as much a you want, the more often, the better."[30] Unfortunately, letters began to arrive less frequently, and in June 1918 Ludwig G. asked his parents to explain the break in communication.[31] Their response served as a sobering reminder that in spite of his psychological dependence on a connection with the greater entity he had once defended at the front, life in Germany moved on without him. During the break in correspondence with his sister, she was married and expected the birth of her first child.[32] While he languished in captivity, Ludwig G.'s acquaintances continued to attend weddings, build relationships, and carry on with their lives. They were the focal point of his world, but as a prisoner abroad, he inhabited the outer edge of theirs.

It was difficult to come to terms with this realization, and prisoners grew angry with friends and relatives who had seemingly forsaken them in their time of need. A 1918 letter from an officer in the UK expressed disappointment with Germany's apparent negligence toward its enlisted prisoners abroad. "The State of things in a camp for enlisted men is sad enough," he wrote. "And that a man must also feel that the German homeland, on which he hangs with every fiber, does nothing, absolutely nothing, that is unjustifiable. Especially since these should be the people to assist in repairing and relieving the losses of the war. How can they do that when now they hear nothing more from their homeland? I have thoroughly considered whether I should write this, but after I heard the same from many gentlemen in other camps, I now hold it to be my duty to share this with you so that you can at least do something to remedy these grievances. I call on the homeland: Do something—do as much as you can for your imprisoned soldiers who have to suffer severely, but who must also despair when they are neglected!"[33]

The officer's call to action illustrates the correlation between prisoner well-being and interaction with the home front. Yet these accusations contradict the true nature of German prisoner relief. Despite the sense of isolation that most prisoners wrestled with, home front organizations reached out to exiled warriors soon after the first battles of the Great War. The Mecklenburgischer Hilfsverein für deutsche Kriegsgefangene und Vermisste (Mecklenburg Aid Association for German Prisoners of War and Missing), a relief association in the province of Mecklenburg, noted in its annual report of 1917 that prisoners suffered more as a result of irregular contact with the homeland than physical hardships or poor treatment.[34] Organizations like the Hilfsverein seemingly understood that the prisoners' sufferings were not exclusively physical. For that reason, aid associations worked diligently to facilitate contact with relatives and to reassure prisoners of the home front's recognition of their sacrifices.

Beginning in 1914, Germany's regional Red Cross associations began to coordinate plans for prisoner relief. In January 1915 the Prussian Kriegsministerium approved the establishment of the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Vereine vom Roten Kreuz (Central Committee of the German Associations of the Red Cross). Although regional Red Cross agencies maintained their independence, the wartime organizational scheme allowed volunteers to coordinate relief projects geographically. The Ausschuß für deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Hamburgischen Landesverein vom Roten Kreuz (Hamburg Red Cross's Commission for German Prisoners of War) oversaw relief efforts in Northern Germany; the Verein vom

Roten Kreuz in Frankfurt a. M., Ausschuß für deutsche Kriegsgefangene (Frankfurt Red Cross's Commission for German Prisoners of War) supervised regional associations in the south.[35]

The Red Cross looked into the fate of men listed as prisoners or missing, collected the addresses of soldiers in captivity, and prepared care packages for prisoners abroad. Early assistance from influential personalities like Prince Max von Baden, who lent his services after illness forced him from the XIV Army Corps, was essential to the success of relief proposals. Welfare agreements with enemy powers depended upon reciprocity, and Prince Max provided an invaluable link with Kriegsministerium officials whose authorization made relief work for Allied prisoners in Germany possible.[36] The cooperative work of national branches of international religious associations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was likewise important to maintaining open lines of communication among the belligerent powers. In Germany, the most influential of these associations was the Deutsche Kriegsgefangenenhilfe, which brought together volunteers from several prominent evangelical student associations.[37] The support of the YMCA and a respected figure like Prince Max lent relief efforts a degree of public legitimacy and validated the experiences of prisoners held abroad.

Initially, the Hamburg Red Cross worked primarily with prisoners in Russia and the Frankfurt committee administered relief in Western Europe. As the number of German prisoners increased, volunteers in Stuttgart processed parcels destined for France and the Cologne Red Cross assumed responsibility for prisoners of the British.[38] Local agencies continued to support prisoners in the UK, but as of December 1916, Cologne handled all monetary donations for prisoners held by the British. In that capacity, the Cologne office provided instructions for ensuring that letters and packets bound for the UK and British colonies reached their destinations.[39] Based in London, Dr. K. E. Markel's Prisoners of War Relief Agency handled the transfer of funds from the German Red Cross and distributed clothing, musical instruments, and gift parcels (*Liebesgaben*) after the items arrived via the Netherlands.[40] Typical parcels included sausage, toothpaste, soap, coffee, underwear, and tobacco. The packages generally cost between 4.50 and 12.50 marks to assemble, depending on the contents.[41]

The Red Cross also cooperated with Vaterländische Frauenvereine, patriotic women's associations, to organize national fund drives. The most notable effort was the Volksspende für die deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen (National Fund Drive for the German Prisoners of War

Ludwig Hohlwein postcard used to raise funds for the Volksspende of 1916. © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

and Civilian Internees) of July 1916, which was officially endorsed by the Kaiserin. The Volksspende raised awareness of the prisoners' plight by asking citizens of even the smallest German communities to donate funds to help lessen the prisoners' mental and physical deterioration. It was a comprehensive campaign designed to raise funds by soliciting donations in major pedestrian areas, train stations, theaters, and through door-to-door collections. The Volksspende was publicized well and featured more than 370,000 posters by the renowned graphic artist Ludwig Hohlwein. In addition, the Volksspende produced ten million postcards featuring the Hohlwein image or poems by prominent German writers Walter Bloem, Ludwig Fulda, and Rudolf Herzog.[42]

Relief organizations served as one of the prisoners' most important contacts on the home front, but for men already battling the stigma of

surrender, accepting charity threatened to strengthen the interpretation of prisoners as helpless and weak. Whereas military authorities often wrote off prisoners as deserters or cowards, civilian relief agencies commemorated prisoners' sufferings. However, they did so in a manner that drew attention to the prisoners' vulnerabilities. Both during and after the war, relief workers sometimes referred to prisoners in unflattering terms. A representative of the American YMCA, for example, one of the first organizations to provide aid to Germans in the UK, depicted military prisoners as the walking dead:

> The prisoner of war is a strangely pathetic figure—a youth, conscious of no crime, yet deprived, in the full vigor of his manhood, of nearly all the ordinary outlets of human activity; a soldier, without the stimulus of active service or the sustaining consciousness of achievement; an exile, living in an atmosphere of constant hostility, owing his very life to the sufferance of his captors; a man without rights. Since he is no longer an effective unit in the business of war, his own military organization counts him as non-existent. Though living, he is dead, and dead with little glory. To his captors he is simply an additional embarrassment, another mouth to be fed, another body to be clothed. To his guards, he is the cause of the most monotonous and hated of all duties; and to the civilian population, he is the enemy in their power and without means of retaliation.[43]

Few prisoners appreciated being described as militarily useless or dead with little glory, particularly when their masculine identity was based in large part upon their military effectiveness. Still, even if charitable donations further emasculated recipients by bolstering the notion that prisoners were incapable of caring for themselves, relief associations served as an indispensable link with the outside world.

The desire to feel appreciated superseded the shame of accepting charity, and recipients generally had kind words for the organizations that supported them. When Carl Z. received a care package from his Rhenish hometown of Gräfrath while imprisoned at Dorchester, he warmly thanked the town's mayor and acknowledged that it did a prisoner some good to be able to say, "the homeland is thinking of us."[44] Another Rhinelander, Johann D., arrived in England without any financial resources. When the city of Solingen's Red Cross branch transferred 12.50 marks into his account at Brocton, the prisoner acknowledged the gift by declaring that "never in [his] life would he forget his countrymen's willingness to sacrifice" on his behalf.[45] Prisoners not fortunate enough to receive

care packages could grow uneasy with thoughts that their hometown may have overlooked their sacrifices. By late August 1917, Otto B. had patiently watched his fellow prisoners at Dorchester collect care packages and financial donations for far too long without himself receiving a parcel. He responded by pleading with his hometown mayor to please think of him in this time of need, as he, too, "had done his part and fulfilled his duty as a defender of their beloved fatherland."[46]

Otto B. clearly believed that he deserved recognition from the German home front, and his anxieties were related to the fear that his sacrifices as a soldier had not been recognized. However, most prisoners do not seem to have anticipated care packages. As a garrison town, the East Prussian city of Rastenburg served as a second home to numerous soldiers who fell into British hands. The city's Liebesgaben-Ausschuss (Care Package Committee) routinely prepared care packages for its soldiers in captivity. Letters of appreciation from the men who benefited from the agency's charity reveal that prisoners often did not expect the same generosity offered to soldiers in the field. When Willi S. received a package at Stobs in Scotland, he thanked the Ausschuss for its kindness and wrote, "It greatly pleased us all, who have had the misfortune to enter captivity, that you also graciously thought of us at this time."[47] Alfred M., a prisoner at the Larkhill working camp, claimed that he would "never forget what the good city of Rastenburg did for [him] and his comrades from the regiment." He was particularly pleased that the Liebesgaben-Ausschuss had also thought of prisoners of war.[48] Sgt. Paul P. responded to the arrival of his care package at Pattishall in Northamptonshire with similar sentiments, exclaiming, "It especially pleased me that you, the citizens of my beloved garrison town, have also adopted and so generously commemorate the Germans who have entered captivity through no fault of their own (*unverschuldet*)."[49]

Paul P. made a point of clarifying that he was no deserter, but like his fellow prisoners, his use of the term *also* demonstrates that he had internalized the stigma of surrender. The Liebesgaben-Ausschuss received hundreds of letters from prisoners in the UK, and they regularly thanked the organization for also remembering *them*. Prisoners realized that their surrender jeopardized their status as men and warriors by separating them from the action of the front lines. While they assumed that the home front would honor frontline soldiers with gifts of appreciation, prisoners were genuinely surprised that Germans were still concerned with the welfare of soldiers in enemy hands. Relief organizations like the Liebesgaben-Ausschuss verified that someone in Germany considered

prisoners valuable members of society and provided hope that the shame of surrender would not define former prisoners in the postwar era.

When relief agencies failed to meet captives' needs, prisoners occasionally petitioned higher authorities for assistance. Adolf F. was wounded and captured by the British near the Marne in September 1914 before being shipped to Dorchester in Dorset.[50] Since the British did not utilize prisoner labor until 1916, Adolf F. and his fellow enlisted prisoners had no opportunity to earn extra income and depended upon their captors for sustenance. Dissatisfied with the supplies allotted to him, in January 1916 he sent a birthday greeting in the form of an original poem to Kaiser Wilhelm II. At the same time, Adolf F. requested that the Kaiser donate 200 marks to benefit the prisoners at Dorchester.

The British transferred Adolf F. to France in 1916, and as months passed, he likely gave up hope of receiving a reply from the Kaiser. Then, in June 1916, the American Embassy in Berlin notified the prisoner that the German Foreign Office had transferred 210 francs, the equivalent of 200 marks, to him. Embassy officials informed Adolf F. that the money was a donation from His Majesty the Emperor Wilhelm II. The donation "deeply moved" Adolf F., and the prisoner accepted it with his warmest gratitude.[51] An appeal to the Kaiser had been a long shot, but Wilhelm II's gift confirmed that Adolf F. was worthy of assistance from the highest levels of German society and validated the prisoner's sacrifices in captivity. The Kaiser was not only the German emperor; he was also Adolf F.'s supreme military commander. Although it was important for prisoners to establish contact with relatives and relief organizations, it was this sort of recognition from the military establishment to which prisoners attached the most importance.

Reconnecting with the Front

In captivity prisoners transitioned from frontline warriors to spectators with an obstructed view, all while realizing that the war continued without them across the English Channel. Being separated from the action of the front could lead to irrational thoughts. Adolf Heusinger, for example, confessed that while in captivity, thoughts of his brother still fighting at the front brought on sensations of jealousy.[52] Prisoners' wartime manhood had been closely linked to their status as soldiers and participation in the war, and they longed for communication with individuals from their previous lives as combatants. Soldiers form tight bonds during training and depend on one another for survival at the front. Although combat

participation in the war zone ended when prisoners entered captivity, their units remained in the trenches or at sea. Separation from one's unit was distressing. Prisoners feared that just as the YMCA's representative suggested, their comrades might consider them ineffective and therefore nonexistent.[53] Camaraderie among fighting men is a decisive factor in combat motivation, and prisoners often carried a sense of guilt over their surrender, feeling as if they had betrayed the group's esprit de corps and let down the men with whom they shared a sense of mutual reliance.[54] These were, after all, the men who had seen them during their most vulnerable moments. Correspondence with the home front played a critical role in rebuilding a prisoner's confidence, but it was affirmation from fellow soldiers that prisoners coveted.

While British regulations make no mention of communication between prisoners and frontline units, officials surely restricted this sort of contact as a security measure. On the German side, authorities were suspicious of correspondence from prisoner of war camps in the UK. Officials believed that British intelligence sent phony letters to Germany in order to damage morale and gather information from the responses the forgeries generated.[55] Not surprisingly, direct correspondence between prisoners and active soldiers seems to have been discouraged, and prisoners sometimes had to ask relatives and friends on the home front to share kind words with former units.[56] In February 1918, Friedrich L. asked the Rastenburg Liebesgaben-Ausschuss to pass on a greeting to his lieutenant and lamented, "I cannot personally write to him."[57]

Nonetheless, it appears that it was possible for letters to reach the front on some occasions. In August 1917 Ernst Jünger recorded in his diary the text of a letter sent to him by a comrade being held at Frongoch in Wales. Jünger's friend, who had been taken with his entire battalion at Arleux, asked for news from the front and assured Jünger that he was doing well, which prompted Jünger to note that British captivity was apparently not as unbearable as had been depicted.[58] It is unclear whether Jünger attempted to respond, but authorities very likely prohibited him from doing so. German officials realized that materials sent to the UK passed though the hands of British censors. It is unlikely that they would have risked providing the enemy with information on impending offensives or morale. Correspondence guidelines advised German civilians not to discuss information of a military, political, or economic nature and specifically warned against mentioning war conditions or inflation on the home front.[59] It was prudent to suspect that British censors gave correspondence more than a passing glance. The War Office routinely photographed

letters of interest and compiled intelligence reports based on information gleaned from the contents.[60]

Limited contact between troops and prisoners, although a necessary precaution, intensified the prisoners' sense of detachment from the war. Surrender not only physically separated prisoners from the front and the identity they developed there; it denied them the privilege of receiving information related to the cause for which they had sacrificed their freedom. Correspondence restrictions produced separation anxiety among prisoners who wondered if their comrades from the front had survived and worried how friends from their units might have interpreted their capture or surrender. In spite of the obvious threats posed by correspondence between captives and the front, many prisoners cited the absence of an effective means of communicating with former units as a particularly distressing problem for prisoners in the UK.

A February 1918 report on German prisoners transferred to the Netherlands asserted that prisoners taken in the early years of the war believed that the homeland looked down upon and had "abandoned and forgotten" them in captivity. The report called special attention to the significance of contact with military acquaintances and offered suggestions for alleviating the prisoners' sense of detachment and failure: "Gift parcels from the Red Cross and donations from the homeland do not help against this. The men yearn to hear something from their units. Letters from regiments or companies with a few friendly words and greetings, for example, 'to the brave fighters of the Marne,' to the 'heroes from the battles of autumn 1914,' to the 'courageous fighters of Loos 1915,' to the 'brave defenders from the struggles at the Somme,' are necessary to refresh the courage to face life and confidence of these seriously suffering people."[61] The report's recommended use of the adjectives "brave" and "courageous" was not accidental. Prisoners needed to hear these words in order to assure themselves that their comrades at the front did not equate their surrender with desertion or cowardice.

In the months following his transfer to the Netherlands, Lt. Capt. Alfred S. of the submarine *U-8* likewise underscored the value of communication with the front. While discussing British offers of special status to prisoners of Danish and Polish descent, as well as to those from Alsace and Lorraine, he warned that in order to prevent prisoners in England from losing their enthusiasm for the war, "as much as possible must be done to improve their contact with the homeland. Everyone knows that not much can be done. But they also know whether they have been altogether forgotten or not. A German prisoner who once received a card from his company leader with entirely general comments often carried it with him through the entire

time of his ordeal. Loyal German noncommissioned officers and troops who are already recognized at the front as hard fellows must remain in contact with their units or higher authorities."[62] It was apparently possible for soldiers to send greetings to prisoners in captivity, perhaps via a third party. Alfred S. and his fellow prisoners in the Netherlands believed that correspondence with military acquaintances was essential to preserving a prisoner's dignity and helping to sustain a positive attitude toward the war.

To circumvent limited contact opportunities, prisoners took advantage of transfers to Switzerland and the Netherlands to smuggle uncensored letters to the front. Uncensored communications allowed prisoners to express themselves freely and explain the events that led to their capture. In these candid letters, prisoners sought to demonstrate their continued identification with former units and simultaneously revealed their need to be acknowledged by their comrades. In what appears to be a smuggled letter from 1917, Lt. Hermann B., a North Sea pilot, articulated his longing to once again serve with his flight unit. He informed his commanding officer that he was "in every respect capable of flight duty" and would be indebted to the captain if he "could later come again to the II.S.F.A [II Seefliegerabteilung] and be able to stay there."[63] The response Lieutenant B. sought was an acknowledgment that he was not a deserter and would always have a place with the II.S.F.A.

In another letter smuggled to the front from Donington Hall, officer Hans K. stressed the difficulties of being separated from his men with little knowledge of the war's progress. He thanked a fellow officer for an earlier greeting and confessed, "It did me some good (*ordentlich gut*) that one has not yet forgotten me entirely."[64] Hans K. recounted his capture and gave a detailed description of his injuries. Like many other prisoners, he claimed to have been unconscious when captured. Eager to be of military use, he informed his comrade of ammunition depots he had spotted in Le Havre prior to departure for the UK. Hans K. regretted that British newspapers, whose war news he considered unreliable, were his only information source. Expecting victory, he commented that it "would be a shame if our troops suddenly stood in Calais and we knew nothing about it." In case he had not sufficiently expressed his solidarity with the frontline troops, Hans K. concluded with the assurance that "even long, hard captivity cannot shake our faith in Hindenburg and Ludendorff. You could hardly imagine how greatly we yearn for the front and our beloved comrades, and already gentlemen, among them myself, have attempted to escape this country."[65] Although his escape attempt failed, his words indicated that he preferred the perils of active service to the safety of Donington Hall.

Other prisoners attempted to associate themselves with the front through material symbols of military achievement. Sgt. Schindler L. of the 126th Infantry Regiment mobilized in August 1914 and fell into British hands approximately one year later. Before his capture, Sergeant L.'s superiors nominated him for a Silver Merit Medal of Baden, but his award failed to arrive before his surrender and transfer to the prisoner of war camp at Pattishall. In September 1917, he wrote military authorities in Karlsruhe, explaining that he would be grateful to receive his award in captivity. He strengthened his request by mentioning that he had been wounded in battle and had received the Iron Cross, 2nd Class.[66] Schindler L. recognized that his courageousness was open to debate, and his attempt to secure a military decoration was likely a coping mechanism to convince himself that his service record was respectful.

Schindler L. was one of many prisoners to appeal to higher authorities for commendations, and it was not unheard of for relatives on the home front to also petition military officials on behalf of their loved ones in captivity.[67] In fact, requests that medals be awarded in captivity were so numerous that the Prussian Kriegsministerium addressed the issue as early as 1915. Military authorities initially declared that prisoners would not be eligible to receive awards until after their release.[68] The policy was later modified in order to enable the awarding of Iron Crosses earned prior to capture to prisoners interned by neutral powers. At the same time, the Kriegsministerium instituted a plan for recording the battlefield accomplishments of prisoners whose performance merited recognition. Owing to the war's exceptional length and high turnover rates among officers at the front, officials feared that worthy soldiers might be overlooked and never receive their decorations. Under the new documentation system, distinguished prisoners could claim awards following repatriation or transfer, provided that the conditions of their capture did not make them undeserving of such recognition.[69]

Prisoner advocates applauded these measures as an effective means of ensuring prisoners that the homeland had not forgotten them, or their battlefield achievements.[70] Even though the Kaiser's military representatives recognized the sacrifices of soldiers in enemy hands, German authorities insisted that prisoners receive commendations only after repatriation or internment by a neutral power. It was as if the awarding of an Iron Cross in captivity might tarnish one of Germany's highest military honors.[71] The willingness to acknowledge a prisoner's past accomplishments implied that it was possible for brave men to fall into enemy hands, but lingering concerns with the circumstances of capture suggested that surrender

could negate earlier heroism. Schindler L. and the other prisoners who petitioned for commendations ultimately achieved their aim. Although prisoners could not receive awards on enemy soil, their correspondence made it impossible for officials to forget Germany's captive soldiers.

Because of the scarcity of letters written to prisoners in the UK, it is difficult to discern how family members in Germany or soldiers at the front responded to the prisoners' calls for acknowledgment. Letters from captivity reveal that prisoners found little immediate comfort in the knowledge that they would likely survive the war. Instead, shame and guilt burdened numerous prisoners who would have rather faced the horrors of the western front than confront the sense of dislocation that accompanied removal from it. Surrender brought a soldier's loyalty and manhood into question, but there was a way to escape the obscurity of the prisoner of war camp and redeem oneself in the eyes of the military establishment. The surest path to redemption led through, over, or under the barbed wire, and back to active service.

Physical Reconnection: Escape

The Great War's participants widely accepted that prisoners were honor bound to escape and reconnect with their units if at all possible.[72] As a group of German prisoners explained to their commandant upon the discovery of an escape tunnel, "Every prisoner of war has the duty to attempt escape from captivity, with us the same as with you."[73] The Hague Convention granted the right to punish escape attempts. Yet neither disciplinary action nor the Red Cross's suggestion that prisoners would be treated as proper noncombatants if they resisted the urge to escape deterred prisoners who equated flight with redemption.[74] Escape from the UK was extremely rare, but prisoners continued to attempt the feat even after they realized that their efforts would almost certainly end with punishment. The success or failure of a bid for escape was of little consequence. A prisoner's desire to flee the safety of captivity for the dangers of the front signaled that his spirit remained unbroken and his willingness to serve resolute.

Escape was, quite simply, the manly thing for prisoners of war to do. Behind the barbed wire, there were no further opportunities for a man whose bravery or loyalty had been challenged to silence his critics in the heat of battle. Flight could represent an attempt to relieve the boredom of captivity, but for military prisoners, it often represented something more significant.[75] Escape attempts exemplified a refusal to allow one's

captors to dictate the terms of the prisoner/captor relationship and demonstrated a prisoner's desire to reclaim his soldierly virtues. Escapees prepared for their journey in secret, sharing their plans with only their most trusted fellow prisoners. However, when the escape took place, it became a public spectacle that required prisoners to assemble for roll call, guards to scour the area surrounding the camp, and camp officials to notify authorities and press agencies of the breach in security. The message escapees hoped to convey was that although surrender had removed them from the front, they sought to rejoin the fight taking place across the channel. Furthermore, escapees were attempting to prove something to themselves. Corralled within barbed-wire enclosures, prisoners often felt less than human, like animals. Flight offered prisoners the opportunity to escape their cages and reclaim not only their humanity but also their manhood.

Although military authorities might have considered captives functionally nonexistent, prisoners maintained a degree of usefulness in captivity. By constantly working to escape, prisoners forced captors to employ guard staffs capable of keeping them within the barbed wire. The War Office left the formation of the guard up to local military authorities. Members of the National Reserve, who were usually too old for service in the trenches but capable of sentry duties, often made up the early guard formations.[76] Financial considerations required most camps to rely on a light guard detail. The Jersey camp in the Channel Islands, for instance, held 1,500 prisoners in July 1915, but the strength of the guard stood at 130.[77] Camp Brocton, a substantially larger facility, was capable of holding approximately 6,800 prisoners. The camp relied upon only two companies of guardsmen from the Royal Defence Corps (RDC) totaling 834 men, and 200 of those guards served as escorts for migratory labor gangs.[78]

The RDC, an outgrowth of the National Reserve that trained soldiers for a variety of homeland duties, assumed guard duties in many UK camps after its April 1916 establishment.[79] There was no age limit for enlistment in the RDC. Included in it were Protection Companies, which consisted entirely of men too old for military service or younger men of "low medical category," responsible for guarding "vulnerable points" and prisoner of war camps.[80] Aside from relying on soldiers unfit for frontline service, the British guarded prisoners "very lightly, if at all" while the men labored outside the camp.[81] Nonetheless, every man employed as a sentry was prevented from working at another war-related task, and provisions to prevent escapes kept scarce materials such as barbed wire, concrete, lighting equipment, and timber away from the front.

The War Office understood the prisoners' motivations for escape and endeavored to install formidable barriers to their success. Camp officials frequently examined barbed-wire enclosures and kept prisoners on their toes with surprise roll calls and night inspections. Tunneling was a preferred method of escape, and commandants regularly checked camp yards for digs in progress. Proportionately speaking, German officers in the UK attempted escape more frequently than men of other ranks. To counteract the officers' proclivity for flight, staff members at officers' camps remained on high alert and employed additional measures to prevent breakouts. Each camp replaced coins with distinctive metal tokens that were easily identifiable and useless outside the camp. All German officers were required to wear proper uniforms and dressed in civilian clothing only when participating in sporting events. Finally, camp personnel stored knap sacks and other bags in a secure location and only allowed officers to use cumbersome trunks that could not be easily transported.[82]

In spite of preventive measures, prisoners had little trouble securing civilian clothing and British currency, outmaneuvering guards, and making their way into the countryside. Guard duty was a tedious and monotonous task, and many sentries failed to approach their jobs with the enthusiasm expected by their superiors. In a postwar evaluation of Brocton, the camp's commandant commented that "in general the guard troops have needed and [*sic*] good deal of supervision, being too leniently inclined toward the P/W."[83] Following an escape from the officers' camp at Sutton Bonington in Nottingham (Kegworth), the chief constable reached a similar conclusion: "English officers make very bad gaolers. It is not their work and their previous training is all against it."[84] Fortunately for the British, nature provided a flight deterrent that only the most ingenious prisoners proved capable of overcoming—the English Channel.

Hundreds of military prisoners escaped their camps' enclosures, but only two officers and four men of other ranks appear to have to evaded recapture.[85] Even after it became clear that escaping the UK was all but impossible, prisoners diligently worked to defy the boundaries set by their captors. Perhaps prisoners continued to attempt an improbable return to Germany because the benefits of escaping far outweighed the risks. Prisoners faced disciplinary confinement if caught in the act of escape, and while it rarely occurred, regulations authorized sentries to shoot escapees after firing a warning shot. Flight attempts could be dangerous, but if escapees successfully reached Germany, the military and home front greeted them as heroes who had defied the odds to rejoin the nation's struggle.

No individual prisoner epitomized the romanticism that surrounded escapees better than Gunther Plüschow, unquestionably the most famous German to flee the UK. A naval pilot, Plüschow was stationed at the German colonial base in Tsingtau, China, in August 1914. When Japanese forces besieged the base months later, he narrowly escaped before landing in a Chinese rice field and destroying his plane.[86] Plüschow then purchased a ticket aboard a passenger liner bound for San Francisco. On board, he met an American who encouraged him to remain in the United States, which was still neutral, rather than returning to Germany. Plüschow idealistically proclaimed that he was a German officer and wanted to fight for his fatherland. He could not have possibly imagined how difficult that would be.[87]

Plüschow's quest to reach the front took him around the world. Once in the United States Plüschow made his way to New York, where he had his passport altered and boarded an Italian steamer. He succeeded in crossing the Atlantic, but in Gibraltar, Plüschow's luck ran out. British soldiers questioned the aviator's identity during a ship inspection and sent him to the UK. Upon his arrival in Plymouth, the British imprisoned Plüschow and transferred him to the prisoner of war camp at Dorchester. As an officer, he was entitled to be held with other men of rank. Following a brief stay at the officers' camp at Holyport, he transferred to Donington Hall. Plüschow found it difficult to live without knowledge of how Germany was faring at the front, and he began to suffer from barbed-wire disease. With the assistance of another officer fluent in English and familiar with the UK, he quickly made preparations to flee Donington Hall and end his misery.[88]

Escaping Donington Hall proved to be rather uncomplicated. The officers feigned illness in order to explain their absence from roll call and arranged to have two fellow officers slip into their beds before camp personnel came to investigate. With camp officials none the wiser, Plüschow and his accomplice cleared the fence surrounding the estate and headed into the town of Derby. The officers took separate trains to London and agreed to reunite on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral. Plüschow's companion never made it to St. Paul's, and although he would be more difficult to track down in London, Plüschow was soon a wanted man. Plüschow worked out a plan for stowing away aboard a steamer destined for the Netherlands and waited for his opportunity while posing as a dockworker. As he waited to board a ship, Plüschow joined a dockworker's union and was recruited for Kitchener's Army, but after several tense days on the docks, he succeeded in reaching the port of Vlissingen in the Netherlands before crossing into Germany.[89]

Once Plüschow convinced German officials that he was a naval officer rather than a British spy, the Kaiser awarded him the Iron Cross for his exploits. Plüschow appreciated the recognition, but he considered the privilege of resuming active duty to be his most significant reward: "I became a flyer again, was permitted to go to the front to my fighting comrades, was allowed to be of assistance, to fight for the fatherland, and become the commander of a large marine flight base on the eastern front!"[90] In 1915 Plüschow assumed control of a flight station in Libau. While there, he traveled to Kovno to share his story with Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff at a dinner held in Plüschow's honor. As two generals engaged in a war of attrition, Hindenburg and Ludendorff probably saw in Plüschow a characteristic worthy of acknowledgment—an unwillingness to accept defeat.

While in Libau, Plüschow wrote his memoir, *Die Abenteuer des Fliegers von Tsingtau: Meine Erlebnisse in drei Erdteilen* (The adventures of the flyer of Tsingtau: My experiences on three continents).[91] His exploits made him a household name in wartime Germany. He published the first edition of the memoir in 1916, and the original printing sold 600,000 copies before war's end. Subsequent editions in 1927 and 1933 pushed sales to 643,000, distinguishing Plüschow's as one of the most successful German-language accounts of the Great War.[92] Even though he had clearly bested his former captors, Plüschow could not resist the opportunity to taunt his British adversaries. Following the completion of his memoir, he sent a complimentary copy to H. E. Belfield, the director of the DPW.[93]

The home front's reception of Plüschow illustrated the redemptive nature of a successful escape. Since he returned to Germany before the British held large numbers of prisoners, most of the men who eventually filled the UK's camps knew the details of his adventure and could hold out hope that although escaping was nearly impossible, it could be done. Writing several years after Plüschow's death, his wife suggested that for troops in the front lines, her husband's story provided an inspirational model for manliness (*Mannestum*) and glory.[94] One thing was certain; for prisoners who worried that they might be forgotten, Plüschow's ordeal proved that escape offered recognition and acclaim as a hero.

Escape: Duty or Crime?

As Germany hailed Plüschow as a hero, the coordinated escape of three other officers prompted quite a different response in the UK. In August 1915, German naval officers Wolf-Dietrich Baron von Helldorff, Heinrich von Hennig, and Hermann Tholens escaped from Dyffryn Aled in Wales.

Prior to departure, Tholens succeeded in sending a message to the commander in chief of the German submarine forces through an exchanged prisoner.[95] Hennig likewise passed secret codes to naval officials in letters that suggested it would be relatively simple to escape Dyffryn Aled. Through coded messages from family members, the commander in chief agreed to deploy a submarine to pick up the officers off the coast of Wales. Max Valentiner, a friend of Hennig and commander of the *U-38*, volunteered for the operation.[96]

Valentiner's crew, along with an additional submarine, the *U-27*, headed for a scheduled pick-up at the Ormes-Head in Wales, but the *U-27* departed for another mission before attempting to make contact. Valentiner's *U-38* ventured precariously close to shore after failing to locate the escaped officers during the first night and even swept the shore with searchlights. The three officers had reached their rendezvous point, but coastal rocks made it impossible for the *U-38* to detect their torch signals. When weather conditions worsened, the officers gave up hope of finding the vessel and parted ways. Tholens purchased a rail ticket to London before a policeman confronted him at the station and ended his run as an escapee.[97]

Police eventually apprehended all three prisoners, but recapture was only the beginning of the officers' ordeal. When the commandant at Dyffryn Aled sent for his prisoners, he ordered that they be handcuffed for the return journey to camp, even after they offered their word of honor not to attempt escape. Upon arrival at the camp, the commandant required the prisoners to stand handcuffed before a crowd of soldiers and civilians for approximately fifteen minutes. The German officers, who believed that escape was their duty, were appalled by the commandant's refusal to accept their word of honor and quickly lodged complaints with the American Embassy. The events that followed demonstrated the officers' unwillingness to allow their captors to debase prisoners' surest path to redemption by treating them as criminals.

In early September 1915 Lieutenant Helldorff informed the American Embassy's German Division that he regarded his treatment "as beneath the dignity of an officer" and "a personal chicanery and insult" on the part of the commandant.[98] Hennig not only considered his treatment insulting, he questioned the commandant's understanding of the concept of honor: "I humbly wish to point out that in all civilized states handcuffs are only put on in the case of the lowest criminals, and consequently I also firmly believe that the handcuffing of officers who are prisoners of war and who simply wished to perform their duty to their Fatherland is not compatible with the standpoint of honour of the English army."[99]

News of the handcuffing sent shockwaves through the community of officers at Dyffryn Aled. Before any of the prisoners involved in the incident had an opportunity to protest, the camp's senior officer wrote American representatives to object to the commandant's disciplinary techniques. He notified the embassy that every German officer held the belief that "it was not only his right, but his duty, to avail himself of any opportunity of escape which presented itself."[100] In a later communication, the German camp senior reiterated Hennig's contention that handcuffs were intended for criminals. He claimed that the dishonorable treatment was so alarming to the Dyffryn Aled officers that "as companions of those who were subjected to it, we feel bound to comment upon it."[101]

The publicity generated by the incident made matters worse. Several British officers who witnessed the prisoners' arrest disapproved of the commandant's actions, and the War Office seemed to recognize that the episode might lead to reprisals against British prisoners in Germany. British officials saw little reason to share information about the incident with the German government.[102] The issue was complicated by the fact that the commandant at Dyffryn Aled had handcuffed officers after failed escapes on other occasions. Lieutenants Sandersleben and Ambler fled the camp in April 1915 and remained at large for almost a week before being recaptured.[103] In the days after their arrest, a military tribunal sentenced the officers to twenty-eight days confinement, but the episode otherwise passed with little fanfare.

After securing transfer to the officers' camp at Holyport, Sandersleben asked the American Embassy to inform the German government that he, too, had been handcuffed following an escape from Dyffryn Aled, even though guards with fixed bayonets surrounded him. Furthermore, Sandersleben claimed that the commandant forced him to pay three pounds for his transport back to the camp. Already indignant at having been handcuffed, Sandersleben was shocked to discover that prison officials in Brixton expected him to share an exercise yard with "black and coloured men and other English criminals."[104] Like Hennig, Tholens, and Helldorff, Sandersleben believed the treatment he received was spiteful and insulting. As soldiers of a nation at war, the officers were confident that they were performing their duty. The trouble was that their duties as prisoners conflicted with those of their commandant. The officers' success at evading sentries suggested that the staff at Dyffryn Aled had been negligent in its responsibility to ensure that the camp's prisoners remained behind barbed wire.

Two German prisoners, almost certainly Sandersleben and Ambler, with police at Blaenau Ffestinlog, Wales, on 11 April 1915. Meirionnydd Archives, Gwynedd Archives Service, Wales, ZS/48/51.

Treating escaped officers as criminals invited the Germans to handle British officers in the same manner. Since the War Office expected British soldiers to attempt escape from enemy captivity, defending the Dyffryn Aled commandant's actions would have been counterproductive.[105] In November 1915, even before Sandersleben issued his complaint, the British Foreign Office assured the German government that steps had been taken to make certain that handcuffs would no longer be used following recapture.[106] This guarantee was as close as the British would come to an apology, but their willingness to accept responsibility for the incidents showed that they respected a prisoner's obligation to rejoin his comrades

at the front. The officers who suffered the indignity of handcuffing contended that they had been treated as criminals rather than men of honor. Any officer would consider being shackled after giving his word of honor disgraceful, but being treated like a criminal was especially damaging to officers in captivity. The commandant's decision not to take the men at their word could only mean that he did not perceive them to be honorable soldiers. Desertion and treason were crimes under military law, and captives were well aware that in some circles, prisoners could be suspected of either crime. Being handled as a criminal had a deeper significance for prisoners who were painfully aware of the stigma of surrender and seemed unable to escape its implications, even when demonstrating an unquestionable devotion to duty.

The commandant's extreme response to the Dyffryn Aled escapes proved that even though the prisoners failed to reach Germany, they succeeded in creating problems for British authorities. When prisoners slipped out of their camps, sentries and local police units had no choice but to devote their attention to recapturing them. Subsequent military tribunals and dealings with neutral embassies that transmitted complaints to the prisoners' home governments tied down civilian and military authorities for hours or days. And it was not only officers who proved to be problematic for their commandants. When five enlisted prisoners escaped from camp Dorchester in a span of two months, the camp commandant was reportedly forced to resign his post.[107]

The War Office expected escapees to be punished for the difficulties they created, and penalties for flight convinced many prisoners that their captors continued to view escape as a crime. Although The Hague Convention allowed captors to punish escapees, it provided no standard for disciplinary action. The German army operated under the assumption that "attempts on the part of individuals who have not pledged their word on honor might be regarded as the expression of a natural impulse for liberty, and not as a crime."[108] British military law permitted tribunals to punish escapees with any penalty "exclusive of death," and sentences in the UK were customarily much harsher than those handed down in Germany, as acknowledged by an internal postwar British report.[109] Tholens, Hennig, and Helldorff, for example, received eighty-four days confinement, a sentence the Kriegsministerium believed violated the spirit of Article VIII of The Hague Convention and belittled the officers involved.[110] Prisoners in Germany tended to find British punishments severe as well. Following his escape from a German camp, British lieutenant S. E. Buckley claimed that the handing down of harsh sentences in the UK made life more difficult

for prisoners trying to escape Germany. Buckley reminded British officials that German prisoners had "little or no chance" of escaping England, and he attributed progressively harsher punishments in Germany to the British practice of sentencing German officers to long terms of imprisonment.[111]

The German government vigorously protested the British treatment of escapees, and prisoner punishment was a subject of much contention at conferences with German and Turkish officials in Switzerland and the Netherlands in summer 1917. Negotiations led to the adoption in the UK of a code limiting the punishment of simple escapes to fourteen days confinement and two months for flight attempts that included violations of other regulations.[112] The new standards, codified as Army Council Instruction 1209 of 1917, still called for reprimanding escapees but brought British practices closer to the standards observed by other belligerents.[113]

New Approaches to Prisoner Recapture

As the prisoner population of the UK increased, German captives provided military tribunals with ample opportunities to apply the new sentencing guidelines. During the same month that the War Office released Army Council Instruction 1209, the *Times* reported that there were thirteen German prisoners at large in the UK.[114] The British eventually recaptured the escapees, but a coordinated breakout from an officers' camp in Nottingham left more than twenty additional prisoners unaccounted for during the following month. On 25 September 1917, twenty-two German officers escaped from Kegworth in Sutton Bonington by tunneling under the camp's barbed-wire perimeter. Operations of this magnitude required months of planning and cooperation among the prisoners involved. Excavation of the tunnel reportedly took the prisoners three months to complete, and the officers constructed maps and compasses and stockpiled food before making a dash for liberty. British authorities captured most of the men within three days, but four officers remained on the run until 30 September.[115]

A number of the officers who fled Sutton Bonington had previous escape attempts to their credit and had a reputation as "probably the toughest lot of prisoners to deal with in England," according to the chief constable of Nottingham.[116] Almost all of the officers involved in the escape were sentenced to fifty-six to sixty days of military confinement. In order to award sentences exceeding the fourteen-day standard for simple escape, military tribunals convicted the prisoners of possessing civilian clothing or altering their uniforms. The officers considered the disguises a necessary part

of the escape and challenged the legality of the verdicts.[117] Although they protested the harsh sentences, the officers could serve their time knowing that they had caused tremendous difficulties for their captors.

The mass escape from Sutton Bonington prompted local officials to question Britain's approach to camp administration and to call for closer cooperation between military and local police agencies. The threat posed by the German officers roaming the Nottingham countryside forced the chief constable of the district to employ special constables in a thorough operation that included roadblocks, night searches, and motorcycle and bicycle patrols. The search lasted five days and exhausted the chief constable's resources. In his report on the recapture efforts, he noted that the investigation required him to drive his constables "unmercifully hard." On account of the shortage of regular police officers in the county, he feared that an undertaking of the same magnitude could not be carried out again for some time. The chief constable assured the Home Office that if numerous officers were to escape again, "the same amount of success would not be attained in their apprehension."[118] He maintained that the camp's commandant and adjunct captain were excellent officers but concluded that it was impossible to effectively run the camp with the limited support staff at their disposal.[119] In other words, the staff at Sutton Bonington could not expect to control the German officers in their care without reconsidering their methods.

Other observers called for more drastic measures. In a letter to the editors of the *Times*, a concerned citizen wrote that he regarded the breakout at Sutton Bonington as a reflection of the camp's administration: "That a tunnel could have been excavated under the fence into the adjoining field without discovery, if it were not a very unpleasant fact, would be incredible, as it is discreditable to the officers in charge of the camp. Just imagine the time it would take and the quantity of soil to be removed. It is manifest that there has been great laxity, and it is imperative that drastic measures should be taken at once. The officers in command should be removed and placed upon their defence before a Court-martial. There are, as may be expected, all sorts of rumors in the district, which a public inquiry may perhaps show to have no foundation. One wonders whether these camps are under any sort of official inspection."[120] The ease with which the German officers fled the camp disturbed the residents of the surrounding area. The suggestion that the commanding officers at Sutton Bonington stand before a court-martial left little doubt that residents were concerned and angry over the prospect of German officers living near them with such lax supervision.

Perhaps the residents of Nottingham were correct to suspect that British authorities were not granting prisoners the respect they deserved as flight risks. Camps for officers supposedly remained on a state of high alert, but as authorities gained confidence in the English Channel's ability to contain prisoners, British officials found it more economical to reward citizens for assisting in recapture than to employ large contingents of guards.[121] Only weeks before the escape at Sutton Bonington, the head of military intelligence (M.I.5.), Col. Vernon Kell, authorized constables to offer rewards of one to five pounds for information leading to the immediate arrest of an escaped prisoner. Naturally, camp guards were not eligible for rewards.[122] With little hope of prisoners making it across the channel, British authorities were content to simply round up prisoners after escape efforts ran out of steam.

As a result of the breakout, the commandant at Sutton Bonington doubled the guard staff, but a deficiency of sentries was not the only problem with the British method of handling escapes.[123] Despite the reliance on local policemen to assist in prisoner recapture, poor communication between camp authorities and local officials hampered searches and wasted resources. The chief constable of Nottingham called for closer cooperation with camp officials in the wake of the breakout at Sutton Bonington and recommended that protocols be established for contacting relevant agencies in the event that a prisoner breached a camp's perimeter. His colleagues in other districts shared his desire for reform. In November 1917, the Home Office called a meeting of representatives from eight agencies, including New Scotland Yard, the constabulary, M.I.5., and the War Office. Representatives acknowledged that the chief procedural difficulties of recapturing prisoners were insufficient warnings that an escape had taken place and inadequate notification of recaptures. The latter problem was especially disturbing. In many cases, special constables had continued their searches long after prisoners had been taken into custody.[124]

The Home Office meeting resulted in a protocol that required camp commandants to quickly inform constables of breakouts and supply descriptions of wanted men. Each camp maintained a card index of prisoners' descriptions in order to hasten the transmission of information. Owing to the higher quality telephone lines at police stations, chief constables passed information to local authorities while commandants telegraphed the Home Office, New Scotland Yard, and Command Headquarters. Command Headquarters continued the chain by informing military authorities of the escape. Neutral steamers offered the best chance of crossing the channel, so the Home Office warned port authorities, customs officers,

and port police to anticipate a prisoner's arrival. Since prisoners could remain at large for several days, New Scotland Yard publicized escapes in the *Police Gazette*, which was circulated among police forces in England and Wales twice weekly. The Press Association and Central News also received notification of escapes. Authorities used the same communication chains to ensure that prisoner searches concluded as soon as a prisoner had been apprehended.[125] The protocols reached police stations throughout the UK in January 1918,[126] and while they streamlined the process of recapturing escaped prisoners, the new practices did little to check the prisoners' aspirations for flight.

Heinz H. E. Justus, for instance, fell into British hands on 31 July 1917 and began attempting escape almost as soon as he set foot on British soil. Following his arrival at the officers' camp at Colsterdale, Justus repeatedly attempted to break through the camp's barbed-wire enclosure or tunnel underneath it. On the way to building a reputation as a master of disguise, Justus succeeded in walking out of Colsterdale's gates while impersonating the camp's canteen manager. Once outside the camp, he used items smuggled in parcels from his mother to disguise himself as a woman. When sentries caught up with him, they encountered a man dressed in a skirt and white fur hat. His exploits earned him a court-martial and transfer to Holyport, where he participated in several failed tunneling operations. Justus's reputation as a difficult prisoner resulted in his transfer to a third camp at Lofthouse Park, but the prolific escapee decided to take a detour before reaching his final destination.[127]

En route to Lofthouse Park, Justus leapt out the window of his train while other officers shielded him from view. He hid the high collar of his officer's uniform with a handkerchief and made his way to London. Only hours after his escape, he took in a theatrical show and was delighted to discover that the English staff officer sitting to his right was oblivious to the fact that he was in the presence of a wanted man. Recognizing that his beloved officer's tunic was a liability, he considered throwing it into the river but refrained because he thought he might like to have it if he was recaptured. Justus's solution to the problem was both practical and arrogant—he mailed the tunic to his old commandant at Holyport. Doing so ensured that he would be able to retrieve the garment if his escape failed and allowed him to thumb his nose at an old adversary.[128]

Newspaper coverage confirmed that the commandant received the tunic and presumed Justus to be once again posing as a woman.[129] Justus remained at large for more than a week, but his plans for hopping a neutral steamer were foiled when he came down with the flu. Justus's

condition declined so rapidly that he had no choice but to turn himself in. After recovering, he was court-martialed and sent to Chelmsford prison. While serving his sentence there, he received his tunic from the commandant at Holyport, who was surely pleased to have gotten the last laugh.[130]

Justus probably felt that his bid for freedom had been worth the effort. Military honor codes demanded that prisoners attempt to return to battle, but prisoners also derived a great deal of satisfaction from trying to outsmart their captors. In this sense, escape attempts can also be seen as a type of sport pitting commandants and prisoners against one another. Hatching an escape scheme provided prisoners with a long-term goal, and planning an escape signified that prisoners had not accepted their fate and sought a return to active service in Germany's struggle. Men in captivity undoubtedly believed that escape efforts tied down British resources, and they were eager to share news of their exploits with the home front whenever possible. In a smuggled letter from Stobs in Scotland, a submariner informed his wife that he had acquired civilian clothing for an escape and needed only to obtain the necessary funds to put his plan into action. He neglected to provide the specifics of his plan, but the submariner surely knew that his chances at success were minimal. Still, it was important that his wife know he was making plans to rejoin the war and not simply wasting away.[131] In another smuggled letter to a fellow officer, Hans K. lamented that getting off "the island" was almost impossible, but he proudly claimed that an average of twenty sentries guarded every ten officers at Donington Hall.[132]

Did the British really find their German captives as problematic as the prisoners liked to imagine, or were the prisoners' feelings of accomplishment misguided? The answer to this question is complicated. The British consistently sought to guard prisoners with the fewest sentries possible. As a matter of policy, authorities preferred to offer rewards for tips leading to the prisoners' apprehension rather than strengthen the guard. What prisoners could not have known was that the War Office's quest for efficiency was a sign that resources were stretched thin. German labor was important to British agriculture, but the number of sentries required for scattered work groups far exceeded the amount that had been needed when prisoners were clustered in larger parent camps. The growth of the work-camp system and increases in German surrenders led to significant shortages in the number of RDC men available for guard duty by 1918.[133] Shortages became so acute that officials feared the RDC would not be able to supply guards in the event of unexpected growth in the prisoner population.[134]

In view of these shortages, commandants relied heavily on the English Channel's ability to turn back escapees. If the channel had not been there, it is safe to say that many of the men who fled their camps would have reached a neutral country and rejoined their units. Effecting escape from a British working camp in France, for example, was a much easier undertaking, and numerous prisoners succeeded in evading recapture. However, the War Office was not terribly concerned with the ones who got away. In its postwar report, the DPW claimed that it was "no wonder" that many prisoners escaped from various theaters of war outside the UK, but it considered the prisoners' triumphs a "comparatively minor consideration as compared with the grave disadvantages of employing an excessive number of guarding troops who were required for duties of much greater importance."[135]

The War Office attached limited importance to ensuring that captives remained behind barbed wire, but the DPW's attitude toward escapes belied the prisoners' success at drawing their captor's attention from other war-related matters. Escapes never threatened to turn the tide of the war, and a soldier in the trenches or manning a submarine was always more useful than the most problematic prisoner of war. Yet every search for a prisoner on the run required military and local police authorities to divert their attention away from other affairs. As the escape at Sutton Bonington made clear, the efforts required to recapture prisoners sometimes stretched resources to the breaking point. The Home Office's decision to call a national meeting on prisoner recapture suggests that the difficulties experienced in Nottingham were not exceptional. Despite the desire to keep guard staffs at a minimum, escapes prompted commandants to increase security measures and strengthen sentry numbers, a complicated task given the limited pool of potential guardsmen.[136] The Great War was a war of attrition where manpower reserves played a crucial role. At the very least, escape attempts aggravated an already stressed prison camp system.

■ Becoming a prisoner of war was a traumatic experience for the German soldiers and sailors who surrendered to the British during the Great War. However, it was inside the camps, after the fog of battle had lifted, that prisoners were forced to come to terms with the realities of their decision to surrender. Surrounded by dehumanizing barbed wire, they were physically cut off from the higher purpose for which they had once fought. Prisoners suffered immensely from sensations of abandonment and detachment, and whereas these sensations are not exclusive to the wartime captivity experience, many of the prisoners' anxieties were related to and

intensified by the fear that their loved ones and comrades might think that surrender or capture had exposed them as inadequate soldiers and men. German prisoners in the UK thus longed for affirmation from military acquaintances and relatives in Germany. Many prisoners internalized the stigma of captivity so thoroughly that they were astonished to find that German relief agencies still cared for their well-being. As their letters make clear, prisoners became preoccupied with maintaining contact with the outside world and took every opportunity to assure their countrymen that they remained loyal soldiers despite their inauspicious fate. A captor's willingness to accept an enemy's surrender offered survival, but survival carried a high emotional price.

Escape proved to be the most effective means of reconnecting with the war effort and regaining one's sense of manhood and honor, but for the overwhelming majority of prisoners, flight attempts proved unsuccessful. The frequency with which soldiers meticulously planned escapes, despite their almost certain failure, demonstrated that fleeing a prisoner of war camp did more than free escapees from the physical confines of the camp. It offered release from the nagging thoughts of inadequacy that occupied the prisoner's mind. Escaping back to the front was the ultimate expression of solidarity with one's fighting comrades and the most effective means of shaking the stigma of surrender. However, there were also ways of demonstrating continued devotion to the national cause without leaving the confines of a camp. In the trenches and at sea, prisoners had been armed with typical weapons of war, but in the struggle waged inside the camps of the UK, cultural sensibilities governed attempts at continued resistance.

CHAPTER FOUR

REDEMPTIVE MANHOOD

Organizing a New Theater of War

The English Channel prevented all but a few German prisoners from escaping the UK and returning to the front, but prisoners rarely allowed separation from the battlefield to exclude them from contributing to the war effort. In many cases, prisoners' pre-capture sense of manhood rested upon the assumption that they served a higher collective purpose and would willingly sacrifice themselves for the good of the nation and its values. In enemy hands, prisoners felt detached from that greater purpose and their roles as defenders of a nation at war. Surrender inevitably set off an identity crisis that forced prisoners to confront the stigma of captivity. This process included proving that in spite of the view held by many observers, prisoners were neither cowards nor traitors, and certainly not "dead with little glory."[1] With little hope of reaching the battlefield, prisoners worked to overcome the emasculation and shame of captivity by once again devoting themselves to a higher cause. The activities they organized behind barbed wire stressed their camaraderie, unbroken nationalism, eagerness to continue the fight, and commitment to playing a constructive role in postwar German society.

The German prisoners of the British believed that their response to captivity said something significant about their national character and, more importantly, their identity as men at war. The culture of captivity became a culture of resistance and redemption. Prisoners chose action over passive acceptance of their fate, and camp activities gave their lives substance and meaning. Ranging from acts of simple disobedience to the production of first-class cultural events, camp pursuits were intended to confirm that the prisoners' removal from the battlefield was not indicative

of an unwillingness to serve. Prisoners drew upon traditions of resistance dating to the Napoleonic occupation of the German lands to rebuild their masculine identity. As soldiers on enemy soil, prisoners needed to believe that they were still connected to a higher purpose, and the importance of camp activities went well beyond relieving the boredom of captivity.

Disobedience as Resistance

German prisoners were subject to British military law and likely to be punished for any transgressions committed as "guests" in the UK. Whereas captors anticipated that prisoners would attempt escape, and largely honored their right to do so, acts of disobedience directed at camp authorities generally met with swift retribution.[2] On the whole, there were relatively few instances of outright indiscipline, but it was not unheard of for prisoners to express their dissatisfaction with life in captivity by refusing to observe their captor's regulations.[3] Swiss representative A. de Sturler visited the military detention barracks at Stafford in August 1918 to find its cells filled with men accused of disciplinary infractions. The first prisoners of war began serving sentences at Stafford in July 1917, and by the time of Sturler's inspection, more than 217 German prisoners had done time in the facility. The British most commonly jailed prisoners for disobedience, insubordination, and breaking into camp stores, but the prison also held men sentenced for laziness or refusal to work, stealing, using threatening language, and threatening noncommissioned officers.[4]

The British took disrespect toward their officers seriously. When a British noncommissioned officer instructed the prisoner Hugo B. to put out a fire, the German allegedly responded with "highly insubordinate and disgusting language." Although Hugo B. claimed that his inexperience with the English language made it impossible for him to comprehend the severity of his statements, a court handed him a seemingly harsh sentence of six months imprisonment with correspondence restrictions.[5] In another case of defiance, several prisoners at Brocton displayed an "insubordinate attitude" during roll call. The ensuing confrontation ended with the commandant knocking a prisoner to the ground and placing him in a detention cell. The German camp senior challenged the commandant's actions only to receive the same treatment as the comrade he had defended. This was one of several instances of unruliness at Brocton. The British officer assigned to investigate the incidents concluded that the insubordinate acts were not isolated but part of a "continued series of determined attempts" by a small number of prisoners to break down discipline. By the investigator's

estimation, the prisoners' complaints to the German government on the matter were aimed at "getting the better of the Commandant."[6]

Prisoners employed another form of resistance as laborers inside their camps and in the countryside by working slowly or not at all. In the last years of the war, German prisoners became a significant component of the British labor force, but the quality of the Germans' work disappointed many employers. The freedom associated with agricultural work encouraged prisoners in the farming sector to execute tasks reasonably well for fear of being replaced by a more industrious comrade, and skilled laborers likewise performed a higher quality of work. Nonetheless, Board of Trade estimates suggested that prisoner output approached only 55–65 percent of the numbers achieved by the prewar English labor force. British authorities attributed much of this discrepancy to ration reductions and the prisoners' inexperience with their occupations.[7] While that may have been the case, deliberate indolence also played a significant role in impeding efficiency.

Subordinate groups often employ this sort of "foot dragging" as a safe form of everyday resistance, and although public acts of defiance occur less frequently because of their consequences, we have already seen that they took place.[8] In June 1918, members of the Dunmow Farmers' Club complained of the minimal effort put forth by German prisoners and declared that they would no longer employ them because of the trouble the captives caused. One employer asserted that prisoners on his farm destroyed his flower garden and "pelted the workhouse master with rag balls."[9] While the victim of the assault was probably appalled by the prisoners' insolence, another employer experienced far worse from a German working his land. After the farmer and his wife turned in for the night, the prisoner broke into their home and murdered them with a billhook. Of course, cold-blooded murder by prisoners was exceptionally rare, and the billhook-wielding prisoner's crime was the product of deranged mind rather than any desire to resist his captors.[10]

Labor protests among prisoners were usually nonviolent, but they were often carried out in public. On numerous occasions, prisoners expressed dissatisfaction with working conditions or pay scales by going on strike. In one case, approximately thirty prisoners called a sympathy strike when authorities punished three of their comrades with a twenty-eight-day pay stoppage for walking off the job.[11] Another strike occurred when British officials transferred prisoners employed in drainage work to agricultural sites during harvest time. Disappointed at being left behind to complete the less desirable drainage operation, the remaining prisoners from the

group organized a two-day strike that ended only after officials withheld mail privileges and replaced standard rations with bread and water.[12] Prisoners apparently utilized the power of the strike in hopes of gaining favorable work assignments. But work stoppages were also a weapon of choice in power struggles between prisoners and commandants. Strikes occurred at Brocton on at least two occasions, the first of which broke out when the commandant revoked the privilege of hauling fallen wood into the compound. Once again, a British investigator concluded that the strike was an attempt to "best the Commandant" and believed both strikes to be examples of "deliberate resistance to authority by the prisoners of war concerned."[13]

Disobedience, whether expressed as a vulgar insult or a coordinated strike, represented deliberate resistance to authority. When prisoners participated in public acts of defiance, they understood that they would be punished. By causing trouble for guards and other camp staffers, prisoners kept their captors on edge and boosted their own egos by cultivating an image as soldiers dedicated to resisting the enemy. Power struggles are common between any prison population and its warden/commandant, but acts of defiance allowed prisoners of war to imagine that they were contributing to the military effort by requiring commandants to employ larger guard staffs. German officer Walter P. and his fellow prisoners at Wakefield engaged their commandant in a protracted test of wills late in the war. When the commandant harassed prisoners by locking the gate between the camp's two sections during a theatrical production in the neighboring compound, the officers attempted to force the barrier open and later launched an "offensive" of harassment against him. The morning following the incident, three prisoners failed to appear for roll call, and the camp's officers began lodging daily complaints against the Wakefield commandant with the British War Office. In a smuggled letter, Walter P. revealed the deeper significance of the prisoners' activities by assuring his father that their defiance had led to a doubling of the camp guard. "You see," he continued, "we tie down as much power here as we can."[14]

Reestablishing Connections

Adopting an insubordinate stance and attempting to "best" camp personnel signaled the prisoners' refusal to accept their fate, and their insolence surely troubled commandants and kept guards on their toes. However, prisoners who employed extreme tactics risked giving the impression that when faced with adversity, German soldiers resorted to criminality and

dishonorable conduct. Insubordination could also result in jail sentences or emotionally distressing punishments, particularly correspondence restrictions. Accordingly, most prisoners chose a subtler path of resistance that stressed their identification with the war effort and rebuilt their sense of manhood. While maintaining their physical and mental health, prisoners placed their camp lives in a broader framework by focusing on how their individual actions might help them effectively serve the nation. This involved regaining a sense of power in the camp environment by reshaping the spaces the British had assigned them and encouraging observers to recognize the camp's viability as a battleground of a different sort.

Between the overt acts of resistance and backroom diatribes of defiance that take place beyond the power holders' gaze, there exists another plane of resistance. These acts of resistance take place in public, but they are subtler than strikes or physical confrontations and usually carry a double or secret meaning. Songs, humor, and rituals tend to fall into this category. While the meaning of the prisoners' camp activities was often quite clear to participants and British officials, their nonthreatening yet nationalistic tone situates them somewhere on this middle plane of resistance.[15]

Members of a national communities form relationships with only a fraction of their countrymen, but they often connect with one another through shared traditions, symbols, and experiences.[16] Regional factors heavily influenced the German prisoners' identities. Yet when faced with a common enemy, they managed to reconcile their local and national identities, symbols, and expressions of German culture to set themselves apart from their captors and convert an environment of shame into a community of resistance and solidarity.[17] There were certainly disagreements among prisoners, but as one officer recalled in his memoirs, no one wanted to "give Tommy a show." Everyone understood that the British took great satisfaction from signs of German disunity, and the prisoners accordingly attempted to prevent squabbles from becoming public affairs.[18] Following the outbreak of the Great War, the British attempted to sever the cultural ties that bound them to their most threatening enemy and denounced German culture as barbaric. "Englishness" and "Germanness" were believed to be incompatible, and recognizing oneself as decidedly not German was essential to British national identity.[19] By expressing and celebrating their Germanness, prisoners challenged the hegemonic culture of their captors and reaffirmed their commitment to a nation at war.

Prisoners had little control over the quarters in which they were housed in the UK. The War Office determined the physical construction, furnishings, and geographical location of barracks. In the civilian realm, families

Postcard showing three German prisoners seated before illustrations of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Field Marshall Hindenburg, among other personalities. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, MSg 200/1247.

decorate their homes with images of individuals they admire and respect, and prisoners routinely adorned their walls with photos and sketches of prominent German military and political figures. When American inspector Edward G. Lowry visited the officers' camp at Holyport in May 1915, he observed that the officers had recently celebrated the "Bismarck anniversary," and a large picture of the founding statesman overlooked one of the camp's recreation rooms.[20] Francis E. Brantingham toured the facility the following year and found that "among the photographs and prints decorating the rooms were frequent portraits of the German emperor and the Field Marshall Hindenburg."[21] When a correspondent from the *New York Times* visited Holyport, he similarly discovered that many officers had proudly displayed photos of the Kaiser and his son, the crown prince, in their quarters.[22]

The portraits were signs of admiration for the military establishment and royal family. The iconic images identified the men who displayed them as loyal Germans in much the same way that a depiction of the Virgin Mary or the crucifixion of Jesus identified someone as a devout Catholic. Outside the barracks, prisoners sometimes attempted to lay claim to a camp's paths and streets by naming them after famous German personalities. The paths that traversed the grounds of Stobs in Scotland, for instance, went by unofficial street names like Zeppelinallee and

Hindenburgstraße, and prisoners held weekly concerts on Blücherplatz.[23] At other camps, prisoners associated themselves with the front by hanging improvised war maps.[24] These visual representations helped captives psychologically link themselves to the front and shorten the distance between the camps of the UK and the battlefield.

In their efforts to create a German enclave on enemy soil, prisoners were confronted with the challenges that face any group that seeks to foster a sense of community. Larger camps held thousands of men, and it would have been difficult for individuals to familiarize themselves with more than a small percentage of their fellow prisoners or keep up with a camp's numerous organized activities. The development of camp newspapers was especially important in this regard, as camp publications strengthened prisoners' sense of community by keeping them informed of upcoming events and chronicling camp life. Newspapers connected prisoners "through print" in a way that verbal communication could not.[25] The first camp newspapers appeared in the UK in 1914, and before war's end, prisoners had founded more than fifteen publications in military camps.[26] Prisoners organized and produced camp newspapers themselves and generally printed the publications on basic block presses or sent away for professional printing. Newspapers were usually funded through subscriptions, and although subject to War Office censorship, the publications added structure to the camp environment by providing prisoners with a means of marking time. Print media also served as a sort of therapy against the dangers of barbed-wire disease. Aside from uniting prison camp populations, newspapers formed an additional bridge to the outside world. Prisoners sent copies of camp publications to Germany, the United States, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Japan. More than 2,500 issues of each printing of *Stobsiade*, the official paper of Stobs in Scotland, for example, made their way to the German home front.[27]

In many respects, camp newspapers served the same purpose as the numerous trench newspapers published by German soldiers on both the eastern and western fronts. To some extent, German soldier newspapers were meant to "reawaken" a soldier's sense of manliness and comradeship, and the publications commonly identified duty and loyalty as specifically "German" attributes that were essential parts of manhood.[28] Although, German soldier newspapers stressed the importance of a man's willingness to die for the fatherland, they also claimed that soldiers could remain loyal by keeping themselves healthy and contributing to the war effort in a variety of other ways.[29] Frontline newspapers were also a means for soldiers to chronicle their experiences and provide an accurate account of the

war from the combatants' perspectives for future generations interested in learning "the truth" about the conflict.[30]

The organizers of prisoner newspapers similarly saw their publications as a forum to tell the truth about life in captivity. In the pages of publications like *Stobsiade*, readers found reason to believe that prisoners had not accepted captivity lying down and remained mindful of their duties as men and soldiers. In fact, the prisoners had rebounded from the initial shock of surrender to commit themselves to the war effort and the exaltation of German character. *Stobsiade*'s first military edition stressed the importance of staying engaged and encouraged prisoners to think about how they might contribute to the paper's success.[31] In the follow-up edition, *Stobsiade*'s editors reminded readers that a prisoner of war's primary duty was to stay active and work toward the future rather than sinking into a hopeless state of despondency.[32] The staff of camp Dorchester's *Deutsche Blätter* used its inaugural issue to inform readers that the "highest purpose of the existing camp associations, to pay homage in enemy territory to the spirit and character of the fatherland through gymnastic and athletic activities or the fostering of German art, German music, German songs or the German language, will also be served by our paper." *Deutsche Blätter*'s editors considered it a duty to serve German interests and reasoned that their work might help prisoners overcome the feelings of emptiness that accompanied captivity by giving their lives a sense of direction.[33]

By drawing Dorchester's organized activities under the same umbrella, *Deutsche Blätter*'s commentary suggested that although methods differed, prisoners could organize their lives in captivity around common goals. Indeed, the organizational aspect of the prisoners' pursuits gave meaning to their existence and allowed them to feel as if they still served a larger cause. J. Davidson Ketchum spent the Great War in Germany as a civilian internee at Berlin's Ruhleben camp before earning a doctorate in psychology after the war. In his posthumously published study of Ruhleben, the former internee argued that organization was essential to prisoners' ability to build a world of purpose behind the barbed wire. Ketchum asserted that as individuals, humans are generally disinclined to reach toward a goal, but Ketchum observed that people behave differently when placed in groups. When part of a formal, coordinated unit, individuals tend to become goal oriented.[34]

Although Ketchum was not a combatant, his observations offer valuable insight into the prisoners' motivations for participating in organized activities. One of the prisoners' primary goals in the UK was reestablishing their union with the fatherland that had been severed with their departure

from the battlefield. Long before unification in 1871, Germans used festive celebrations to cultivate a sense of national unity. The process of culturally uniting the German lands following political unification was challenging. Regional peculiarities endured as the young nation went to war in 1914. Although Bismarck and earlier Kaisers had resisted the creation and celebration of national holidays, Kaiser Wilhelm II recognized the value of national commemorations and supported them enthusiastically.[35] Imagining how their comrades and countrymen might be celebrating holidays of national significance made the agony of separation from the homeland particularly acute for prisoners of war. In April 1915, Lt. A. D. W. Pult was crossing the English Channel aboard a hospital ship when he realized that his countrymen were likely celebrating Otto von Bismarck's 100th birthday. At times like these, Pult later recalled, he was doubly eager to contribute his full energy to his nation's struggle. Instead he lay helpless, "like a small child," on his way to England.[36]

Shortly after his arrival, Pult likely discovered that his comrades behind barbed wire had also celebrated Bismarck's birthday. For German prisoners in the UK, celebrating national holidays was a means of demonstrating their loyalty. At the front, soldiers festively decorated the trenches with flags and held banquets and athletic competitions in honor of the Kaiser's birthday.[37] The persistence of cultural divides made celebrations of the Kaiser's birth essential to maintaining a united front on enemy soil, and celebrations of the emperor's birthday carried spiritual undertones, with loyal worshippers singing hymns in honor of a monarch who personified the religion of nationalism. At one such event at Dyffryn Aled, festivities included a military march, the singing of the German national anthem—presumably "Heil dir im Siegerkranz" or "Das Deutschlandlied"—and patriotic songs like "Ich bin ein Deutscher" (I am a German). The evening also featured humorous soldiers' songs and a duet titled "Berlin bei Nacht" (Evening in Berlin).[38] During the 1918 "Fatherland Evening" held at Brocton, a camp for common soldiers, the Kaiser's birthday celebration featured the songs "Deutscher Schutztruppen Marsch" (March of the German Protection Troops), "The Germans to the Front," and the "Schwarz-Weiß-Rot! Marsch" (Black-White-Red March).[39]

The military tone of the musical selections highlighted the prisoners' unbroken patriotism and helped distinguish the men as strong and courageous disciples rather than passive and cowardly nonbelievers. Celebrations of nationalism represented more than an evening of amusement. They afforded prisoners the opportunity to shape their surroundings and musically express what they longed to demonstrate physically. The diary

writings of Ernst Ewald H., a Saxon reserve lieutenant, illustrate this point well. A prisoner at Holyport, Lieutenant H. wrote in January 1917 that he had just celebrated the Kaiser's birthday for the third time since the commencement of hostilities. Observing his commander in chief's birthday in enemy captivity may not have been ideal, but as Lieutenant H. noted, "One can no longer demonstrate through acts what one expresses through song and word on a day such as this."[40]

Prisoners drew a sense of solidarity from celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday and clearly saw the ritual as a means of continuing the fight. Following a commemoration of the event at Stobs in Scotland, an editor from the camp newspaper reported that the prisoners' sport and music associations had all given their best efforts for the festivities. Recognizing the sense of camaraderie engendered by the commemoration, he noted that many prisoners would remember the ceremonies as one of the few instances when the ugliness and trivial matters of life in captivity disappeared.[41] Even better, honoring national holidays did not require prisoners to abandon their regional identities. It was possible for regional and national identities to coexist, even thrive, in Imperial Germany.[42] In January 1918, Stobs's prisoners commemorated the births of Kaiser Wilhelm II and King Ludwig III of Bavaria within weeks of each other. While the Kaiser's celebration featured theatrical and musical selections, prisoners observed King Ludwig's birthday with an evening of traditional Bavarian dance and song, in the Bavarian dialect, of course.[43]

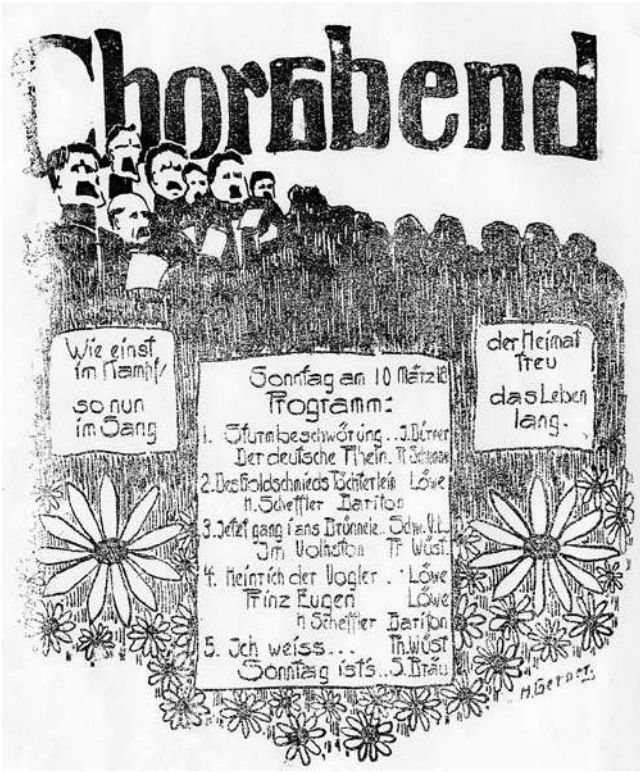
Musical expressions of nationalism and solidarity were not restricted to holidays or special occasions. Although prisoners ultimately sought contact with the outside world, they drew strength from each other as well. Lt. Erich G. recalled that he spent hours gathered around his barrack's furnace singing with fellow prisoners. Of all the songs they sang, the "old, beautiful folksongs" that reminded them of home were the favorites.[44] During Gunther Plüschow's brief stay at Dorchester, he recalled, prisoners often loudly sang nationalistic favorites like "The Watch on the Rhine" as they passed British civilians on supervised walks.[45] In early 1915, the *Leigh Chronicle* reported that prisoners in the town's camp could be heard singing "For Fatherland and Gott," "For Kaiser and Gott," and "For Victory and Christ" from outside the camp.[46] At more formal events, choirs performed folk songs and military marches for enthusiastic audiences throughout the year. Prisoners at camp Jersey in the Channel Islands organized a brass band, choir, guitar band, and music committee. Similar musical groups thrived at other camps for both officers and enlisted men.[47] Most of the participants in musical and choral ensembles were amateurs, but they

approached their performances with professionalism and purpose, with posters, flyers, and newspaper ads advertising upcoming events.

Prisoners who joined musical associations were continuing an established tradition of melodically expressing nationalist sentiments. Germans had long considered themselves the "people of music" and believed their perceived musical greatness to be a defining national trait.[48] Nurturing a German musical tradition was an important part of the nationalist movement that swept the German lands following the humiliation of defeat at the hands of Napoleon's armies.[49] Choral societies claimed more than 100,000 members by 1847, and participants generally adhered to a nationalist agenda that promoted fraternity and national solidarity.[50] After 1871, amateur singing associations committed to "strengthening German identity" flourished throughout the new nation.[51] Choral ensembles were not simply a way to pass time or make captivity more bearable. Participants were taking part in an art that they, perhaps inaccurately, believed to be distinctly German. In the camps of the UK, it was their voices that echoed devotion to the nation rather than the report of their rifles.

Many of the camps' musical activities were made possible by relief associations that acquired instruments and secured venues for performances. American YMCA representatives arrived in England in May 1915 and worked closely with Dr. K. E. Markel's Prisoners of War Relief Agency to improve the prisoners' spiritual and physical welfare. A chemist by trade, Markel was born in Hesse and then moved to Britain with his German father and English mother at the age of five.[52] His agency provided prisoners with musical instruments, clothing, and various tools, while the YMCA oversaw the construction of social halls and huts inside the camps. In some cases, commandants allowed prisoners to use portions of existing structures as social and instructional centers. New arrivals could necessitate the use of the space for other purposes, and prisoners rarely felt as if donated facilities truly belonged to them. For these reasons, YMCA officials preferred to design and construct permanent centers designated for community functions. Prisoners erected social huts and halls themselves, and the YMCA acquired building materials and financed operating costs such as for heating and lighting once the centers were operational.[53]

Limited equipment availability restricted the prisoners' musical repertoire, but most camps collected an impressive array of instruments. Musicians at Handforth, for example, had access to violins, a cello, a string bass, an oboe, guitars, and a bassoon. The pianists among the prisoners were also able to rent playing time from a piano owner in the vicinity.[54] Among the more popular events held at YMCA social clubs and other



"Chorabend," Holyport, *March–June 1918, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, MSg 200/681, p. 10.*

venues were Richard Wagner evenings that featured the composer's classics. Other productions, such as the one held at Donington Hall in July 1916, included renditions of Mozart's works and a variety of folk songs and military marches.[55] In order to make participation in musical festivities easier, the British YMCA distributed prisoner songbooks containing religious hymns and traditional German folk songs. Intriguingly, the songbooks included a classic poem by Ernst Moritz Arndt that repeatedly asked, "Who is a man?" Along with listing several other characteristics of man, Arndt proposed that a German man was one who was prepared "to die for God and fatherland; he'll fight on, until the grave, with heart, and voice, and hand."[56]

Camp choirs and ensembles consisted of both talented musicians and amateurs, but their performances reflected the values and ambitions of their members. Participants strove to demonstrate that their efforts had a deeper meaning than simply entertaining fellow prisoners. In an advertisement for a choral evening at the officers' camp at Holyport in March 1918, organizers erased any doubts concerning their motivations by including a

slogan alongside the evening's musical lineup: *Wie einst im Kampf, so nun im Sang, der Heimat treu, das Leben lang* (As once in battle, now in song, true to the homeland all life long).[57] For both performers and spectators, musical events helped prisoners shed feelings of isolation and shame and build communities based on nationalism and camaraderie. It mattered little how long a given prisoner had been in a particular camp. The sensation of singing in unison was powerful, and with song and verse, prisoners recognized each other as countrymen.

Physical expressions of camaraderie and strength were also popular in the camps of the UK, and once again, prisoners drew inspiration from German traditions of resistance. In the months following Napoleon's crushing victory over the Prussian army, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn diligently worked to persuade his fellow Germans that physical development was the key to recovering their lost pride and morale. French dominance of the German lands, he asserted, was only possible because Germans had become "soft and effeminate." In order to repel their conquerors, Germans would have to harden their bodies and regain the strength they had allowed to slip away.[58] In other words, German men would have to recapture their manhood in order for Germany to recover its losses. Thus, Jahn's nationalism was intimately linked to an idealized notion of strong, martial manhood, and the gymnastics movement he founded was seen as a forum for providing young men with preliminary military training, physical development, and an education in nationalism. An estimated 300 German gymnastics associations with 800,000–900,000 total members thrived throughout the German lands by 1847, but only around 100 survived the reactionary era that followed the failed revolutions of the subsequent year. The movement experienced resurgence in the early 1860s, and in 1864 more than 167,900 men counted themselves as members of a gymnastics association.[59]

Many gymnasts believed that they represented a barrier to weakness and passivity and sought to showcase their abilities to defend the fatherland. The gymnastics movement grew remarkably in the decades after German unification, and by 1895 it had ballooned to encompass more than half a million politically active athletes hoping to prop up their masculine image.[60] From its inception, Jahn had conceptualized the gymnastics movement as a "training in manliness" that would create fearless soldiers who were ready to answer the call to arms on any occasion.[61] Just over a century later, the movement's emphasis on strength and nationalism was especially attractive to prisoners of war whose ability, or willingness, to defend the nation had been called into question with their surrender.[62]

American YMCA representatives supplied even the smaller British camps with gymnastic equipment, and prisoners were eager to put it to use.[63] A postwar chronicler of life at Handforth remembered that the camp's equipment was equal to that of a good association in Germany, complete with a vaulting horse, springboards, horizontal bars, rings, and a trapeze. The physical quality of the gymnasts entering Handforth apparently diminished in the war's later years as a result of food shortages and the hardships of war, but even these less impressive participants probably did not fail to recognize the symbolism of their activities.[64] Photographs of gymnasts in several UK camps reveal that prisoners trained and performed in matching uniforms and attempted routines that demanded tremendous strength and agility. Complex maneuvers required prisoners to place incredible trust in their fellow gymnasts, which must have encouraged camaraderie among the athletes.[65] *Stobsiade* reported that the gymnastics association at Stobs was a testament to the maxim of the German gymnastics movement: "Fresh, Pious, Joyous, Free (*frisch, fromm, fröhlich, frei*)." Discussing a recent gymnastics evening, editors reported that the camp's gymnasts performed with enthusiasm while training their minds and bodies and developing self-discipline and personal courage.[66]

Although participants drew inspiration from the movement's nationalist past, gymnasts emphasized their confidence that training would make them more productive citizens in postwar German society. In 1916 Dorchester gymnasts placed a telling advertisement in the camp newspaper under the heading "He who rests—rusts!" The ad reminded prisoners of their duty to sustain physical and spiritual strength in anticipation of the challenges that awaited them following repatriation.[67] Even in captivity, prisoners realized that they might once again be called on to serve the nation militarily. As a gymnast at Stobs recognized in April 1918, remaining fit for service would require prisoners to keep their bodies capable of resistance (*Widerstandsfähig*) until their return to Germany.[68]

Imprisoned gymnasts drew upon a specific German tradition to display their nationalism and mend their shattered masculine image. Participants in other, less politicized, camp athletics shared similar goals. In a 1917 article on the content of letters taken from German prisoners following capture, a British correspondent warned readers against "attaching too great importance to the wailings of men, who, after all, may only be the weaklings of their units."[69] Courage and physical endurance were inextricably linked, and it was often assumed that prisoners of war were among the worst physical specimens their armies had to offer. For men hoping to repair their sense of manhood, organized sports of all varieties offered

Gymnasts perform in front of the YMCA hut at Leigh in Lancashire, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, B 433/1304.

Camp Gymnastics Association, Stobs in Scotland, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, B 433/1304.

venues to counter these assumptions by flaunting athletic prowess and reminding captors that the men they guarded were able-bodied flight risks. The fear of being considered a disloyal deserter was a lingering concern for prisoners of war, and athletic training presented a setting for prisoners to counter their negative image while demonstrating their desire to prepare themselves physically for service to the homeland.[70]

In the decades prior to the Great War, German society "rediscovered" the human body and physical beauty. Prewar youth movements combined physical education with the desire to experience unspoiled nature and the benefits of exposure to sunlight. A healthy figure was not only aesthetically pleasing; many contemporaries believed that the body was a reflection of the spirit.[71] A well-built body spoke to the courageousness and character of the man who had sculpted and maintained it, and the relationship between physical exertion and the development of an admirable physique was well recognized. Sport remains, after all, a principal "definer of manhood in mass culture."[72] As the former Olympian Karl Ritter von Halt noted, the connection between sport and militarism was not lost on the prisoner athletes of his camp, and many likely saw athletics as the activity that most closely mimicked their military training.[73]

Prisoners of all ranks accordingly placed high priority upon securing venues for physical activities. One of the simplest methods for staying in shape was taking extended marches outside of the camp's confines. The War Office was initially cautious about allowing prisoners to stray beyond the barbed wire, even when accompanied by an escort. In September 1915, officers at Dyffryn Aled complained that the camp's exercise grounds were inadequate. They proposed that prisoners be allowed to hike outside the camp under the condition that they give their parole, or word of honor, not to attempt escape. Fears that locals might assault prisoners prompted the commandant to deny the request.[74] The commandant's concern for his prisoners' safety was not the only obstacle facing captive officers who sought physical exertion. Military authorities expected prisoners to attempt escape if the opportunity presented itself, and prisoners who gave their parole in order to exercise relieved captors of the responsibility of guarding them closely.[75]

In April 1915, the Bavarian Kriegsministerium in Munich declared it dishonorable for a prisoner to give his word of honor not to escape or take up arms against the enemy, as no prisoner was permitted to behave in a manner that made him incapable of acting in the interest of Germany or its allies.[76] Eventually, the British and German governments reached an agreement authorizing prisoners of rank to offer temporary parole in

order to exercise outside the camp. A British officer accompanied prisoners on marches but was unarmed and served only to prevent contact with locals. Before allowing prisoners to exit a camp's gates, the British required officers to sign the following declaration: "I hereby promise and undertake that during the period I am permitted to leave this place of internment for the purpose of taking exercise I will make no attempt to escape, will make no preparation for a future attempt to escape, and will commit no act prejudicial to the British Empire or her Allies."[77] This arrangement was beneficial to both prisoners and their captors. It afforded prisoners a much-needed change of scenery, and the British found the threat of suspending the privilege to be an effective means of maintaining discipline.

Inside the confines of a camp, sporting events took place on designated athletic fields, and prisoners took full advantage of the opportunity to compete. According to the editors of *Deutsche Blätter*, athletic associations "shot from the earth like mushrooms" at the Dorchester camp.[78] Enlisted prisoners at Leigh similarly organized soccer matches, played a type of volleyball know as "fistball," and swam in an on-site tank during the summer.[79] At Shrewsbury in Shropshire, prisoners trained with dumbbells, boxed, and partook in "Sandow developers," a series of exercises conceived by renowned bodybuilder and fitness celebrity Eugen Sandow (born Friedrich Wilhelm Müller) to attain muscular perfection.[80] Officers at Donington Hall enjoyed access to 21,780 square yards of recreational grounds that featured multiple tennis courts. When not perfecting their backhand, prisoners could also work out on rowing machines.[81]

Although most camps could not match the square yardage available at Donington Hall, athletic events were popular throughout the UK. In most camps, sport committees organized competitions and worked with aid associations to secure athletic equipment. Red Cross and YMCA representatives furnished many of the necessary supplies, but prisoners occasionally arranged fund drives inside the camps or asked relatives to mail materials from Germany.[82] In one of his early letters home, for example, Lt. Ernst Ewald H. asked his parents to send soccer cleats, two pairs of white shorts, his good sports shirt, and elastic stockings.[83]

Prisoners devoted significant time and effort to the government of athletic events. In rare instances world-class athletes like Karl Ritter von Halt played prominent roles in the development of training routines, but even lesser athletes recognized the importance of effectively organizing a camp's sporting life.[84] At Kegworth in Sutton Bonington, the camp recreational committee drafted sports bylaws and served as an intermediary

body between athletic clubs and other recreational groups. One of the committee's primary functions was to govern the use of recreational fields by assigning time slots for practice.[85] In many camps, this sort of organizational scheme was necessary to accommodate the large number of sports represented and the number of prisoners who wished to participate. Soccer, for example, was one of the more popular activities available to prisoners. In 1917, more than 7,960 athletes at Handforth competed in 364 matches, but players had to share field time with athletes from the rounders and field hockey clubs.[86]

Whether prisoners competed as gymnasts, as weight lifters, or in soccer matches, they hoped their activities would make it possible for them to care for their minds and bodies so that they might contribute to German prosperity at war's end.[87] Several years after the war, a former Handforth prisoner argued that the sponsors of the camp's athletic associations had done a true service to the health of the nation by strengthening the prisoners and promoting "good German sense" and comradeship. He called attention to the more than 25,000 athletes who participated in soccer matches and over 33,000 gymnasts who performed on at least 500 separate occasions at Handforth and concluded, "With the physical and spiritual collapse of the German people, every healthy and capable young person is valuable."[88] Sports not only promoted health and stamina; they likewise improved morale. Endorphins released during physical activity promoted a heightened sense of contentment, which could help prevent the onset of barbed-wire disease.[89] In much the same way that Friedrich Ludwig Jahn had advised Germans to embrace physical development as a means of overcoming military humiliation in the early nineteenth century, prisoners believed that they could not recover their manhood and sense of pride without rebuilding and maintaining their physical strength and endurance.

The reformers of Jahn's generation placed great emphasis on physical strength, but they also realized that a well-built body was of little use if the mind was not equally sound. The German education system was geared toward producing students who would become loyal and efficient servants of the state. This was especially true of Imperial German universities, where professors commonly delivered lectures that reinforced popular ideas about the correlation between manhood and sacrificial nationalism.[90] In the years before the Great War, German universities experienced a spike in enrollment as students from previously underrepresented backgrounds joined the academic community in increasing numbers. However, universities suffered serious enrollment declines when students volunteered for

frontline service or auxiliary roles in war-related fields after August 1914. Although some students attempted to promote academic pursuits in the trenches by founding makeshift schools behind the front lines, a preoccupation with survival left little room for scholarship.[91]

Despite the decline in the home front's student population and limited educational opportunities in the field, schools inside prisoner of war camps thrived.[92] Prisoners considered scholarly endeavors to be a top priority, and they made a point of stressing that their studies could not only lead to self-improvement but also make them better Germans. In camps across the UK, prisoners organized classes in language study, military sciences, history, woodworking, and countless other subjects. Aside from giving prisoners a sense of accomplishment, completing courses could lead to new opportunities for wage earning and a sense of independence following repatriation. Upon Lt. Erich G.'s return to Germany from Scotland, for instance, he was able to forego his apprenticeship and begin work immediately thanks to the training he received as a prisoner in the UK.[93]

Most prisoner of war camps contained a limited number of experts in virtually every discipline, many of whom had been taken at sea when trying to return from employment in the United States in order to rejoin their units after the outbreak of war.[94] In civilian camps, a wealth of instructors and materials led to educational schemes that rivaled many university curricula.[95] Despite the presence of willing experts, military camps could not meet demands for qualified instructors. Fewer potential instructors limited the number of intensive programs in military camps, but military prisoners proved eager to take advantage of course offerings. Prisoners at Frongoch in Wales studied English, French, Spanish, and Italian and also took classes in engineering, mathematics, drawing, and "instruction for railway men."[96] At Kegworth in Sutton Bonington, officers busied themselves with courses on "languages, political economy, engineering, and military science." As a Swiss inspector noted, students of the military sciences had to be particularly creative owing to the prohibition of military textbooks.[97] Instructional materials available to camp schools came primarily from the British and American YMCAs and Dr. Markel's Prisoners of War Relief Agency, but prisoners also received donations from the German home front.[98] Among the many organizations and individuals that contributed educational materials was the Deutscher Studentendienst 1914, which reached out to university students in captivity by attempting to supply them with "intellectual nourishment" in the form of scholarly literature.[99]

Two of the most successful camp schools were located at Stobs and Handforth, both of which were larger camps with sizeable populations to draw upon. Prisoners began taking classes at Stobs in June 1915. The following year approximately 1,200 prisoners enrolled in the camp's courses. German instructors at Stobs offered a diverse curriculum, including foreign-language training, bookkeeping, history, geography, statistics, and zoology. By January 1917, a staff of sixty-seven instructors oversaw the educational pursuits of more than 3,600 prisoners in the camp's compounds.[100] At Handforth, students studied German history, social studies, art history, stenography, foreign languages, mathematics, and agricultural sciences—including animal husbandry and agricultural chemistry. Handforth's first course offerings in winter 1915–16 drew 1,300 students from a prisoner population of 2,500. Enrollments peaked in summer 1918, when 2,355 students registered for available slots in forty-nine courses. At the time, the facility held approximately 2,600 prisoners, meaning that more than 90 percent of Handforth's population was enrolled at the camp school.[101]

Camp courses were a serious affair, and some of the more advanced students from across the UK had the opportunity to work with British professors in a university extension scheme organized by the YMCA and Cambridge University. Beginning in late 1916, seventy-five professors advised around 150 German students.[102] For extension program students and camp school participants alike, preparing for the future allowed prisoners to look past the despondency of their situation and envision new lives as part of postwar German society. They realized that regardless of victory or defeat, the homeland they found upon their return would be irrevocably altered by the experience of war. The editors of *Stobsiade* considered their camp school to be the fulfillment of the duty to live for the fatherland that so many comrades had bled and died to defend. They believed postwar Germany would need courageous men with "honest hearts and clear eyes" and reasoned that educational pursuits strengthened their bond with the nation.[103] After all, the editors continued, prisoners could fulfill their mission only if they possessed at least a general understanding of the workings of the German state and national economy.[104] The outbreak of war had led to a surge in patriotic instruction in German universities. Camp schools were equally interested in cultivating a sense of nationalism among the students.[105] At Stobs, for instance, school organizers openly professed their hope that the instruction prisoners received could mold them into "conscious carriers" of German nationalism.[106]

Prisoners were eager to share news of their scholarship with loved ones in Germany. Doing so dispelled the notion that prisoners waited in comfortable idleness while soldiers at the front continued to suffer and die. In 1915 a prisoner at Donington Hall explained to his wife that he had little to report concerning camp life except that he was "very busy learning Spanish and English." He went on to inform her that the camp population had a "tremendous zeal" for languages and contained "perfect experts" in English, French, Turkish, Russian, Danish, Spanish, and Japanese. After describing the castle's artistic life, he closed with the assurance that "we understand how to make use of our time as well as we can."[107] Another prisoner, Friedrich S., frequently wrote of the agricultural manuals and educational offerings available to him, free of charge, at Stobs in Scotland. The manner in which he discussed his agricultural studies suggested that he had not enjoyed similar opportunities in Germany, and he planned to take full advantage of the camp's resources. For Friedrich S., course work was more than a means of passing the time, as he assured his family that he hoped to put his "mental work" (*Kopfarbeit*) to good use at a later date.[108]

For other prisoners, the skills polished in captivity doubtlessly helped determine the direction of their lives in the postwar years. The experience of educating fellow prisoners was so rewarding that some camp teachers resolved to become professional educators after repatriation and considered the discovery of a new profession to be the silver lining of the cloud of captivity.[109] For other prisoners, the connections established in captivity were essential to their future success. Acclaimed artists of the Weimar Republic Franz Bronstert, Fritz Fuhrken, and Georg Philip Wörlen met as prisoners at the officers' camp at Ripon in Yorkshire, where they spent approximately fifteen months in captivity. It was at Ripon that Bronstert and Fuhrken first dabbled in the expressionist style that characterized the art of their postwar working group, "Der Fels." Years after his release, Bronstert recalled that Ripon had essentially functioned as an art academy.[110] In view of the artists who honed their skills at Ripon, the camp would have to be considered one of the most successful academies of its time. Nearby at Colsterdale, the expressionist Otto Nebel likewise began developing his distinctive style after having been captured by the British in 1918.[111] In these cases, the British camps proved to be a nurturing environment for artistic expression and a launching pad for some of the most innovative German artists of the postwar period.

Skills acquired in camp schools could also be used in escape attempts. Following his flight from a transport train bound for Holyport, Heinz H. E. Justus planned to return to Germany aboard a Spanish steamer since

he had studied Spanish in a camp school.[112] Whether using the education received as a prisoner to attempt escape or prepare for the future, by attentively working to acquire new talents, prisoners showed British authorities that their spirits had not been broken. German lieutenants at Donington Hall established a makeshift war academy to continue studying for their officers' exams. The submariner Edgar von Spiegel recalled that when British staffers observed the officers at work, they were taken aback at the Germans' desire to improve themselves and "make the best out of their captivity."[113] Prisoners likewise hoped to make a statement to the home front about their intentions of returning to Germany as productive citizens and potential warriors. As the editors of *Stobsiade* wrote, educational pursuits were designed with an eye toward helping the home front recognize that schools were not simply a "useful pastime, but honest German work, work for the future (*Zukunftsarbeit*) in the best sense of the word."[114]

Camp schools were not the only venues for prisoners to sharpen their minds. Barbed-wire disease was a serious threat to the emotional health of any man who had been in captivity for an extended period, and thwarting depression was one of the primary reasons that prisoners participated in and attended camp theatrical productions. In many ways, camp theaters combated physical and mental decay among both performers and their audiences. Additionally, theaters allowed officers to recreate a "prewar sense of comfort, power, and self worth."[115] Hermann Pörzgen, the leading postwar chronicler of the camp theaters, wrote in 1933 that camp theater promoted communal experiences and spawned new interests, topics of conversation, and memories.[116] Theater, it seems, permitted prisoners to reconnect with the comforts of their prewar identities. German prisoners of the British discussed their theatrical activities in letters and diaries less frequently than their counterparts behind the eastern front, but prisoner of war stages in the UK appear to have served a similar purpose.

Much like concerts and sporting activities, theatrical productions were extremely popular events where prisoners could socialize and exhibit a degree of cultural refinement in captivity. Between 1914 and 1919, enlisted prisoners in the UK founded at least twenty-seven theaters, and officers oversaw the activities of nine additional stage companies.[117] Theatres appeared in British camps early on, but participants faced significant obstacles to keeping their stages operational. At officers' camps, where prisoners had disposable income, viewers often kept theaters afloat by paying admission or a monthly membership fee. Enlisted prisoners relied more heavily on equipment donations from the YMCA or Dr. Markel's aid association. Working prisoners likewise received salaries for

their labor, but much of their earnings went toward purchasing supplemental food items. In order to accommodate prospective viewers of various means, Handforth's theater opened its doors to all prisoners and only charged a fee for the best seats in the house.[118] With the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, shortages in leather, paper, and other materials needed for costumes and scenery created additional challenges for theatrical troops struggling to produce high-quality performances with limited resources.[119]

Despite these difficulties, captive thespians delivered thousands of memorable performances that positively affected the prisoners' reality by offering the temporary diversion of a fictional world. Participants busied themselves with the production and rehearsal of shows, as well as the preparation of programs and advertisements for events. In some camps, theater was so popular that prisoners founded multiple companies. The theater was an important staple of German cultural and social life, and across the UK, camp companies presented an assortment of original works and German classics, including *Johannisfeuer* (Midsummer's Eve), *Wallensteins Lager* (Wallenstein's Camp), *Rosenmontag* (Rose Monday), *Alt Heidelberg* (Old Heidelberg), *Die Spanische Fliege* (Spanish Fly), and scenes from Goethe's *Faust*. Actors and production staff attached great meaning to their work. Costumes, which British authorities allowed only after actors gave their word that the disguises would not be used in escape attempts, reflected the participants' dedication to suspending the audience's sense of reality.[120]

Viewing or performing in theatrical productions offered an escape from the realities of camp life and gave prisoners reason to smile. Taking part in a production not only allowed prisoners to recall the comforts of their prewar lives; it also offered the opportunity to assume a new identity, or a fictional persona whose existence had not been shaken by the experiences of surrender and captivity. Preparing for a performance was a group effort, and performers took great enjoyment in helping one another into costume and makeup prior to the show. A photograph taken during preshow preparations at Stobs captures prisoners in top hats, suit vests and drag applying cosmetics and styling hair as a crowd of fellow performers looks on with delight. The photograph gives no indication that the performers were prisoners who were quite possibly battling depression and struggling with feelings of inadequacy. Their expressions reveal not even a hint of their psychological baggage, and if not for the photo's label, it would be impossible to discern that the performers were prisoners.[121]

Theatrical preparations at Stobs in Scotland, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, MSg 200/2730.

The ability to help prisoners forget the perils of their situation was perhaps the greatest advantage of camp theaters. A winter storm prevented William Whiting, a visitor to Frongoch, from attending a concert and play "for which the best talents of the camp were commandeered" during the 1915 holiday season. Much to his disappointment, Whiting arrived on the scene as the play ended, but despite the rain and driving wind outside, he noted that in the play's aftermath, "it was easy to detect that the atmosphere was one of cheerfulness and hilarity."[122]

In an environment often entirely lacking women, theatrical performances affected the camp atmosphere in another significant way. Prisoners, who would have ranged in age from approximately seventeen to forty-five, often suffered tremendously from the deficiency of female company. This was an issue in most of the Great War's prison camps. Although prisoners around the globe sometimes managed to smuggle local women into their compounds or arrange meetings outside, contact with females was limited.[123] In his investigation of barbed-wire disease, Dr. Vischer argued that prisoners attempted to overcome their sexual difficulties by decorating their surroundings with "suggestive pictures" and frequently discussing sexual topics.[124] Suggestive artwork also sometimes appeared in camp publications. At Holyport, a postwar camp publication commemorating the pre-Lenten celebrations known as Fasching contained a rendering of a prisoner

bowing before an alluring woman in carnival attire, as well as a separate piece depicting three naked women: one straddling a chair, one climbing a pole, and another sitting atop a slab of meat with her legs spread.[125]

Vischer maintained that prisoners found another outlet for their sexual frustrations in the theater.[126] The appearance of female impersonators onstage offered prisoners at least the illusion of a womanly presence in the camp, and impersonators seemed to understand the function they served for their audience. Impersonators served as the only representation of feminine comfort available to many prisoners for the duration of their captivity. It was essential that female impersonators maintain the illusion of femininity by perfecting their costumes and softening their voices so that viewers might allow themselves to believe that a woman, with all her charms, stood before them onstage.[127] The vision of a female presence could make it possible for prisoners to psychologically escape their camps. A former prisoner from Oswestry in Shropshire recalled that the camp's theater featured all varieties of femininity, from teenagers to angry mothers-in-law. The results of hours of makeup and costume preparation, he contended, made it possible for viewers to forget that that they were in a prison camp theater.[128]

Prisoners at Brocton likewise enjoyed the illusions of femininity presented on the camp stage and paid homage to the accessory that made it all possible—the corset. A publication commemorating the camp theater's second anniversary included a short song praising the corset's ability to make the "ladies" of the stage attractive by giving bulky men a figure as slim as a stiletto. A corset, the song continued, could bring to light a man's inner Venus and complete the likeness of a proper damsel. An accompanying illustration revealed three prisoners working in unison to tighten the corset laces of a fellow prisoner with voluminous lips and still larger simulated breasts.[129] Even if prisoners wrote the corset song in jest, its publication reveals that female impersonators went to great lengths to maintain the impression of a female presence onstage.

For other prisoners, female fantasies were less important. It would be absurd to presume that there were no same-sex relationships in a population as large as that of the German prisoners in the UK. In an era when society ruthlessly persecuted gay men for their lifestyle, prisoners, as well as soldiers at the front, rarely spoke of so-called abnormal sexual practices in their diaries or letters home.[130] Vischer claimed that among prisoners of war "homosexual practices [were] not as frequent as might be imagined" and suggested that "mutual self-abuse" probably took place more often. Still, he conceded that some of the camps he visited had experienced "homosexual epidemics," particularly during the earlier phases of the war.[131]

"Actresses" at Brocton, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau, MSg 200/2730.

Officers imprisoned in Russia apparently believed that perfecting their skills as female impersonators could effectively check the outbreak of these "epidemics" by preserving the "image of woman." Drag performances could be seen as a challenge to social norms regarding appropriate male behavior, but many former prisoners preferred to overlook this detail and portray theater as a barrier to the onset of homosexual activity.[132] After all, Europeans had historically accepted the stage as a "safe" space where actors were permitted to violate class and gender norms for the sake of their art without fear of reproach.[133] German prisoners who spent time in the UK left fewer indicators of their views on the role of drag performers than their Russian counterparts, but there was no shortage of men willing to slip into costume and the persona of a female character. Furthermore, they do not appear to have accepted their roles reluctantly or with any degree of embarrassment. The number of female impersonators active on the stages of the UK and the performers' willingness to be photographed in drag suggest that at the very least, the practice was an accepted part of the camp environment. This is not surprising when one considers that transvestite theater is common in many cultures, even more so in situations where women are unavailable to fill female roles. Theaters have existed in prisoner of war camps since at least the eighteenth century. Since women are generally absent from camps, the practice of male prisoners taking on

female roles has existed for just as long.[134] Cross-dressing for theatrical roles was common in virtually all of the Great War's prison camps, including those for civilians.[135]

Moreover, camp impersonators were not doing anything that was not also taking place among soldiers in makeshift theaters along the battlefront. Theatrical productions were extremely fashionable on all segments of the western front, with German soldiers organizing stages in at least 520 locations.[136] On both sides of the lines, soldiers assumed female personas, and although authorities were not entirely comfortable with the practice, cross-dressing was a necessary and accepted component of frontline theater.[137] German frontline newspapers rarely printed photographs of drag performers, but when productions required men to take on female parts, reviews of the shows generally noted the presence of drag performers without commenting on the phenomenon.[138] More research is needed to determine whether prisoners in the UK viewed drag performers as deterrents to the development of "abnormal" relationships, but the impersonators' devotion to the craft suggests that they were important personalities in the prisoners' world.

That world, as we have seen, was a world in which prisoners sought to redeem themselves by framing their activities in the larger context of national service. Theater attendance, athletics, and military history courses were not an instant cure for the guilt and shame of captivity. There was no watershed moment when the prisoners of the UK collectively decided to confront their insecurities head on and reclaim their soldierly virtues. With prisoners leaving for neutral internment and new captives taking their place, the composition of the UK's prisoner population was constantly changing. Since the process of coming to terms with one's surrender and captivity differed for every prisoner, a given camp simultaneously held men consciously working toward the future and others unable to see past the shame of their capture.

H. M. Hall visited several early prison ships anchored off England's Southend as a correspondent for the *New York World*. He reported that while not all of the prisoners he encountered had proper uniforms, each had managed to hold on to something that denoted his status as a soldier. As Hall toured the prison ships, the captives on deck snapped to attention "with hatred frozen in their faces" and performed drills that "would have made the finest company that West Point ever turned out go green with envy." Evidently, these prisoners were eager to convey that they remained proud soldiers despite their capture, but other prisoners Hall came across seemed less sure of themselves. When he conducted interviews below

decks, he found "in most instances they (the prisoners) turned their eyes away as if horribly ashamed of having been taken prisoner."[139]

Camp veterans understood that having a meaningful life in captivity required an adjustment period. In July 1917, the appearance of new prisoners prompted the editors of *Stobsiade* to remind readers that new arrivals faced long, hazy days of no substance. If they hoped to overcome the despondency of their situation, however, new prisoners would have to learn that working for the future through organized camp activities was the only chance for salvation.[140] British authorities were likewise aware of the significance of camp activities, and commandants used the threat of revoking privileges as a disciplinary tool. Unruliness could lead to the cancellation of planned events and hikes outside the compound. Moreover, commandants did not hesitate to punish prisoners for the mistreatment of British soldiers in Germany with harsh restrictions on camp recreational life. When the War Office took exception to the poor treatment of British prisoners in the Tenth Army Corps district in Germany, it ordered commandants in the Northern Command to restrict prisoner access to newspapers, confiscate all musical instruments, forbid outdoor games, and seize "all national flags, maps, pictures of German and Allied Sovereigns, Commanders and Notabilities," among other restrictions.[141]

Retributions of this nature hit prisoners where it hurt the most. Their identity as representatives of German character and dedicated soldiers depended on the expressive outlets offered by camp organizations and the ability to surround themselves with national symbols. The prisoners hoped their endeavors would send a message to the home front and their captors. Although the British surely took notice of these undertakings, camp officials were usually content to grant the prisoners significant freedom as long as the men did not violate censorship restrictions or become too boisterous. After all, allowing captives to celebrate holidays and occupy themselves with sports and scholarship suggested that the British treated their prisoners with dignity and were tolerant of the enemy's patriotic impulses. British authorities recognized that a contented prisoner population was easier to administer than an angry one, and harsh restrictions appear to have been infrequent and brief.

A Question of Meaning

In many ways the activities organized inside the camps of the UK differed little from those that the soldiers participated in while in reserve lines at the front or in camps for civilian internees. Frontline soldiers published

trench newspapers, celebrated the Kaiser's birthday, staged plays, held choral evenings, and took part in scores of athletic events. These pursuits helped soldiers cope with the pressures of life in the trenches and pass the time in what could be a monotonous environment when major attacks were not under way. One could argue that camp pastimes served the same function for prisoners of war. Relieving boredom was certainly one of the catalysts for the organization of camp activities, but it was the meaning the prisoners attached to their camp pursuits that set them apart.

J. Davidson Ketchum, who experienced wartime internment as a civilian, made the case that "ritual and ceremony, though technically superfluous, are of deep psychological importance; by dramatizing man's petty activities they rescue them from insignificance and endow them with dignity and value."[142] In the case of the German prisoners in the UK, Ketchum's analysis could not be more accurate. Surrender forced prisoners to reevaluate how they might serve their country, and their deployment to a new theater of war required that they ascribe new meaning to familiar activities. For many prisoners, organized camp pursuits became the core of their identity. Without celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday or choral evenings, prisoners were simply vanquished warriors in enemy custody. By carrying out familiar rituals from home and the front, prisoners made a clear statement about their nationalism and loyalty to the war effort, which helped rebuild their sense of manhood and made it difficult for critics to charge that prisoners were little better than deserters.

Camp pursuits enabled prisoners to resurrect their masculine identity, and, as Ketchum suggested, restore a sense of dignity to their daily lives. Moreover, prisoners saw camp organizations as a means of ensuring that they would return home mentally and physically sound, confident that they had represented themselves, and their country, well on enemy soil. Prisoners from middle-class backgrounds also likely saw camp pursuits as a means of improving themselves in accordance with the traditional model of manhood that stressed the importance of being a well-rounded, educated man with the sensibilities of an artist and impressive social acumen.[143]

When separated from the battlefield and home front, prisoners attempted to reconstruct their identities as soldiers in the service of a greater cause with expressions of German nationalism, strength, and a concern for Germany's future. Although real men supposedly did not surrender, the prisoners of the UK showed that the ideas about service, duty, and appropriate male behavior that had influenced their lives prior to capture also shaped their response to life in captivity. They may have surrendered,

but with few exceptions, they had not betrayed their comrades or nation at arms. On the contrary, many prisoners dedicated their lives in captivity to reestablishing their strained bonds with the national community. When news of the German army's collapse in November 1918 reached the prison camps of the UK, prisoners likely mourned defeat but welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate their dedication to rebuilding a strong Germany. Wartime captivity had been filled with uncertainties, but prisoners had always been sure that whether the war ended in victory or defeat, peace would hasten their release. What they soon realized was that although the conflict that had shaken their self-image and stolen their freedom had ended, their ordeal was far from over. As the German government disintegrated and revolution spread throughout the country, prisoners in the UK remained isolated from their families and defeated nation, with no indication of when they might finally be reunited with the homeland.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRISONERS OF PEACE

The Postwar Captivity Experience

In early November 1918, revolution spread from the northern port city of Kiel to the German interior, carrying with it feelings of discontent that would eventually destroy Imperial Germany. On 9 November Prince Max von Baden, the last chancellor of Imperial Germany and one of the leading figures in German prisoner relief coordination, announced Kaiser Wilhelm II's abdication and officially recognized the government of Friedrich Ebert's Social Democrats. Two days later, with the Kaiser in Dutch exile, a German delegation acknowledged Germany's military defeat with the signing of the Armistice at Compiègne. For millions of German soldiers on the western front, the armistice brought about the commencement of demobilization.[1] Yet for the prisoners in British custody, the end of hostilities brought no such hope for a prompt homecoming. Regardless of when prisoners had fallen into enemy hands, they likely expected the war's end to be followed by a timely release from captivity. Much to the prisoners' dismay, the Allies determined that general repatriation was a matter to be addressed during formal peace negotiations and opted to delay prisoner release until after the proceedings had concluded.

This chapter examines the prisoners' responses to postwar captivity and the German home front's efforts, and ultimate failure, to expedite the prisoners' release. In the months after the armistice, prisoners initially focused on keeping their minds and bodies sound for life after their homecoming. As months passed without any indication of when the British might begin repatriation, prisoners became anxious over the uncertainty of their future. Would there be a position for them in the army or navy or with their former employers when they returned home? How had the revolution

affected their families? How would the home front and fellow soldiers view prisoners who had chosen surrender over a fight to the death? These were only a few of the questions that occupied prisoners' thoughts and revived old insecurities. While prisoners had designed camp activities to reestablish a connection to the homeland and strengthen their masculine image, the uncertainty surrounding repatriation and the future made the prisoners' sense of detachment and helplessness increasingly acute.

Nonetheless, prisoners continued to channel their energies and launched a campaign to expose the impracticality of delaying repatriation. In Germany, the prisoners' friends and families likewise demanded the immediate return of all prisoners of war from the victorious powers. Although the Ebert government legitimately wanted to hasten the prisoners' release, officials faced with financial crisis and military impotence were powerless to force the Allies to hand over captives until they were prepared to do so. For the Germans in the UK, the war continued in a very real sense. Prisoners remained separated from their families in economically and politically uncertain times and could only speculate as to when they might escape the barbed wire and stigma of captivity.

War without End: The Unwanted Encore

Between 6 August and 11 November 1918, more than 185,000 German prisoners surrendered to the British.[2] The BEF employed a majority of these prisoners on the European continent, but officers and the severely wounded made their way to the camps and hospitals of the UK to await repatriation. Already in late July 1918, approximately 62,880 prisoners had inhabited at least 495 camps in the British Isles. The influx of prisoners taken during the German army's collapse meant that as the war concluded, more German soldiers than ever populated the British camps.[3] According to the *Times*, by 12 March 1919, the War Office held approximately 99,684 German military prisoners in England.[4]

Prisoners reacted to news of the armistice with a combination of relief and despair. The silencing of the western front meant prisoners could look forward to an inevitable homecoming, but thoughts of returning home had to be balanced against the realization that the war had been lost. After more than two years of captivity at Dorchester, Karl K., an enlisted man, wrote to his parents that the German people had finally taken the steps necessary to end the nation's suffering. He saw no shame in defeat and argued that even the enemy recognized the hardships endured by Germany's soldiers and home front for more than four years.[5] At the officers' camp at

Skipton in North Yorkshire, cheers of jubilation among the British guard staff provided the first indications that the war had ground to a halt. When it became clear that Germany had been defeated, prisoners "cried like children" in response to what was unfolding around them.[6] Hearing news of the military defeat, however, was only the beginning of their disappointment.

The Hague Convention vaguely stipulated that at the conclusion of peace, "the repatriation of prisoners shall be carried out as quickly as possible."[7] As determined by the conditions of the armistice, German authorities began repatriating Allied prisoners almost immediately. By 15 January 1919, Secretary of State Matthias Erzberger announced that with the exception of the ill and wounded, all Allied prisoners of war had departed German soil.[8] The armistice nullified wartime treaties regarding prisoner exchange and internment, which left the Allies under no obligation to release prisoners promptly. With large numbers of prisoners employed in the UK and on the Continent, the British and French opted to delay repatriation primarily out of economic considerations.[9]

The armistice likewise initiated the series of events that would lead to the arrival of the last prisoners to be held in the UK. The victorious powers divided the German submarine fleet only weeks after the armistice, which dictated that the German surface fleet would be interned in a neutral or Allied port until its fate could be decided at Versailles. The German fleet left Wilhelmshaven under the guidance of Admiral Ludwig von Reuter on 19 November, and just over a week later, more than seventy German vessels were interned in the northern British port of Scapa Flow. The skeleton crews of approximately 4,800 sailors and officers who remained in Scapa Flow to maintain the vessels were not technically prisoners of war, but they would end their time in the UK with that distinction.[10]

Although the decision to retain captives was not necessarily malicious on the part of all the Allied powers, the prisoners' inability to demobilize with their frontline comrades served as another reminder of how surrender and capture had severed their relationship to other soldiers and the homeland. In the weeks following the armistice, prisoners learned of the Allies' intention to postpone repatriation, a development that forced them to come to terms with the fact that they would not be reunited with their families for months to come. In late November, prisoner Ludwig G. drafted a letter from the working camp at Woodford to inform his parents that he would be spending another Christmas and New Year's Eve in England. He assumed the camp would celebrate as it had the previous year, a painful prospect for a prisoner who had expected to be home with his family for the holidays.[11]

Delayed repatriation not only postponed family reunions; it also made it difficult for some prisoners to recover from their wounds. Lt. Hans K. was injured in June 1917 and spent months in recovery before being transferred to Kegworth in Sutton Bonnington. In a January 1919 letter to relatives in the United States, he explained that his back required further surgery and he hoped that the Allies would release the "poor prisoners of war" soon. He appears to have already lost faith in his government's ability to speed the repatriation process. It was American president Woodrow Wilson, with the support of the Democratic Party, whom he hoped could secure the release of sick and wounded prisoners "as soon as possible."[12]

The general sense of disbelief over Germany's loss and uncertainty over the prisoners' fate brought organized activities to a temporary halt in many camps. At Skipton, prisoners cancelled regularly scheduled hikes outside the camp because they could not stomach the glares from locals beaming with pride in their national victory.[13] In time, prisoners realized that Germany's defeat was largely inconsequential for much of what they had hoped to accomplish through their camp pursuits. The war was lost, but prisoners could still make a statement by expressing their solidarity with the home front and continuing to improve themselves mentally and physically for life in the new Germany. With thousands of prisoners arriving from the western front throughout November, organized activities and celebrations resumed in the months following the armistice, although many facilities experienced decreased participation. This trend only worsened after peace had been officially concluded.

A great deal of informal discussion of the state of the home front took place in the camps of the UK. Prisoners often debated whether Germany should be a monarchy or republic, and these discussions could be especially difficult for prisoners who hailed from Alsace-Lorraine or Schleswig-Holstein.[14] Among the common soldiers, there were doubtlessly those who welcomed the fall of the old order and the opportunities that might be available under a new democratic government. There was more mourning of the Kaiser's abdication among the ranks of the captive officers who shared a special relationship with their commander in chief and held a place of privilege in Wilhelm II's Germany.[15] The Kaiser's birthday had always been an occasion for prisoners to celebrate national pride and honor their commander. On the Kaiser's first postwar birthday, the senior officer at Skipton reminded his men that although the Kaiser no longer held power, Wilhelm II was to be honored as a shining example of true patriotism.

In his address, the camp senior conceded that many characteristics of the Germany he and his fellow officers cherished were relics of the past. Yet he was determined that his men not lose sight of their loyalties, insisting that they vigorously defend the exiled Kaiser against the "shameless attacks of the triumphant enemy." Even after the end of hostilities, the camp senior saw his captors as foes, and he considered it a "sacred duty" to hold the Kaiser's name "pure and unstained" before the entire world. As far as the officer was concerned, his men could best honor the Kaiser through continued work for the welfare and success of the German people. Military defeat had not blunted the senior's nationalist sentiments, and he concluded his message by encouraging each of his men to remember that "you are a German." The Kaiser's exile seemed to strengthen the prisoners' bond with their fallen leader. Skipton's senior officer called attention to the fact that the Kaiser would be celebrating his sixtieth birthday "alone and abandoned, far from the homeland."[16] As a prisoner, it was not difficult for the officer to put himself in the Kaiser's place. It is unknown whether the officer knew of the Kaiser's unwillingness to lead his troops in a suicidal assault, but the parallels between his description of Wilhelm II's birthday in exile and the officer's emotional state are difficult to overlook.

For many prisoners, remembering that they were German meant continuing to improve themselves through organized camp activities. Scholastic endeavors remained popular throughout the war, and most camps maintained active schools after the conflict's conclusion. The school at Handforth offered fifty courses in winter 1918–19, and while attendance dropped off from the previous semester, more than 1,900 students enrolled in classes.[17] Instruction likewise continued at Skipton, where several officers who had been pulled away from their studies by combat duty worked toward diplomas. Other prisoners attended lectures on a host of subjects, including "Germany's Financial Situation after the War" and "The Peace Treaty and the German Army."[18] As one of the camps founded late in the war, Oswestry did not develop a proper curriculum until February 1919. When courses began the following month, approximately 2,400 prisoners enrolled, which overwhelmed the school's directors and prompted the addition of several new courses to accommodate eager students. The Oswestry educators embraced the timeless motto "knowledge is power," and students saw their studies as a means of maintaining mental strength.[19] The prisoners' devotion to education impressed outside observers. In an article published weeks after the armistice, a Swedish visitor to a British camp reported that prisoners had used every available room for the learning of new subjects. He was struck by their industriousness and proclaimed,

"The diligence of these German prisoners of war, their pursuit to expand their knowledge, and their utilization of time made a deep impression on me. It is highly characteristic of the German spirit."[20]

The sustained success of camp activities also impressed other visitors who noticed that the ability of organized pursuits to protect against barbed-wire disease had become even more important in the postwar months. After a visit to Dorchester in March 1919, Swiss inspectors reported that theatrical productions were still in full swing and noted, "One may indeed wonder how it is possible after 4½ years of captivity for prisoners of war to rejoice and arrange theatrical performances, but it shows a will to live which is just as well."[21] In reality, camp schools and theatrical performances showed more than a will to live; they demonstrated the prisoners' desire to retain their capacity to be productive citizens. When A. L. Vischer released his 1919 study of captivity, *Barbed Wire Disease*, he predicted that many prisoners of war would return home with a "damaged mentality" and threaten Europe's overall psychological health.[22] Prisoners believed that coursework and camp theater were important for the prevention of mental illness. Their continued pursuits in these fields revealed a determination to maintain their mental faculties, a central component of a healthy sense of manhood.

Athletic competitions continued to draw devoted participants and spectators after the armistice as well. The Holyport sport commission sponsored a weeklong festival that featured track and field events, hockey, a pentathlon, gymnastics, and a separate competition for the camp's orderlies.[23] Prisoners at Ripon in North Yorkshire preferred hand-to-hand competition and organized an extended athletic festival in which officers competed in pugilism and wrestling. Perhaps eager to hone the skills they learned in the trenches, Ripon's officers also participated in a grenade-throwing contest—for distance and accuracy.[24] Gymnastics participation fell off at Handforth after November 1918, but the camp's soccer program expanded considerably in the postwar era. In the ten months that the camp remained operational in 1919, more than 9,500 prisoners took part in 369 matches, with figures for both participants and games played exceeding all previous totals. In spring of that year, players from the camp at Leigh traveled to Handforth for a series of matches that drew almost 2,000 spectators. Months later, prisoners challenged Handforth's guard staff to a soccer match. In spite of a Scottish officer's efforts to organize the meeting, it never took place.[25]

During the war, prisoners realized that they might have to rely on physical strength and abilities to support themselves when they returned home.

The economic and political upheaval that followed Germany's defeat made this even more apparent. Still, not all prisoners took advantage of the opportunities available for physical development. From the camp at Oswestry, a health-conscious newspaper columnist lamented that some of his fellow prisoners spent their time sitting idly and playing cards. He warned his comrades against allowing one of their greatest assets, their bodies, to waste away. By his estimation, the prisoners' health was paramount, and he believed that back in Germany, the "entire future would revolve around a healthy body."[26]

Despite the prisoners' physical and psychological commitment to ensuring that they would be assets in the new Germany, numerous factors that influenced the course of their lives remained completely beyond the prisoners' control. Extended captivity not only kept prisoners separated from their families; it often left their dependents without a primary wage earner. The prisoners' distance from Germany put them at a distinct economic disadvantage. Consequently, the prisoners' inability to provide for their families complicated existing feelings of inadequacy. Trapped in the UK, prisoners could only guess whether they would be compensated for their time in captivity or return to Germany as penniless burdens to their relatives, a rather emasculating prospect. The Hague Convention explicitly stated that captives became the responsibility of their captors upon surrender; hence the German government was under no obligation to remunerate soldiers who fell into enemy hands. In spite of this internationally recognized law of war, many German prisoners felt that they deserved back pay (*Nachzahlung*) for their time behind barbed wire. The Allies' insistence on holding prisoners after the armistice only strengthened the captives' claims to compensation.

In March 1919, Handforth's senior prisoner contacted German officials in Berlin to inquire whether he and his fellow captives could expect back pay beginning with the date of their capture. He was especially interested in how the government planned to compensate prisoners, whose families relied upon them, for the time between the armistice and repatriation. As the camp senior, he wondered what would be done to help his fellow prisoners compete on the job market with demobilized soldiers who had been home for months.[27] The fear of being overlooked for employment opportunities was common in the camps of the UK, and prisoners sometimes used correspondence privileges to express interest in positions. After reading that the Social Democrat Gustav Noske had been appointed minister of national defense, Machinist Alfred B. of the *U-48* informed Noske that the warrant officers interned at Pattishall were desperate to secure positions

in the provisional fleet. The submariners were anxious over their inability to represent themselves in Germany, and Alfred B. encouraged Noske to recognize the disadvantages of their status: "We hope that we are to be regarded having had a great loss on account of our captivity and many of us having a wife and children to provide for."[28]

Apprehension over the economic future was symptomatic of a collective sense of uncertainty and frustration that surged as months passed with no announcement of a repatriation schedule. In a March 1919 letter from Stobs, Georg F. told his girlfriend, Sophie, of his growing depression and lamented that no one had any idea when his homecoming might take place. Plans to marry Sophie upon his return had kept Georg F. going through years of captivity, but delayed release made it difficult to look past all that he had lost as a prisoner. Stobs, he declared, was the "murderer of [his] youth."[29] Sophie seemed to understand his plight and assured him that repatriation would come soon, as she was sure that the German people would settle for nothing less. Until then, though, she could only encourage him to think of their future and "hold [his] head high."[30]

This was sound advice, but many prisoners lacked Sophie's optimism about the chances for a timely release. Prisoners in both officers' camps and facilities for enlisted men grew progressively difficult to manage throughout 1919. As days passed, their anxieties and anger over their special status in what seemed to be an endless war intensified. Only months after the armistice, a Swiss inspector reported that prisoners at Leigh had "only one desire which is to be sent home and one grudge which is that nothing is being done with respect to their repatriation."[31] In the absence of a plan for release, some prisoners attempted to arrange their own homecoming through escape. As early as December 1918, officers at Holyport routinely refused to give their parole, and flight attempts across the UK increased as prisoners grew tired of waiting for a peace treaty to be signed.[32]

The consequences of an escape attempt could be deadly. The Swiss Legation's Corragioni d'Orelli visited Brocton in March 1919 to investigate the shooting of a prisoner who had apparently tried to flee. The inspector was troubled by his findings and argued that the death could have been avoided. The sentry responsible for the shooting had reportedly been a prisoner in Germany, and the body of the victim was found inside the compound rather than outside the barbed wire. D'Orelli concluded that while he did not question the sentry's intentions, the guard could have perhaps fired a nonlethal shot and spared the prisoner.[33] Another German lost his life when a guard at Dorchester presumed the prisoner to be attempting escape and opened fire. The incident was judged to be a case of justifiable

homicide.[34] These shootings demonstrate that despite the armistice, tensions remained between prisoners and guards. While much of Europe may have been focused on peace, the war dragged on for the men behind barbed wire, as well as the guards charged with overseeing them.

Postwar escapes were often acts of desperation, but as had been the case prior to the armistice, flight attempts were also a means of defying one's captors. Continued resistance took other forms as well. Whether refusing to give parole, showing up late to roll call, or goading sentries, many prisoners remained insubordinate. As Swiss inspectors recalled after a visit to Frongoch during which prisoners seemed agitated over food shortages, "It all comes from being cooped up and idle, one loses all sense of proportion. Grudges grow as large as giants and small matters fasten on one's nerves like a tick on a dog's ear and sometimes the only fun one has is to be aggravating."[35] At times, guards failed to appreciate the prisoners' antics, and on one occasion a sentry at Holyport fired on two officers whom he believed had provoked him.[36] The incident prompted a great deal of excitement, but no one appears to have been injured and the camp calmed down in the weeks following the episode.

Other acts of defiance, however, had more serious implications. Admiral Reuter, the commander of the German fleet at Scapa Flow, was determined that the Allies would not receive German surface vessels as part of the reparations scheme. A career officer, he had no intention of allowing the navy to suffer the humiliation of surrendering its fleet. He began planning for the possibility of scuttling the ships interned at Scapa Flow when peace terms were announced in May 1919. With the Reichstag having voted to accept terms that included the loss of the interned ships, Reuter experienced his own battlefield moment of truth at Scapa Flow. As the enemy figuratively advanced, he was forced to decide between surrender and captivity for the proud German fleet or death with honor. On the morning of the 21 June 1919, the admiral prepared his full-dress uniform with Iron Cross. He understood the gravity of what he was about to do, and it was only fitting that he dress for the occasion. At approximately 10:30 A.M. Reuter chose *Heldentod* for the German navy and ordered the scuttling of all vessels under his command. According to some reports, several destroyers raised a red flag with the letter "Z," internationally recognized as the code to advance on the enemy, before they sent their ships into the depths. The sinking caught the British by surprise, and guards were slow to respond. When they realized what was taking place, Royal Marines fired on the vessels, killing nine German sailors and wounding sixteen more.[37]

Reuter's orders resulted in the largest scuttling in history, and it was a clear act of defiance intended to preserve the honor of the German navy. A German officer later recalled that the crew of one of the sinking ships had been reminded that they "were doing this for [their] fatherland," at which point the sailors responded with "three rousing cheers for Germany."[38] The British considered the scuttling an act of treachery, and Reuter and his men became official prisoners of war only hours after sailors carried out his orders. On 24 June, Reuter's crew reached the prisoner of war camp in Oswestry, and within a week the admiral, now the highest-ranking prisoner in British custody, arrived at Donington Hall. Since prisoners had access to British newspapers, they were familiar with the details of the scuttling. The officers at Donington Hall allayed any doubts Reuter may have had about his comrades' attitude toward his decision by greeting him with a chorus of cheers as he entered the castle.[39] Reuter had struck a blow against his enemies and demonstrated that defeat had not altered his conception of honorable behavior. His fellow prisoners, who had struggled endlessly with their decision to surrender, could certainly appreciate his motivations.

The sinking of the German fleet may have complicated the proceedings taking place at Versailles, but it did not prevent the treaty's formal signing on 28 June 1919. By that point, the prisoners in the UK had spent more than seven months in postwar captivity, most thinking that peace negotiations presented the only obstacle to their freedom. Ludwig G., for example, assured his mother in early June that he believed every letter he wrote was to be his last from captivity, and he felt sure that the conclusion of peace proceedings would come in the near future.[40] As he predicted, the treaty was signed only weeks later, but it would be months before Ludwig G. and his comrades would see their homeland. The Treaty of Versailles stipulated that prisoners were to be released "with the greatest rapidity," but only once the settlement came into effect, which meant that repatriation could not proceed until the Allies ratified the treaty.[41]

For the second time in less than a year, the prisoners' expectations that physical reconnection with the homeland would follow a particular event were dashed. Prisoners had looked forward to the end of peace negotiations as a sign that their ordeal would finally reach its conclusion. After all, how could the British continue to detain prisoners when the war had officially ended? From the prisoners' perspective, it mattered little that the peace treaty was not official until ratified. All they knew was that it had resulted in no concrete date for their release. This state of uncertainty dominated the prisoners' lives to the extent that they found it difficult to focus on anything else.

From Oswestry, Reserve Lt. Hans J. pleaded with German politicians to give prisoners an indication of when they might be released. In a letter to a member of the German National Assembly in Weimar, the lieutenant stressed the severity of the prisoners' desire for information and recalled an incident that occurred when a friend with a seriously ill wife asked for the latest repatriation news: "When I shared with him some news from letters and newspapers, a circle of old prisoners from 14 and 15 immediately gathered around us and examined news from the letters and discussed news items from German, English, French, Swiss and Spanish newspapers. Every piece of news about repatriation is greedily devoured, discussed and passed along in a manner that you cannot understand if you are not a prisoner of war."[42] The lieutenant's was a familiar story. During the war, prisoners had longed for a connection with the world outside the barbed wire, looking for confirmation that they had not been abandoned. With the front silent and peace concluded, the threat of abandonment seemed all too real for men who had been away from their homes for years. This made an acknowledgment that they would, in fact, be allowed to rejoin the national community more important than ever.

Feelings of disappointment often manifested themselves in expressions of anger. The *Morning Post* reported in July that prisoners at an unnamed camp had been "unruly" since peace was signed, which required the War Office to call in reinforcements from the RDC to maintain order. In the most severe case of unrest, a sentry shot and killed a prisoner after the German attacked him with a brick.[43] Prisoners blamed a great deal of their extended suffering on their British captors, but many also questioned the new German government's handling of repatriation. By July 1919, enlisted prisoner Karl K. confided to his parents that the lack of regular correspondence with the home front was threatening his mental stability. He assured his family that many of his fellow prisoners blamed the German government for their despair since officials had built up false hopes in press releases.[44] The following month, he warned his parents against putting too much faith in deceptive press reports and cynically alleged, "In any case, up to this point still no decisive steps toward our release have been attempted or undertaken." Believe what your son tells you, he concluded, and not the nonsense from the newspapers (*Zeitungsquatsch*).[45]

Parents who chose to believe their captive sons had reason to worry that the ambiguity surrounding repatriation had pushed prisoners to their breaking point. More than a month after the signing at Versailles, Ludwig G. complained that he had no idea what to do with his time and spent the entire day struggling with his thoughts, losing heart with each day. He

reminded his parents that three-quarters of a year had passed since the armistice, but "the poor prisoners must still remain sitting in the same place while the others were home long ago."[46] The "others" Ludwig G. referred to were frontline soldiers who retuned home shortly after the armistice. His reference illustrates his keen awareness of the ways in which surrender had separated him from his frontline comrades. It is not difficult to imagine that prisoners were resentful of soldiers who had already started their postwar lives. Stranded prisoners also became testy with loved ones whose letters did not reach them on a regular basis. When Wilhelm S. wrote to Else S., presumably his wife, from Brocton in early August 1919, he demanded to know why she "made him wait so long for a letter," adding, "I have no idea what I should think about it."[47] By the end of the month, he seemed even more frustrated and sullenly wrote, "You have already received many letters from me, but I have not received a single sign of life from you for ten weeks. From other loved ones I also hear nothing, which makes one quite anxious about what's really going on at home."[48]

After several months at Donington Hall, it became apparent to Admiral Reuter that many prisoners had reached the end of their rope. He became a vocal advocate for the immediate repatriation of prisoners who had been in captivity for an extended period. In August, Reuter wrote the British prime minister that the "prisoners of war and interned have reached the utmost limits of their endurance." Himself a prisoner, Reuter understood his comrades' anxieties about the future. He notified the prime minister that "almost every officer will be compelled to enter a new profession, which for the senior officers with families is especially a heavy care as they are mostly without means. Every day in captivity lowers their vitality and lessens their opportunity in life."[49] With this observation, Reuter drew attention to the prisoners' greatest concern. They had attempted to remain loyal by looking to the future and bettering themselves for their postwar lives. Delayed repatriation made it impossible to compete for desirable employment and threatened their fragile mental stability and ability to provide for their families. Prisoners justifiably feared that when they finally returned to Germany, the consequences of their past lives in captivity would jeopardize their prospects for success and reintegration.

It was especially frustrating that although prisoners were unable to pursue employment in Germany, many continued to work to the benefit of their enemies. The number of prisoners employed in the UK declined in the months following the armistice as the War Office transferred able-bodied enlisted men to the Continent, but more than 31,000 reportedly remained at work in the UK at the end of July 1919.[50] This was a small

force compared to the army of more than 180,000 German prisoners of the British who were employed in France. By April 1919, most of the prisoners in France were busy clearing battlefields of debris, scrap, and salvage.[51] In addition to those who entered labor companies shortly after capture, the British relocated a number of prisoners from the UK to assist in clean-up duties in France. When prisoners at Oswestry discovered that they were to be transferred across the English Channel, many complained that they "had been sold by the English to the French to work as slaves in the devastated areas of Northern France." Even though the men claimed to be content once they arrived in the former war zone, their work was undeniably dangerous. Salvage operations included collecting and disarming ammunition. British officials often assigned this work to Germans since the prisoners were more familiar with German armaments and suffered fewer casualties than Allied soldiers employed in the same tasks.[52]

Back in the UK, the prisoners' greatest concern was repatriation. With summer at an end, officers took their appeals for freedom directly to the British public. As one prisoner at Lofthouse Park put it, "The homeland cannot help us, so we will help ourselves."[53] Although prisoners had limited contact with British civilians, the occupants of several camps found an ingenious way to spread their message. Prisoners at Oswestry constructed a large banner from bed sheets that read "Let Us Home [*sic*]" and unfurled it when civilians passed the camp.[54] At other camps, prisoners inscribed illustrated pleas for help on razor-thin sheets of tissue and attached them to paper balloons. They then sent the balloons into the countryside with requests that the notes be delivered to the local press.[55] The flyers appealed to the citizens' desire for the demobilization of British troops. One such message sent from Lofthouse Park claimed that 50,000 British soldiers were required to guard the Germans in the UK and argued that sentries could return home if prisoners were allowed to leave.[56] Some messages asked readers to consider how English mothers would feel if their sons remained in captivity after peace, while others reminded Britons that while prisoners awaited repatriation, their wives and children made do without providers.[57]

The balloon campaign was bothersome for camp commandants. During a visit to the officers' camp at Redmires in Yorkshire, a Swiss inspector asked the German camp senior to stop his fellow officers from sending out balloon messages, at the special request of the commandant.[58] The commandant probably realized that many British citizens sympathized with the prisoners' cause on both humanitarian and practical grounds. In an August 1919 editorial in the *Times*, for example, it was suggested that

the government grant clemency to the German prisoners, who had to be "guarded, fed, and warmed" at public expense.[59] Financial considerations were difficult to overlook. Only weeks after the article appeared in the *Times*, Sir Arthur Balfour lamented that the maintenance of the German prisoners required the British and Americans to spend approximately £150,000 per day.[60] Commandants likewise benefited little from the prisoners' extended stay and had no control over repatriation. Like prisoners, they simply awaited instructions from the War Office regarding plans for prisoner release.

News of the balloon campaign of 1919 made its way to Germany, and it demonstrated to the home front that prisoners were still dedicated to working toward the future and looked forward to reuniting with their homeland.[61] However, it also revealed that with each passing week, prisoners lost faith in the German government's willingness or ability to expedite their release. As correspondence with the home front demonstrated, the government's apparent lack of action was a source of constant disappointment that reopened old, emasculating psychological wounds. Yet the prisoners' prolonged suffering was not the byproduct of an uncaring or indifferent home front but rather a sign of Germany's powerlessness to challenge the policies of its victorious enemies.

On the Home Front: The Realities of Prisoner Politics

In the months following the armistice, the history of the UK's prisoners merged with that of other German prisoners awaiting repatriation in camps around the globe. As frontline soldiers demobilized in November 1918, more than 800,000 German prisoners remained in enemy hands.[62] Additionally, significant numbers of former prisoners were already home in Germany by the signing of the armistice. Belligerents exchanged severely wounded prisoners throughout the war, and German prisoners had begun returning from behind the eastern front after Russia's defeat in 1917. Although both Germany and Russia were reluctant to release prisoners, the Treaty of Brest Litovsk included provisions for repatriation.[63] Former prisoners of war fortunate enough to be home at war's end were surely thankful to be free. However, the government's apparent lack of concern for repatriated prisoners and efforts to gain the release of those still in captivity troubled the former captives.

In response, a cohort of former prisoners founded the Reichsbund zum Schutze der deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen (Reich League for the Defense of the German Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees)

on 20 December 1918. The Reichsbund hoped to consolidate existing prisoner aid associations in order to present itself as a formidable organization dedicated to the prompt release of German prisoners of war and civilian internees.[64] Under the leadership of Baron Wilhelm von Lersner and Gerhard Rose, among others, the Reichsbund brought together prisoner advocates from across the political spectrum and quickly gained followers in more than eighty local associations (*Ortsgruppen*).[65]

The Ebert government was well aware of the general dissatisfaction surrounding the issue of repatriation, and it recognized the need for a centralized agency to handle prisoner affairs. As one government official argued, the creation of such an agency appeared to have few disadvantages. It would garner the sympathy of the entire nation and show prisoners of war "that although they feel betrayed and sold out," the German people had not abandoned them.[66] In early organizational meetings, officials determined that the new agency would cooperate with existing aid associations, and authorities were aware of the difficulties they faced. Financing prisoner aid schemes was a topic of particular concern. By war's end, the monies collected through Red Cross charity drives and the Volksspende were practically exhausted, and the number of needy prisoners had climbed in the war's final months. If the government were to set aside 10 marks per prisoner each month, for example, it would result in a monthly expenditure of 7–8 million marks.[67] Nonetheless, government officials could not overlook the need for action. On the first Christmas Eve of the postwar era, thirteen government representatives released an open letter assuring prisoners that the fight for repatriation would continue until the last prisoner had returned home.[68] On 2 January 1919, Ebert and his future chancellor, Philipp Scheidemann, went a step further and publicly announced the establishment of a government agency, the Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen (Reich Central Office for Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees) to oversee prisoner affairs.[69]

Ebert's administration selected Social Democratic deputy Daniel Stücklen to head the Reichszentralstelle. By early January, the agency directed regular meetings between aid workers and government officials in order to discuss repatriation and prisoner welfare.[70] Initially, the Reichsbund seemed eager to cooperate with Stücklen's agency, but it was only a matter of months before differences of opinion began to strain their working relationship. The Reichsbund saw repatriation as the most important matter facing postwar Germany, and it believed itself to be the public voice of the prisoners and their families. In order to stress its apolitical nature, the Reichsbund changed its name to the Volksbund zum Schutze der

deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen (People's League for the Defense of the German Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees) in early 1919 and began to actively recruit a membership base capable of exerting pressure on the government.[71] Political differences could not be allowed to interfere with the ultimate goal of securing the prisoners' release, and the Volksbund was prepared to work with anyone, regardless of political affiliation, who was willing to be of assistance.[72]

The Reichszentralstelle, on the other hand, was tied to Ebert's socialist government and thus more sensitive to the complications of ongoing peace negotiations and the difficulties facing postwar Germany. Stücklen hoped to secure the prisoners' release as quickly as possible and argued that in negotiations with the victors, repatriation should be addressed independently of other issues. Nonetheless, he recognized that Germany's hands were tied, and he conceded that only the victors held the power to free their captives.[73] The Volksbund was critical of government claims of helplessness and, although still working with the Reichszentralstelle, launched its own newsletter to publicize the fight to bring prisoners home. Adopting the slogan "Heraus mit unseren Gefangenen" (out with our prisoners), Volksbund activists organized nationwide protests and even traveled to Spa, Belgium, to persuade the Allies to release prisoners on humanitarian grounds.[74] The organization also reached out to religious officials and encouraged them to use international ties to pressure church leaders in neutral countries to speak out against the retention of the German prisoners.[75]

On the home front, the Volksbund continued to pressure its own government to make repatriation a priority. In order to garner support, the Volksbund trained speakers to interact with the community and provided them with instructions for effectively engaging the public. If former prisoners themselves, speakers were to discuss their personal experiences and explain that Germans should not overlook that impact that delayed repatriation could have on the prisoners' attitude toward the German government. Keenly aware that some Germans might be skeptical of the prisoners' loyalty, speakers argued that "prisoners were not the worst soldiers, but perhaps the best." Finally, Volksbund representatives stressed that the organization was completely neutral in terms of class, religion, and political affiliation. It was simply dedicated to unifying prisoner advocates of all stripes.[76]

The Volksbund's actual size is impossible to determine, but in February 1919 its leaders claimed to speak for millions of members. The tone of the Volksbund's calls for protest was uncompromising. The letters its members drafted to government officials demanded that no preliminary peace

agreement be signed until the Allies began transporting prisoners home. In one letter, a member wrote that the liberation of prisoners was a matter of life or death for the German people and pressured the government to demand the immediate release of any Germans in enemy hands.[77] Members of the Volksbund's executive board in Berlin similarly insisted that the government sign no preliminary treaty that did not include arrangements for immediate repatriation. In correspondence with the Foreign Office, the Volksbund warned that "the patience of the German people had run out," and argued that the enemy must know that Germany would not stand for further humiliation.[78] Oldenburg's Volksbund division challenged the government's very identity when it informed Ebert that the socialist revolution had meaning only if it was serious about the concept of "brotherly love." Like other branches of the Volksbund, the Oldenburg group warned against signing any document that failed to provide for prisoner release. Quoting Goethe's *Faust*, Oldenburg affiliates called for action by reminding Ebert that "in the beginning was the deed."[79] The Reichszentralstelle understood that one of the largest obstacles to prisoner release was the need for labor in the devastated areas of France. The agency recognized that in the absence of a labor solution that satisfied French authorities, it would remain impossible to speed the prisoners' return.[80] Prisoners' families were particularly troubled by news that relatives might be used to clear the former war zone of debris. In March 1919, the women of Sonneberg, a city near Germany's eastern frontier, circulated a petition expressing disbelief that prisoners who had already spent years of their lives in "dishonor and misery" would now be utilized for clean-up duty. As an alternative, petitioners suggested that the government send the thousands of unemployed German workers who collected weekly payments without "lifting a finger" to do the work designated for prisoners.[81] The Volksbund shared the women's contempt for the thought of prisoners clearing battlefields. The group's Magdeburg branch considered the use of prisoners in the former war zone to be little better than slavery. In a letter to Phillip Scheidemann, its leaders made clear their preference for breaking off peace negotiations over abandoning prisoners to the "vindictiveness of the enemy."[82]

The Volksbund and other prisoner advocates effectively expressed their dissatisfaction through correspondence, and the association's growing membership emboldened representatives to take an aggressive stance in discussions with government officials. At an April 1919 meeting, A representative of the Foreign Office acknowledged the strength of the Heraus mit unsern Gefangenen movement and maintained that it was the

government's duty to bring the prisoners home. Still, he contended that technical considerations, including the lack of adequate transport vessels, complicated an already delicate issue. Speaking on behalf of the Volksbund, Wilhelm von Lersner identified himself as the voice of a true people's movement (*Volksbewegung*) that consisted of more than 2,000 local branches. He demanded that the German government set a deadline for the commencement of repatriation. Establishing a deadline would benefit not only the government, Lersner argued, but the prisoners as well: "The prisoners of war [are extremely resentful] and have the feeling that the government does nothing for them. If they now also see that nothing is settled for certain, then one must fear that following their return they will become adversaries of the government that did not speak up for them. However, if the government demands defined deadlines, these people, who are fulfilled by a deep love of the homeland, will be backers and supporters of this government."[83]

The scenario Lersner presented was an obvious attempt to employ scare tactics to persuade the government to take a stand on repatriation. His Volksbund colleague Professor Gustav Böhmer later emphasized that the paramount question remained whether the victors were prepared to hand over the prisoners. Furthermore, if the answer was no, would the government go ahead with peace negotiations? Although Böhmer probably did not like the answer he received, it offered a revealing perspective on the government's dilemma. The Foreign Office's representative replied that the release of the prisoners was one of the government's fundamental concerns but that it was necessary to view repatriation in the proper context—as only one consideration of a much larger peace process.[84]

The German government did not seem willing to let prisoner release jeopardize the successful conclusion of peace proceedings. Ebert and his fellow socialists benefited little from the prisoners' delayed homecoming. With well more than a million German soldiers having failed to return home from the battlefield, healthy men were valuable commodities. Yet the government was in no position to make demands. It was a symbolic gesture of solidarity for Volksbund members to advocate terminating peace negotiations in the absence of repatriation deadlines, but the realities of a crumbling economy, defeated military, and a war-weary population weighed upon German representatives at Versailles. Delegates were not unwilling to push for repatriation; they simply had to do so with humility rather than the bravado that characterized earlier German diplomacy.

In a 7 May 1919 speech delivered at Versailles, Count Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau, the leader of the German delegation, assured

the Allies that he and his colleagues held "no illusions as to the extent of our defeat—the degree of our impotence."[85] The French prime minister, Georges Clemenceau, urged his allies to use prisoner labor as long as possible, and rebuilding efforts in northern France proved to be a significant barrier to prisoner release. On the German side, Brockdorff-Rantzau conceded that Germany was responsible for the reconstruction of areas devastated by intense fighting, but when discussing the best methods for reconstruction, he warned against the continued use of prisoner labor: "The worst possible method would be to continue to have the work done by German prisoners of war. Such labour is certainly cheap. It would, however, cost the world dear, if hate and despair were aroused in the German people at the thought of their captive sons, brothers and fathers continuing to languish in their former bondage after the Peace Preliminaries. We can attain no enduring peace without the immediate settlement of this question, which has dragged on far too long already."[86] Several days later, Brockdorff-Rantzau again raised the issue of prisoner release in a letter to Clemenceau. Because of the technical and logistical difficulties of transporting prisoners, the German delegate suggested that the "greatest importance should be attached to finding a solution of all preliminary questions" before the repatriation process actually began. Accordingly, he recommended that deliberations on the matter should proceed immediately, and "separately from all other questions."[87]

The German delegation at Versailles recognized the importance of expediting prisoner release and hoped that planning for the captives' return could begin prior to the conclusion of peace negotiations. Clemenceau, however, responded that although the Allies and associated powers would be willing to set up repatriation commissions, they would not do so until Germany announced its intention to sign the peace treaty and officially bring the war to an end.[88] The decision to initiate repatriation was the victors' alone, and they had no intention of seriously addressing the matter until the ink had dried on formal peace documents. Even so, the campaign waged by the Volksbund and by German representatives at Versailles reveals that while prisoners believed their homeland had forsaken them, their delayed homecoming was due to circumstances beyond the government's control. Moreover, the publicity campaign organized by millions of Volksbund members, as well as other prisoner advocates, demonstrated that the prisoners were by no means forgotten.

Dissatisfaction with prisoner retention only grew following the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty, but repatriation was not the German government's only prisoner-related concern. The German government had

set up the Reichszentralstelle to show prisoners that they had not been abandoned. As early as January 1919, however, the Reich Treasury reported that funds available for prisoner care would be substantially less than expected. Even in its infancy, the Reichszentralstelle was hampered by the reality that any resources reserved for prisoners would have to be supplemented with donations from charity organizations.[89] Although the Volksbund was critical of the Reichszentralstelle's approach to negotiating release, the two agencies agreed on the importance of continuing to assist prisoners with care packages until they returned home.

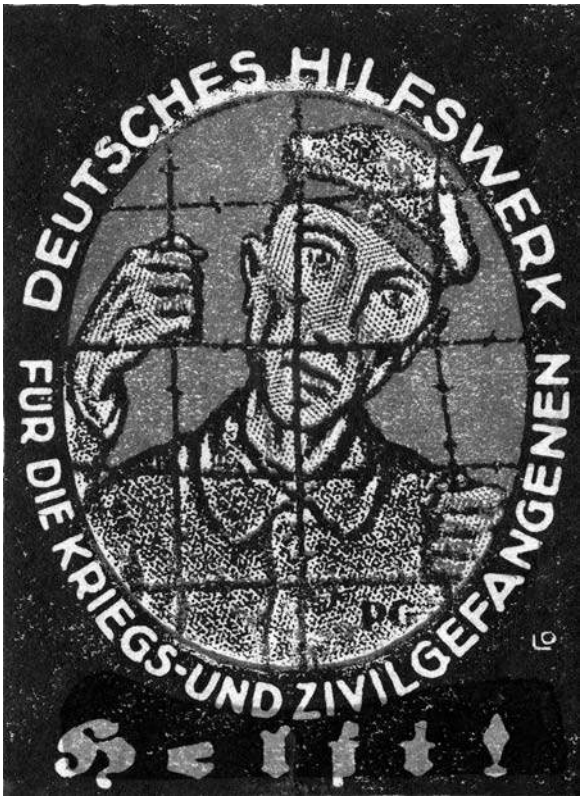
In spring 1919, the Reichszentralstelle began collecting funds for prisoner welfare under the name Deutsches Hilfswerk für die Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen (German Relief Association for the Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees). Along with the Volksbund and Red Cross, the Hilfswerk garnered the support of numerous veterans' and relief associations. It further bolstered its reputation by recruiting political figures like Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, and Brockdorff-Rantzau as honorary board members. Throughout March and April 1919, the Hilfswerk solicited monetary donations and encouraged Germans to provide special assistance during the final phase of the prisoners' difficult ordeal.[90] The Volksbund published a special edition of its newsletter to explain its relationship with the Hilfswerk and challenged members to contribute to a program that would greatly benefit the prisoners.[91] The Hilfswerk made no attempt to conceal the government's inability to handle prisoner aid without public support. In May 1919 it organized a special week of sacrifice (*Opferwoche*) that featured an intensified advertising campaign and door-to-door collections.[92]

As the Hilfswerk was opening its Opferwoche, Brockdorff-Rantzau was busy appealing to the Allies for additional assistance at Versailles. The German government apparently harbored concerns that prisoners might come home as broken men. Brockdorff-Rantzau stressed the importance of prisoners returning to Germany in "as normal a condition as possible" so that they might be quickly reintegrated into the workforce. This would be possible only if efforts were made to improve their mental and physical health, and Brockdorff-Rantzau lamented that Germany did not possess the necessary resources. He requested that the Allies consider providing prisoners with appropriate clothing, footwear, and provisions prior to their departure for Germany. Brockdorff-Rantzau hinted at Germany's willingness to pay for any expenses associated with the additional support, presumably by having the costs added to reparations payments.[93] Predictably, the Allies replied that they would probably not be able to assist prisoners with supplies since many of their territories had only recently been

"liberated from the German yoke."[94] The victors' inability or unwillingness to help with prisoner welfare made efforts on the home front all the more important.

The Hilfswerk forced Germans to acknowledge that the war had not ended for prisoners abroad. Its methods, however, may have unintentionally reinforced the prisoners' negative image. The Hilfswerk relied on compelling poster, stamp, and postcard illustrations, some of which were designed by the distinguished graphic designer Louis Oppenheim, to gain sympathy for its cause and convince Germans to contribute. More often than not, the illustrations portrayed prisoners as physically weak, emaciated shells of their former selves who were sometimes quite literally begging for the homeland's help. As an advertising strategy, the approach made sense. The organization clearly wanted to draw attention to the prisoners' anguish and elicit an emotional response from potential contributors. The Hilfswerk's campaign depicted prisoners as emasculated charity cases who were incapable of helping themselves. In reality, the German prisoners in the UK were happy to receive care packages from the home front, but they had worked diligently to remain physically and mentally strong to avoid returning home as dejected men. The images the Hilfswerk utilized could have ultimately been detrimental to the prisoners' goal of legitimizing the captivity experience. In this sense, the campaign was counterproductive. It is surprising that the Volksbund, an organization founded by former prisoners, apparently failed to challenge the Hilfswerk's illustrations. At times, the organization printed the images in its own publications. The Volksbund was determined that prisoners of war be granted the same respect given to other veterans of the Great War. Despite its cooperation with the Hilfswerk, the organization was hesitant to refer to prisoner aid as charity or participate in programs that might reinforce the perception of the prisoner as a second-class soldier. As far as the Volksbund was concerned, the prisoners had earned any aid they received.

This stance was nowhere more apparent than in the organization's attempts to secure financial compensation for time spent in enemy hands. The Hague Convention of 1907 stipulated that a prisoner became the responsibility of his captors upon surrender. Enlisted men received provisions equal to those granted to soldiers of corresponding rank in the army by whom they had been captured, and officers received salaries according to the same terms. In spite of this internationally recognized law of war, many German prisoners, like those at Handforth, demanded back pay for the duration of their captivity. The Volksbund eagerly supported the prisoners' financial claims, but as a government agency, the



Stamp designed by Louis Oppenheim for the Hilfswerk's fund-raising efforts. Original in author's personal collection.

Reichszentralstelle's desire to help the prisoners with back pay, or any other aid, was curbed by Germany's desperate financial situation. The prospect of compensating prisoners for time in captivity was problematic from the start, as the money was never available.

However, this fundamental problem never deterred prisoners, or their advocates, from requesting that wages be paid to prisoners or their dependents. In February 1919, the president of the Bayerischer Kriegerbund (Bavarian Warriors' League) suggested to the German National Assembly in Weimar that prisoners' partial or full wages might be given to their relatives as a means of supporting them in the prisoners' absence. Many prisoners had been the primary wage earners for their families, and the Kriegerbund reasoned that knowing their loved ones had been provided for would surely lessen the strain of captivity. Obviously familiar with the stigma of surrender, he assured officials that they need not worry about whether such payments were deserved, as in a majority of cases, prisoners had only surrendered after "heroic resistance" in the front lines.[95]

Wartime regulations permitted a prisoner's wife and children to receive his military salary if they had no other means of support. However, requests for prisoners' salaries were handled on a case-by-case basis, and a prisoner's parents or siblings could claim a salary only if the prisoner had been their principal source of support.[96] In the absence of concrete proof of a family's need, German authorities did not hesitate to deny access to wages for men in captivity. When submariner Paul W.'s funds ran low at Pattishall, he instructed his father to contact commanders in Germany to see whether his wages might be transferred and used for his upkeep.[97] Paul W.'s father did as he was asked, but authorities in Kiel informed him that they would not pay wages to sailors in captivity.[98] Eventually, in December 1919, German officials would establish an assistance program for families whose providers remained in captivity, but payouts were capped and were not equal to lost wages.[99]

From a financial standpoint, the circumstances of a prisoner's capture were irrelevant. The Reichszentralstelle held the opinion that demands for payments would be impossible to fulfill, and it suggested that the government revise earlier estimates on available funding in light of the postwar economic crisis.[100] This stance brought the agency into direct conflict with the Volksbund. During a March 1919 meeting, Reichszentralstelle representative Moritz Schlesinger insisted that the Volksbund refrain from encouraging prisoners to make demands that the government was incapable of satisfying. In the Volksbund's defense, Professor Böhmer claimed that anyone familiar with the mood among the prisoners understood that the question of compensation was a daily topic of discussion. The prisoners felt that they had a right to reimbursement and rejected the idea that payments should be need-based rather than standardized. At the heart of the issue, Böhmer contended, was the prisoners' desire to be viewed as honorable soldiers worthy of compensation: "They do not want a gift, but rights. They do not want their captivity to impress upon them a dishonorable character and mark them as second-class soldiers."[101]

Prisoners believed they had suffered enough, and they did not want captivity to place them at an economic disadvantage or to cause them to be viewed as inadequate men and soldiers. In any case, civil servants had continued to receive salaries in captivity, and according to Böhmer, the British, French, and Austrians planned to compensate their prisoners. Thus, he argued, "Only the German prisoner of war will have to panhandle as exceptions to this graciousness to which he believes he has a well-founded right. If the Reich persists with its dismissive standpoint regarding the question of payment, it will most certainly turn the returning prisoners

of war into an army of 800,000 unsatisfied and embittered soldiers that carry the substance of the most extreme left, yes of Bolshevism, in their arms."[102] Böhmer's reference to Bolshevism likely made more than a few of his colleagues uncomfortable. Yet even with the threat of a Bolshevik army marching home to Germany, the government could not pay returning prisoners from an empty treasury. The Reichszentralstelle insisted that the unwillingness to pay was not the result of ill will toward prisoners but rather a consequence of the harsh economic constraints it faced. In view of that immutable fact, its representative suggested the time had come to resign oneself to the current situation and not "raise and propagate false hopes whose non-fulfillment could only bring about agitation."[103]

The Reich finance minister fell in line with the Reichszentralstelle's stance. He maintained that since awarding back pay contradicted international law, any payments to prisoners would have the appearance of donations rather than earned wages. In other words, prisoners had no legal right to compensation. His position struck a blow to advocates who hoped that securing reimbursement might legitimate the prisoners' experiences by implying that although behind barbed wire, they continued to serve their nation. Echoing the attitude of the Reichszentralstelle, the finance minister concluded that making impossible demands of the government threatened to exacerbate existing dissatisfaction among the prisoners and should therefore be stopped.[104]

Nonetheless, German officials appreciated the sensitive nature of the compensation question. In June 1919 the Reichszentralstelle and Kriegsministerium jointly offered a scheme for reimbursing enlisted men and noncommissioned officers who had not received payment from their captors. The sums offered by the plan were small. Yet when combined with the agencies' contention that a "majority of the prisoners entered into enemy captivity against their will," the plan showed the authorities' understanding that prisoners were not inevitably deserters and therefore undeserving of payment.[105] The same month, the new minister of finance, Matthias Erzberger, weighed in on the subject. He declared that the prisoners had doubtlessly suffered tremendously in captivity and would likely continue to find life difficult at home. In view of their service, Erzberger saw it as a "social duty" to assist the prisoners, and he requested that 150 million marks be allocated from government funds to assist them.[106] Officials in the chancellery agreed and approved the request in early July.[107]

The funding the government set aside for prisoners represented a fraction of what would have been necessary to meet the Volksbund's demands for partial or full payment of wages. Nevertheless, securing payment was a

step toward the recognition prisoners desired. Unfortunately, the process of securing compensation aggravated the rift between the government and prisoner advocates. Even though the Reichszentralstelle and Volksbund continued to work together on projects like the Hilfswerk, each party questioned the other's motives. In July 1919, Daniel Stücklen warned the National Assembly in Weimar that the Volksbund continued to make demands that the government could not meet and apparently wanted to "mobilize the prisoners of war and civilian internees against the government."[108] According to a Volksbund representative, the Reichszentralstelle was quick to label his group "reactionary," which made collaboration and more efficiently coordinated campaigns impractical. In the end, it was the prisoners who suffered as a result of the animosity, as mistrust weakened the organizations' potential to expedite repatriation.[109]

In the months immediately following the German army's defeat, the Allies seemed to have little empathy with German requests for prisoner release. In February 1919, the *Daily Express* had responded to German calls for repatriation by alleging that the Germans still held prisoners and were in no position to insist that the Allies do something they had failed to do themselves. The paper demanded that prisoners be set free and reminded British readers that while both powers still held prisoners, there was a vital difference in the countries' respective situations: "We have won the war and Germany has lost it—a trifling fact of which we are not too sensible and which Germany has yet to learn the importance." In conclusion, the article suggested that Germans should be made aware that the British "shall retain or return German prisoners exactly as and when it suits our convenience."[110]

Most Britons probably held similar opinions at the time. As months passed with no sign of repatriation, German prisoners began to look like little more than expensive war trophies. Unlike the spiked helmets and iron crosses British soldiers had taken in the moments following capture, prisoners had to be fed and clothed. Furthermore, labor organizations resented the use of prisoner labor on tasks that could have been completed by British workers. With demobilized troops returning home, the government faced allegations that German prisoners were keeping British men out of work.[111] Even more problematic were the financial considerations of providing food and shelter for hundreds of thousands of men, many of whom could not be made to work because of their status as officers. By the summer of 1919, the British were spending an estimated $13 million per month to guard and care for their prisoners in France and the UK. When American and British representatives spoke to the French about

the burdens of prisoner maintenance, Clemenceau expressed his desire to keep the more than 350,000 prisoners working in France in place as long as possible. One potential solution, he suggested, was for the British and Americans to hand their prisoners over to the French. Since international law prohibited the practice, neither power saw this as a viable option.[112]

Given financial considerations and disgruntlement among British workers, it became clear that the *Daily Express*'s moment of "convenience" had come and gone. Anglo-American representatives continued to push the repatriation issue with the French, and in late August, Clemenceau agreed to allow his allies to release prisoners prior to the ratification of the peace treaty. On 30 August, the British began the process of returning prisoners in France to their homes.[113] The following month, the UK's prisoners finally began making their way across the English Channel, but months would pass before the last German prisoners experienced life beyond the barbed wire and reconnected with the homeland.

Going Home

Between the armistice and August 1919, British authorities lowered standards for invalidism in order to repatriate thousands of German civilians, wounded prisoners, and medical personnel. This policy change freed up room in hospitals and released the British from the burden of maintaining prisoners who were largely unable to work. Additionally, the War Office transferred around 3,500 "friendly" prisoners to French, Danish, Polish, and Czecho-Slovak authorities prior to the general repatriation of prisoners captured while serving with German forces. For the rest of the prisoners held in the UK, repatriation officially began on 24 September 1919.[114]

In preparation for the planned evacuation, the War Office systematically shut down satellites and funneled prisoners into parent camps where they would await their day of departure. The mood in the camps was a mixture of excitement and anxiety. The War Office generally informed prisoners of their impending exodus but rarely provided specifics. Instead, it vaguely announced that prisoners would be released in a few days.[115] Once the British had announced their intention to commence repatriation, prisoners lost interest in the organized activities that had been a cornerstone of camp life. When Swiss inspectors visited Handforth in late October 1919, they reported that the "camp industries so flourishing at one time are slowly dying out, tools and materials are being collected and returned and the same applies to musical instruments, games and books lent by the different Charitable Societies. These are, however, no longer

of interest to the prisoners who have only one thought, to 'pack up and go.'"[116] The time had come to stop preparing for life in postwar Germany and begin living it.

Depending on their rank and place of internment, prisoners took one of several routes out of the UK and back to Germany. Officers traveled exclusively on German vessels running primarily between the German North Sea and the British port cities of Newcastle and Hull. German steamers likewise collected prisoners on the Thames or in Southampton and Harwich. Once prisoners were settled on board, German authorities provided the British with a receipt for their cargo, at which point the prisoners ceased to be their captor's responsibility. Although British ships did not enter enemy ports, an arrangement with the Netherlands provided for the transfer of approximately 10,000 prisoners from Harwich to Rotterdam aboard British vessels. In the Netherlands, British officials handed over prisoners to a German representative who prepared them for the trip into Germany. Finally, the British transferred more than 30,000 prisoners to France, where they were repatriated via rail car.[117] Once the machinery of repatriation was set into motion, the system worked with surprising effectiveness. In an October 1919 telegram to the German Red Cross in Frankfurt, the PWIB reported that more than 75,000 military prisoners remained in the UK.[118] With a few notable exceptions, the War Office had cleared the UK of German prisoners by 20 November, just over a month after the PWIB's telegram.

Despite the efficiency of the repatriation program, years of uncertainty and persistent fears of abandonment kept many prisoners skeptical until they set foot on the ships that would carry them across the English Channel. When a British labor strike delayed his departure from Brocton, Wilhelm S. warned his wife that his repatriation was not going to take place as quickly as she might think. Clearly disappointed, he lamented, "It is now as if we shall not come home."[119] When Otto M.'s departure was similarly delayed because of a strike among German seamen, the doubts he had struggled with for years quickly resurfaced, prompting him to ask, "When are we finally going home? Are we really still going home? Is there any truth to what we did not want to believe, what the English newspapers reported: that the German homeland did not want us back? For God's sake, we would go insane if we had to remain here any longer! German brothers and Sisters, where is your loyalty? Have you really forgotten us?"[120] Otto M.'s ship arrived later than expected, but his setback was nothing compared to the delay experienced by several thousand prisoners withheld even after the repatriation program had come to an end.

To ensure that the German government complied with the terms of the armistice, the British held back approximately 1,400 officers and orderlies, essentially as hostages. Additionally, the more than 1,700 prisoners taken at Scapa Flow remained in British hands while the Allies determined how to punish Germany for Reuter's scuttling. Of course, the admiral resented that the British denied his men the freedom granted to other prisoners, and he regularly demanded to know when final repatriation was to commence. Reuter also complained about his lodgings and supplies and the unwelcome nightly visits he received from a British officer charged with ensuring that the admiral did not attempt escape.[121] The War Office saw little validity in most of Reuter's complaints, and Swiss inspectors concluded that the staff at Donington Hall did everything within reason to make the prisoners' stay as comfortable as possible.[122] Confident that Germany was willing to comply with the terms of the peace treaty, the War Office released the prisoners taken at Scapa Flow in late December 1919. Following the German government's agreement to accept penalties imposed for Reuter's last stand at Scapa Flow, he and his men returned to Germany toward the end of January 1920.[123] At the time of his departure, more than five years had passed since the first German military prisoners of war landed in the UK.

■ The Great War did not end with the armistice of 11 November 1918, or even the signing of the peace treaty that "officially" brought the war to a close the following June. Like other prisoners of war around the world, German prisoners of the British continued to live in an active war zone where their daily lives were governed by regulations laid down by their captors. As their comrades from the front lines left the battlefield, prisoners of war continued to view the world through the barbed wire that separated them from their families and made it impossible to start their lives in the new Germany.

The Allied decision to withhold prisoners until the conclusion of peace proceedings was a cruel twist of fate. The war's end failed to bring the immediate repatriation prisoners expected and deepened familiar feelings of helplessness, emasculation, and uncertainty. Old fears of inadequacy were now complicated by worries that separation from Germany might result in lost employment opportunities and the inability to provide for one's family. Delayed repatriation threatened to hamper the prisoners' chances for postwar success, and thus reinforced the stigma of captivity and lost manhood. However, prisoners rarely passively accepted their lot, as evidenced by their correspondence, their organized activities, and their campaigns for expedited release.

As months passed without a concrete date for release, prisoners lost faith in their government's willingness or ability to help them, and their sense of abandonment intensified. In reality, the home front had not forgotten its prisoners in the UK, or elsewhere, as organizations like the Volksbund campaigned vigorously for the prisoners' release. Although government efforts were limited by political and military realities, postwar officials sincerely wanted to secure the prisoners' homecoming and continued to assist them in captivity as best they could. As the Reichszentralstelle stressed, the government harbored no resentment for prisoners; it was merely incapable of influencing decisions on repatriation. The German delegation at Versailles had limited diplomatic clout, and negotiations regarding prisoners of war demonstrate that the resumption of hostilities was never a viable option for the German army. A nation that feared it might be unable to provide its returning prisoners with clothing and supplies was hardly in a position to equip an army of millions at the front.

The German government was equally unable to meet the prisoners' demands for back pay, which led to further feelings of disgruntlement among those who believed the government was attempting to withhold funds that had been rightfully earned. Ebert's fledgling socialist government needed all the support it could muster. Had funds been available, it is safe to say that Ebert's government would have willingly paid lost wages to returning prisoners. Delayed repatriation and the debate over lost wages dealt a blow to the prisoners' fragile egos, leading many to wonder how badly the home front wanted them back. It also gave the impression that prisoners were not entitled to the wage reimbursement they requested. In truth, the prisoners' prolonged suffering was a consequence of the German government's weak footing at home and abroad. It had little to do with any animosity toward soldiers who had chosen life in enemy hands over death on the field of battle. Nonetheless, the prisoners' sense of abandonment and betrayal was very real, and they would find that the battle for respect and redemption continued long after they left the camps of the UK.

CHAPTER SIX

NATIONAL SOCIALISM AS REDEMPTION?

Former Prisoners in Interwar Germany

Less than a month after the armistice, Friedrich Ebert publicly welcomed German soldiers home as undefeated warriors. His comments provided significant fodder for German observers who insisted that the nation's men at arms had not been conquered but instead sabotaged by disloyal elements on the home front. Average Germans seemed to agree with Ebert and largely greeted demobilizing soldiers as undefeated heroes rather than the remnants of a vanquished army. It remained to be seen, however, how the homeland would welcome former prisoners of war. It was impossible for sympathetic politicians to insinuate that prisoners had not been conquered, as their delayed homecoming marked them as soldiers who had experienced a personal battlefield defeat. Accordingly, the desire to shed their image as defeated men and potential deserters was one of the paramount concerns for many of the German veterans who experienced surrender and captivity.

This chapter analyzes former prisoners' experiences in postwar Germany. It argues that despite the celebrations and expressions of gratitude that accompanied the prisoners' return to German soil, former captives struggled to overcome their image as second-class soldiers who had failed to live up to idealized visions of heroic soldierly virtue. Prisoners returned home to find that they had been inextricably linked to the German army's collapse, and many felt that their fellow Germans considered them unworthy of the recognition enjoyed by other veterans. Ultimately, the Great War had been incapable of destroying prewar notions of honorable battlefield

behavior. More than a decade would pass before a most unlikely figure, Adolf Hitler, granted former prisoners the acknowledgment they desired as honorable members of the community of the front (*Frontsoldatentum*). Even then, their acceptance as respectable warriors was conditional, as National Socialist leaders preparing for war had little use for commemorations of battlefield failure and life in enemy hands.

Coming Home: Long Awaited Reunions

It would have been easy to imagine that the demobilized soldiers that clogged German streets in November and December 1918 had left the battlefield as victors. Military officials worked closely with government representatives to create a festive atmosphere as German veterans returned home, despite their defeat. Flags, victory arches, garlands, welcome banners, and music filled the streets around train stations where soldiers reunited with friends and family. Because of the labor shortage that occurred immediately following the war, employers were usually eager to offer veterans their jobs back. As a result, many demobilized soldiers went back to work soon after reentering civilian life. When veterans returned to the workplace, employers often welcomed them with gifts of cash and cigars to thank them for their service and sacrifice. In most cases, veterans found it possible to return to a "normal" existence fairly quickly after demobilization.[1]

Former prisoners, however, arrived in Germany months later as unemployment increased and officials began the process of trimming the army down to 100,000 soldiers in order to comply with the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles.[2] The reduction of the armed forces meant that thousands of career officers would find themselves without employment when they returned home from captivity. Aside from these financial concerns, returning prisoners served as reminders that Germany had not fought to the last man but accepted military defeat. Even so, Germans seemed initially eager to welcome prisoners home in spite of the lingering suspicion that many had fallen into enemy hands as a result of failed courage or compromised loyalty. Veterans' organizations often supported prisoners' claims for compensation and cautioned against judging returning prisoners for their apparent failings or the circumstances under which they entered captivity.[3]

Letters from behind enemy lines left little doubt that prisoners were dissatisfied with the government's handling of repatriation, and the Volksbund's campaign demonstrated that they enjoyed a broad support

base in Germany. The German government realized that the reception of former prisoners would be a significant factor in the development of their attitude toward the new Germany. In an April 1919 memo to its regional offices, the Central Committee of the German Red Cross underscored the importance of making a good first impression with returning prisoners:

> It cannot be stressed enough that the affectionate reception of our prisoners is one of the most pressing duties presently at hand, and of the greatest political importance. The previously repatriated officers and enlisted men unanimously stress that the first impression upon reentry to German soil—the embodiment of the moment upon which they have concentrated all of their hopes and desires through years of suffering—carries a great psychological value. The sentiments of returning prisoners who are graciously and festively welcomed by the homeland and met with well-prepared arrangements can greatly contribute to evoking their patriotism and willingness to work for civil society and prevent the disastrous consequences of the influx of hundreds of thousands into a politically and economically languishing land.[4]

The Red Cross's worries were not limited to concerns that disgruntled prisoners might not wholeheartedly support the new government. The organization feared that dissatisfaction could lead prisoners to embrace Bolshevism. This likely stemmed from knowledge that the Russians subjected German prisoners of war to Bolshevik propaganda. Some of the prisoners who returned home prior to November 1918 had played significant roles in the Kiel mutiny and similar uprisings in other major German cities.[5] Feelings of distrust were mutual, and many prisoners feared that the homeland might not want them back. In August 1919, submariner Paul P. explained to his father that it was "generally agreed" among prisoners at Pattishall that the German government did not want them to return because of fears that repatriation might lead to further disturbances.[6] To put these concerns to rest and foster goodwill, receptions similar to those planned for demobilizing troops in 1918 were later organized for veterans returning home from captivity.

The sight of gathering crowds was encouraging. When former prisoner Otto M.'s transport from the UK arrived in Wilhelmshaven in October 1919, he found the wreaths, waving handkerchiefs, flags, German music, and "mountains of gift parcels" difficult to comprehend.[7] The outpouring of song and the sight of waving handkerchiefs and flags likewise touched a former Oswestry prisoner who recalled that he had not seen such a display of national appreciation since 1914.[8] In many cases, prisoners had not seen

children in years and were overjoyed at the sight of youngsters running through the streets.[9] If these homecoming ceremonies were intended to convince prisoners of the homeland's gratitude, they were generally successful. When recalling his repatriation, Otto M. asked his countrymen to forgive prisoners for believing that the homeland could have forgotten them, concluding, "It is not true, we see that now."[10] Officers repatriated from Skipton the same month arrived to similar fanfare. After reentering Germany, the former prisoners enjoyed refreshments in a great hall filled with tables covered with white linens. Surrounded by their countrymen, the officers sang folk songs and relished the opportunity to converse as free men for the first time in months or years.[11]

In some towns, local branches of the Volksbund went a step further and formally presented returning prisoners with certificates that acknowledged their sacrifices. The small color prints depicted a woman and a flag-waving child greeting a group of military prisoners as they passed below a window that spilled flowers onto the street below. The certificates included a patriotic poem, titled "Welcome," and were signed by the leaders of the local Volksbund office.[12] The prints, which appear to have been intended for display, resembled certificates of achievement and suggested that former prisoners had done something worthy of recognition. For men unsure of how the home front would view their surrender, this simple gesture was important. It encouraged prisoners to hold their heads high rather than lower them in shame. Along with the nationalistic crowds that greeted prisoners as they returned, the certificates helped to reestablish the prisoners' place in the national community and signified, in writing, that someone on the home front appreciated the prisoners' sacrifices.

Aid associations also sought to convey an understanding of the emotional baggage that many prisoners carried as they returned home. For example, the Kirchliche Gefangenenhilfe, a religious aid organization, reminded former prisoners that they should not allow the "ghosts" of their pasts to darken the future.[13] In a published pamphlet, the organization assured former prisoners of its recognition that captivity was the most difficult ordeal for a battle-tested soldier to endure, as it rendered one helpless and unable to fight for the fatherland. The Gefangenenhilfe offered former prisoners comfort by insisting that wartime captivity was nothing to be ashamed of, but rather an indication of an unwillingness to retreat. Former prisoners were not to be looked down upon, the pamphlet continued, and should rest assured that the homeland would stand ready to help them build new lives.[14] The Gefangenenhilfe's expressions

Certificate issued to returning prisoners of war by the Barmen Volksbund branch. Original in author's personal collection.

of compassion were reassuring, but the organization's decision to discuss the stigma of surrender at length also revealed its understanding that returning prisoners were likely to encounter some degree of animosity from fellow Germans.

Flyers and pamphlets issued by government and aid organizations assured former prisoners of the homeland's gratitude. Nonetheless, officials could not allow prisoners to return to their homes before requiring them to spend several days in one of the numerous *Durchgangslager* (*Dulags*), or transit camps, established to help prisoners begin the process of reintegrating into German society.[15] In order to process the 800,000 prisoners anticipated to cross the German border, military officials set up more than forty *Dulags* throughout Germany that were capable of accommodating 300–8,000 men.[16] At larger camps like the one established in Gießen, which held more than 4,000 men, officials expected to process as many as 40,000 returning prisoners.[17] Although former prisoners were likely irritated at being asked to reenter camps after months or years of confinement, the measure was practical. It offered officials the opportunity to process prisoners in an orderly fashion and ensure that those carrying potentially contagious diseases did not contaminate the general population. In many ways, transit camp procedures were similar to the demobilization protocols followed in 1918. Prisoners routinely underwent medical examinations and delousing, and authorities took great care to ensure that prisoners enjoyed access to the soap and shaving cream necessary to rid themselves of any infestations picked up abroad.[18]

German officials worried that returning prisoners might spread typhus and other diseases as they made their way through the homeland, but authorities likewise feared that prisoners could infect their countrymen with Bolshevism. Military officials believed that Bolshevik leaders placed great importance on organizing communist sympathizers in the *Dulags* by distributing propaganda leaflets and planting agents among the prisoner population.[19] Communist leaders allegedly reasoned that the former prisoners' embitterment over the repatriation process would make them logical recruits for the party. In order to prevent the spread of communist influence in the *Dulags*, camp commandants were instructed to remove any signs of political propaganda and round up and separate communist agitators from the general population. In addition, government officials suggested that political activists from more reliable "*bürgerlich*" (middle-class) parties be planted in the camps to gain support for the new government.[20] *Dulag* staffs continued to monitor communist influence into late 1919. Bolshevik factions persisted with their efforts to recruit former prisoners, but many of the German officers returning from England were reportedly very patriotic and harbored ill will not against the German government but rather their former captors.[21]

In order to alleviate the uncertainty surrounding the homecoming experience, *Dulag* staffs provided prisoners with the specifics of what former prisoners were, and were not, entitled to as veterans. Prisoners received brochures prepared by the Kriegsministerium and Reichszentralstelle that outlined release requirements and the support prisoners could expect to receive as they adjusted to civilian life. Those in need of long-term medical care also found information on the process for receiving treatment, including psychological care, once they reached their final destinations. Like veterans who demobilized in 1918, prisoners received a new suit of clothing to ease their transition into civil society. *Dulag* officials also provided former prisoners with coupons for free passage to their home towns via second- or third-class railcar, as well as a portion of bread for the journey.[22] In order to prepare communities for the arrival of returning veterans, prisoners were required to notify their hometowns of an expected date of return and provide information pertaining to employment and accommodation needs.[23]

Government officials and citizens alike sought to prevent prisoners from feeling alienated in a society whose foundational moments had occurred while they remained captives of a war waged by the "old" Germany. Since prisoners had missed the revolution that toppled the Kaiser, officials hoped that returning prisoners would recognize the opportunity to play a role in transforming Germany into a land of freedom, justice, and peace.[24] The Reichszentralstelle brought prisoners up to speed on the history of the new government and sought to earn their support by providing its own published account of the revolutionary events of 1918. In *Was ist in Deutschland geschehen?* (What took place in Germany?), the Reichszentralstelle acknowledged the prisoners' sufferings but reminded them that the war had led to the establishment of a new fatherland characterized by freedom and opportunities for new prosperity. As long as former prisoners recognized this fact, the pamphlet concluded, their suffering had not been in vain.[25]

The prisoners' sufferings may not have been in vain, but they would not be fully remunerated either. Although they would depart for their hometowns with limited financial compensation and a suit of clothes, in the *Dulags* prisoners learned that they would not receive wages for the duration of the time they spent in captivity.[26] Despite this disappointment, the well-planned receptions and comprehensive reintegration scheme prisoners encountered probably exceeded their expectations. Germans initially welcomed returning prisoners, as one scholar has argued, "by and large, with open arms and minds."[27] The pageantry and displays of affection,

however, did not mean that former prisoners would be able to avoid the question of the circumstances surrounding their capture. Germans may have been willing to accept that it was possible for soldiers to enter captivity with honor, but in many cases, it would have to be verified.

Old stigmas died hard in the new Germany, and officials from some branches of the military demanded accounts of the events leading up to a prisoner's surrender. In the Bavarian army, officers were advised to submit a report of their surrender within three weeks of their release from the *Dulag*. After initially questioning the usefulness of capture reports, Bavarian officials determined that the accounts would be of general interest to officers and might reveal details about the enemies' treatment of prisoners while also contributing to unit histories.[28] The military remained interested in determining former prisoners' innocence or guilt, particularly that of officers. Men asked to explain the circumstances of their capture surely realized that in the eyes of their countrymen, former prisoners' loyalty, manhood, and bravery remained uncertain.[29]

Questions of bravery and loyalty were important and would eventually have to be dealt with, but newly repatriated prisoners had more practical matters to consider. Prisoners had often been their family's primary wage earners prior to military service or captivity. Securing employment and regaining their financial footing was a principal concern. To facilitate this process, the Reichszentralstelle worked with private welfare agencies to establish Kriegsgefangenenheimkehr (Prisoner of War Homecoming) offices across Germany. The offices' primary function was assisting prisoners with their reintegration into civil society. At these local offices, former prisoners could seek advice on finding employment and securing financial assistance during their period of readjustment.[30] Additionally, many former prisoners sought government assistance in the form of compensation for items stolen by captors at the moment of surrender. Alfred S. of the Bavarian Ninth Infantry Regiment claimed that following his capture at Bapaume in August 1918, British soldiers stole his watch, wallet, change purse, and knife. He requested 78 marks for his losses.[31] Another former prisoner, Alfred R., applied for 34 marks for a watch, billfold, and pocketknife lost to British souvenir hunters.[32] These claims for restitution were representative of numerous others filed by former prisoners of the British. While authorities rarely paid out the totals requested, they often compensated prisoners for their losses with smaller sums.

The financial stability of returning prisoners was an issue of concern for German citizens as well. In spite of the desire to expedite repatriation, many Germans worried that the postwar economy could not stand

the strain of 800,000 returning prisoners in search of employment. In a published brochure, Pastor Josef Schmidt claimed that German industry was not capable of employing the men who would seek jobs in the nation's factories. He encouraged farmers to offer agricultural work to men unable to find industrial positions and argued that farmers would benefit by employing a prisoner while also performing a great service for the betterment of the fatherland.[33] Helping former prisoners find employment, the pastor argued, would make it difficult for communist propaganda to take hold among their ranks. The possibility that former prisoners might embrace Bolshevism had long been a concern in Germany, particularly since prisoners felt that their extended captivity had placed them at a distinct economic disadvantage.[34]

The influx of former prisoners streaming back into Germany did, in fact, temporarily strain the economy, but employers largely felt obligated to offer veterans their jobs back. In some cases, industrial leaders became involved with aid programs even before general repatriation ensued. The J. A. Henckels Corporation of Solingen had gained a reputation as one of the finest cutlery producers in the world by 1919. Months before prisoners began returning to Germany in large numbers, the company donated 2,000 marks in the "interest of the returning prisoners of war."[35] Industrialists were not always so eager to assist former prisoners, which forced the government to pass legislation that defended the prisoners' right to reclaim positions they left to join the war. Most employers willingly complied with legislation to avoid further state intervention in the labor market. Just as with general demobilization in 1918, employers believed that male workers had the right to reclaim positions filled by women in times of necessity. The combination of government legislation and popular attitudes about a man's "right" to replace female workers made it possible for former prisoners to find work rather swiftly as an inflationary surge in the economy erased labor shortages and pushed Germany toward full employment in 1920.[36] Although this trend was temporary, the years immediately following repatriation from the UK provided at least an illusion of financial stability that helped smooth prisoners' transition to civilians.

From the elaborate ceremonies that welcomed former prisoners home to the willingness of employers and government officials to assist them in their search for employment, Germany's reception of its returning prisoners signaled a desire to help its veterans reintegrate. Much of the homeland's generosity seems to have been based on the fear that 800,000 former prisoners might embrace extreme political philosophies if they felt unappreciated. Still, few prisoners could complain that they had been

abandoned or left to their own devices following their return to Germany. Yet as former prisoners would soon discover, the homeland's eagerness to welcome prisoners and help them regain their footing was not indicative of a universal willingness to forget that they had left the battlefield in enemy hands. For many prisoners, life in the new Germany was characterized by a continued struggle with the supposed transgressions of their past.

Forging a New Identity: The Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener and the Battle for Prisoner Recognition

By 1920, the British War Office was dismantling the elaborate prison camp system developed from 1914 to 1919. At public auctions, the Ministry of Munitions sold the beds, washstands, linens, and cutlery that once filled Donington Hall. Even the camp's sentry boxes, iron gates, hospital equipment, and barbed wire went on the auction block.[37] With the exception of the graves marking the final resting places of the prisoners who died in captivity, the British could remove any trace that the German prisoners had ever set foot in the UK by disassembling their camps and selling the remnants to the highest bidder. For German prisoners, the captivity experience left scars that transcended physical structures. Long after camps like Donington Hall had been put to new uses or taken apart, the facilities continued to exist in the prisoners' psyche. Despite the relative ease with which many prisoners reentered the workforce and reclaimed the sense of manhood that accompanied the ability to support one's family, they continued to shoulder the stigma of surrender.

In a sermon on the plight of soldiers who fell into enemy hands during the Great War, a German pastor from the province of Mecklenburg observed that captivity was a difficult fate for any brave soldier. He noted that many prisoners would have preferred to die on the battlefield than surrender to the enemy. For it was better, he argued, "to fall into the hands of god than those of men."[38] As the pastor suggested, postwar Germany celebrated fallen soldiers while those who fell into enemy hands continued to struggle with the shame and emasculation of their surrender. In spite of Germany's defeat, the prewar ideal of manliness became even more uncompromising in many situations. Soldierly values and manhood remained deeply intertwined.[39] Paramilitary movements such as the Freikorps, whose members epitomized a brutal vision of military masculinity, found volunteers by the hundreds of thousands.[40] Within paramilitary circles, an aversion to the concept of surrender remained prevalent. When the infamous Freikorps commander Hermann Ehrhardt asked one of his men to carry out a

political assassination in the Palatinate in 1924, he delivered the following order to the assassin: "Keep the last bullet for yourself, Don't fall into the hands of that pack of swine, understand?"[41]

It has been suggested that the German political center and right embraced former prisoners in order to prevent their gravitation to Bolshevism and publicize the abuses they endured as a means of countering Allied charges of prisoner mistreatment in Germany.[42] In some cases this was true, but for Germans unwilling to accept that the army had been defeated, former prisoners were also convenient scapegoats. Even after the war's conclusion, the lines between prisoners, deserters, traitors, and Bolsheviks became increasingly blurred. This encouraged public suspicion of any soldier whose service at the front had ended in surrender. Although the term "manhood" seems to have been rarely used in these discussions, it was difficult to be a coward or traitor and still be considered a real man who had observed soldierly concepts of honor and duty. To question a prisoner's battlefield performance was to simultaneously cast doubt on his manhood, a fact that was rarely overlooked by former prisoners of war. It is difficult to discern the degree to which average soldiers embraced their commanders' wartime attempts to equate *Heldentod* with heroism or whether most accepted the portrayal of prisoners as potential deserters. In the postwar years, however, it became increasingly clear that a significant portion of Germany's former prisoners feared that their reputations as men and veterans had been damaged by their surrender.

One of the primary developments that kept former prisoners under an uncomfortable spotlight was the German obsession with dissecting the army's defeat. War literature flourished in many of the nations that had participated in the conflict, but the popularity in Germany of literature that glorified the war was not matched by its European neighbors.[43] Among the most public forums for analyzing Germany's military defeat were the numerous memoirs that flooded the global market in the early 1920s to satisfy demands for insight from the war's leading personalities. In their attempt to identify the cause of Germany's defeat, many observers, including Generals Erich Ludendorff, Hermann Joseph von Kuhl, and Crown Prince Wilhelm, pointed to the devastating losses that resulted from desertion and surrenders, particularly among revolutionary elements that supposedly gave up with little or no resistance. Kuhl, for example, argued that the columns of prisoners who surrendered in the war's final months included "numerous shirkers, deserters, and defectors." The crown prince similarly called attention to the revolutionary ideology of soldiers prepared to surrender at the first opportunity.[44]

The generals' tendency to associate prisoners with disloyal soldiers was perhaps unintentional. Ludendorff made it clear that not all prisoners were deserters, as many had fallen into enemy hands after fighting until the last moment.[45] Still, discussing prisoners alongside Bolshevik deserters made it difficult to separate prisoners who fought bravely from those who welcomed the opportunity to raise their hands in defeat. Prisoner losses were indeed a critical factor in the German army's disintegration, but while some fresh recruits eagerly surrendered in autumn 1918, the majority of prisoners were battle-hardened veterans who had lived through difficult months, or even years, in the trenches.[46] Observations like those of the crown prince, which implied that prisoners often came from the ranks of revolutionary recruits fresh from the home front, belied the reality of the situation. The image of the prisoner of war as a coward and second-class soldier persisted, and attempting to repair their collective image became a paramount concern for former prisoners during the interwar period.[47]

The Volksbund was the most important advocacy group working to gain prisoner recognition and ease the transition into civilian life, but its primary objective had always been to expedite the prisoners' return to Germany. With a majority of the 800,000 German prisoners home by late 1920, the Volksbund's involvement in prisoners' lives diminished and the association ultimately dissolved.[48] Much of the Volksbund's work continued under Baron Wilhelm von Lersner and the Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener (Reich Association of Former Prisoners of War, or ReK), which had been associated with the Volksbund since March 1919. After falling into enemy hands while on patrol, Lersner spent more than three years in French captivity and Swiss internment. From Switzerland he had been instrumental in early efforts to organize prisoner aid.[49]

Like the Volksbund, the ReK claimed to be apolitical and welcomed members from diverse backgrounds. In 1922 the Working Committee on German Associations reported that an exceptionally high number of ReK members had links to leftist political parties.[50] An early chairman of Charlottenburg's ReK branch, Kurt R. Grossman, had been captured by the British in September 1918, and he went on to become a leading pacifist voice in interwar Germany. While attending commemorative events for fallen soldiers, he met other prominent pacifists like Carl von Ossietzky, and he eventually became one of the leading figures of the German League for Human Rights.[51] Lersner, conversely, later appeared on the membership roll of the Deutscher Herrenklub, one of the Weimar Republic's most influential collections of elite young conservatives.[52]

At the time of its establishment, the ReK was primarily concerned with securing financial compensation for former prisoners. Although it could never rely on the sort of membership base enjoyed by the Volksbund, in 1921 the ReK consisted of 400,000 members, or approximately one-third of all German former prisoners of war.[53] After taking the reigns from the Volksbund, it continued to petition government officials to pay wages for time in captivity. As early as September 1920, ReK leaders informed the German chancellor that there was an astonishing, and increasing, rate of unemployment among former prisoners. The ReK attributed high unemployment rates to delayed repatriation and demanded that officials address the prisoners' dilemma, beginning with the retroactive payment of wages for time in captivity.[54] The German government was interested in meeting former prisoners' demands and established several programs to assist them. However, the programs made available only limited funding to former prisoners who could provide evidence of economic hardship.[55] The Reichszentralstelle maintained that the belief in the prisoners' entitlement to lost wages was erroneous, and decisions regarding financial assistance would continue to be based on each former prisoner's degree of economic hardship.[56]

Many former prisoners linked their economic difficulties to captivity and applied for available government funds to relieve their financial burdens. Former prisoner Hermann B., for instance, complained that as a consequence of captivity he suffered from a variety of unnamed ailments that made it impossible to find steady work. He relied heavily on loans to secure basic necessities and sought lost wages from his time in England in order to repay his debts.[57] Other applications for financial assistance reveal that former prisoners struggled to support their families in the immediate postwar years. Following repatriation from England, Richard S. was admitted to a Cologne hospital to recover from his war wounds. While hospitalized, he argued that the strains of the war, especially his captivity, had driven his wife insane and led to her untimely death. Richard S's children subsequently became wards of the state, and his home fell into disrepair. In short, he argued, his home life had been "completely destroyed" by his participation in the war. For Richard S., moving forward with his life meant taking custody of his children, and he requested assistance with the home repairs that would make that possible.[58] Another former prisoner of the British, Karl S., applied for government assistance when his infant child was severely scalded with hot coffee. Due to his extended unemployment, Karl S. was unable to pay the child's medical expenses. Even though he had applied for and received earlier assistance, he pleaded with local aid officials to take his special circumstances into consideration.[59]

Unemployment was an issue for other Germans as well, but former prisoners often insisted that their economic troubles stemmed from their delayed demobilization. Although many likely resented having to apply for funds that they believed they earned through military service, they were obviously not too proud to request relief. From the ReK's perspective, though, the refusal to pay *all* former prisoners for their service was indicative of the government's negative view of soldiers who spent time in captivity. As early as April 1920, the ReK argued that former prisoners were situated on the same level as men who had been imprisoned for disciplinary issues and had therefore been branded as inferior citizens. The failure to recognize the equality of former prisoners with other veterans strengthened the interpretation of wartime captivity as a tarnish on a soldier's character and led to the "deterioration of his soldierly honor, and therefore also his honor as a man."[60]

The Great War had not destroyed the correlation between soldierly virtues and masculinity, and the ReK clearly saw the government's refusal to acknowledge equally the prisoners' sacrifices as a threat to its collective manhood. At its September 1921 national convention in Leipzig, the ReK again voiced concerns that the failure to compensate former prisoners appropriately suggested that they had not fulfilled their soldierly duties. Representatives informed the German chancellor via telegram that the ReK had no choice but to view the current compensation scheme as a sign of the government's belief that former prisoners were "second-class soldiers." Eager to connect their demands as former prisoners to their sacrifices as soldiers, ReK representatives reminded the government that its members "were taken prisoner at the front and not in the rear."[61]

Linking inadequate compensation and the stigma of surrender became the ReK's preferred lobbying strategy in the 1920s. This approach left no doubt that financial demands were related to fears that former prisoners continued to be suspected of desertion or treason. Thus, the ReK's financial demands must be viewed as part of a larger plan to rehabilitate the public's perception of former prisoners and establish captivity as a respectable experience. This meant transforming the prisoners' image from potential cowards into brave soldiers whose surrender was a consequence of their refusal to retreat. The ReK viewed itself as the former prisoners' legitimate voice, and it stressed that aside from being captives, all military prisoners had been frontline soldiers. This distinction was often lost in the rhetoric of treason and cowardice, and the ReK's obsession with the theme reveals members' feelings of alienation from other veterans.[62]

The ReK's task was difficult. The economic crisis that followed the immediate postwar years' false impression of stability made it challenging for Lersner to maintain a sufficient base of dues-paying members. By March 1922 the ReK's membership had dwindled to 200,000 and financial difficulties forced the organization to seek outside financial support. In 1923, the head office in Berlin was forced to close its doors and file for bankruptcy.[63] It is important to note that the ReK's membership losses corresponded with a larger trend in German society, as other veterans' associations experienced similar declines in participation during the same time span.[64]

In the face of what appeared to be decreasing interest in the activities of all veterans' associations, Germany's interest in the events of the Great War, particularly the origins of the German army's defeat on the western front, persisted. In 1919, the German National Assembly began investigating the factors responsible for the army's final surrender, and Reichstag committees continued to carry out investigations through 1928. Earlier commentary that clouded the distinctions between prisoners, Bolsheviks, and deserters made its way into these later reports as well. A report on the deterioration of the army, for example, argued that desertion en masse and the "surrender to the enemy of entire battalions and divisions" proved that revolutionary propaganda had taken hold within the army. Another section of the report alleged that German prisoners of war had assisted their French captors' efforts to stir revolutionary agitation on the home front by translating inflammatory newspapers into German. As was the case in the years directly after the armistice, officials continued to discuss desertion and prisoner losses in the same breath.[65]

Outside of war memoirs and official investigations, it becomes more difficult to gauge the extent to which the general public suspected former prisoners of cowardice or desertion. It is equally difficult to determine if average Germans associated former prisoners with the deterioration of the army that led to the armistice of November 1918. It is clear, however, that more than a decade after the Great War's conclusion, the stigma of surrender troubled many former prisoners who sensed that their fellow Germans viewed them with some degree of contempt. German society, especially the political right, initially reached out to former prisoners in hopes of preventing their gravitation toward Bolshevism and taking advantage of the propaganda value of tales of abuse against German prisoners. However, if former prisoners avoided being marginalized through the 1920s and became "the favoured sons of the German right," as one scholar has argued, they failed to recognize it.[66] For soldiers who had lived behind the physical

and mental barriers barbed wire created in the camps, surrender's legacy was one of isolation and feelings of separation from the larger public. The link that prisoners had attempted to reestablish in captivity through expressions of nationalism remained largely broken.

The ReK's membership had plummeted in years since war's end, but with the community it represented feeling misunderstood, the organization reemerged to petition for the rights of former prisoners and reenter the struggle to defend their image. In 1924 Lersner began the process of rebuilding the ReK with a core group of 30,000 former prisoners scattered across 600 local branches.[67] During this reconstruction phase, the ReK moved closer to the political right despite continuing to speak of its political neutrality. In particular, the ReK spoke out against the Treaty of Versailles and began to identify itself as a "*Volksdeutsch*" organization. The group's gravitation to the right led to inevitable conflict with its left-leaning members, and in 1925 a group of former prisoners left the ReK and founded the Bremen-based Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Vereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener Deutschlands (Working Group of the Association of Former Prisoners of War in Germany, VeK). A pacifist organization, the VeK attacked the ReK's new militant nationalism and Lersner's vision of the role that former prisoners should play in German society. The VeK was considerably smaller than Lersner's group, and the ReK continued to bill itself as the only association capable of bringing together former prisoners of all political stripes.[68] Although the VeK never challenged the ReK in terms of membership, its existence proved that Lersner's was not the sole voice of former captives. The ReK remained the most influential alliance of former prisoners, and despite the exodus of some members to the VeK, Lersner continued to pursue his goal of rehabilitating former prisoners' image and gaining recognition from government officials.

The Reich Finance Ministry had long considered the ReK's demands to be a thorn in its side, and as the German economy improved in the mid-1920s, former prisoners intensified their campaign for compensation. The ReK insisted that since prisoners had demobilized later than other soldiers, they were consequently held out of work longer and placed behind other veterans on housing lists. The time had come, the ReK argued, to recognize the prisoners' sacrifices as equal to those of other soldiers. Once again tethering compensation to the larger aim of redemption, Lersner and his fellow chairmen reiterated, "The prisoners of war were not taken captive in the rear, but rather in the front lines—there are no deserters in our ranks—we do not speak that word."[69] The ReK could not move beyond its belief that Germans questioned the soldierly virtues of former prisoners,

and high-ranking government officials also understood the organization's deeper motivations for pursuing compensation. One official noted in 1926, "As earlier, the prisoners of war cannot let go of the suspicion that their fate continues to carry a stigma."[70] In spite of its empathy, the government was simply unable to meet the prisoners' demands, a reality that perpetuated their insecurities. Former prisoners experienced some success in their quest for compensation. In spring 1926, the British government announced its readiness to transfer to the German government £200,000 in unpaid wages for work done by captured German soldiers.[71] The ReK insisted that its efforts had influenced the British decision to compensate former prisoners and proved eager to take credit for the scheduled payments.[72]

Disbursements from a former captor did little to lessen feelings of inadequacy. The ReK worked vigorously to cultivate a sense of community among former prisoners who felt alienated in German society, and even attempted to coordinate its efforts with former German prisoners from Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Danzig through the formation of a collective known as the Deutsche Kriegsgefangenenliga.[73] In the latter half of the 1920s the ReK operated its own publishing house, while also working with more established publishers, to produce its own newspaper, books, and numerous pamphlets on the captivity experience.[74] It likewise held countless festivals, holiday celebrations, and flag consecrations at the local level, as well as an annual national conference. At these meetings, the ReK made a point of honoring individuals who had assisted prisoners during and immediately following the war, especially the Swedish Red Cross nurse Elsa Brändström, who earned the title "the Angel of Siberia" as a result of her work with prisoners in Russia.[75]

Although these gatherings proudly celebrated former prisoners' sacrifices and unique sense of nationalism, they also revealed the prisoners' lingering doubts about their reputation in German society. In the program prepared for the 1927 annual conference of the ReK's Rheinland-Westfalen branch, national committee member Dr. Reißland reminded members that although a considerable amount of "smut" had been thrown at former prisoners, each of them knew the circumstances under which he had entered captivity, and that was sufficient. "We do not wish nor need to defend ourselves," he concluded.[76] Lersner, conversely, was a staunch defender of the prisoners' reputation and was determined to break the connection between surrender and desertion. In a ReK informational pamphlet, for example, he maintained that the organization would continue to fight until it was "clear to everyone that captivity was a fate that befell only frontline soldiers," as "the arm of the enemy did not reach into the rear staging areas or the home front."[77]

It is impossible to establish the extent to which former prisoners were suspected of desertion, but Lersner certainly had reason to believe in the necessity of defending the prisoners' image. In February 1929, the ReK's Brambauer branch held its monthly meeting at a local guesthouse. During the course of the evening, a hotel patron, Wilhelm M., insulted the group's members and referred to the veterans as "deserters." Since the incident took place in public, the ReK argued that the insults had damaged its members' reputations. It suggested that the denigrator, who happened to be a local builder, make amends by offering a donation to one of the ReK's upcoming charity drives and threatened to pursue legal action in the absence of a written apology.[78] Wilhelm M., who served two years on the western front before being severely wounded, was hardly impressed by the ReK's threats. Although the ReK sought equality and comradeship with other veterans, Wilhelm M. implied that his comments were directed at all of the special interest groups that contributed to fragmentation among German war veterans. In response to the Brambauer group's demands, he assured the organization that his sufferings were no doubt equal to those of its members, and he closed by warning the group to be more cautious with its threats or face the prospect of legal prosecution.[79]

These sorts of encounters, however infrequent, reinforced former prisoners' doubts about the public's perception of surrender and wartime captivity. The ReK reasoned that the most effective means of improving the seemingly negative view of former prisoners was to educate the public. In the late 1920s, members sponsored a variety of public events geared toward highlighting the prisoners' sufferings in captivity, which they had stoically endured. What was ultimately important was not the prisoners' misery or hardships but the fact that they had persevered and performed their duty to the fatherland both at the front and in enemy hands. In 1929, the ReK initiated plans for an archive and museum dedicated to the study of captivity and asked former prisoners to submit letters, photos, artwork, handcrafts, and other materials from prisoner of war camps around the world.[80] Camp activities provided an outlet for prisoners to demonstrate their nationalism during the war. The ReK believed that showcasing the prisoners' camp pursuits might encourage the public to reevaluate its ideas about life in captivity. At the association's 1929 national convention in Meißen, nearly 3,000 visitors toured the ReK's first temporary exhibit, and the success of subsequent showings encouraged organizers to commence preparations for a larger exhibition.[81]

Taking advantage of the latest technologies, the ReK sponsored film screenings where representatives stressed that former prisoners carried

both the experience of the trenches and the sense of nationalism and camaraderie that comes from close contact with a foreign captor. At a screening of the film *Kriegsgefangene Deutsche in aller Welt*, an ReK spokesperson emphasized that in captivity, prisoners had overcome their political differences to present a united front against their captors. One of the ReK's primary goals, therefore, was to share members' experiences with the homeland so that Germans might also rise above the differences of opinion that made it impossible to work cooperatively toward progress. The film underscored the prisoners' athletic and scholarly pursuits to demonstrate that although separated from the front, they had worked diligently to keep their minds and bodies sound for the duties that awaited them in postwar Germany.[82] In other words, they had never stopped contributing to the higher aim embraced by soldiers at the front.

The ReK designed its activities to persuade Germans that former prisoners were not cowards but brave frontline soldiers who served their country admirably and deserved a place of honor alongside the Great War's other veterans. The film's narrator accordingly reminded viewers that the decision between surrender and death was painful for any soldier, and soldiers often entered captivity only after intense fighting or sustaining severe wounds. The ReK spokesperson admonished the prisoners' critics by arguing, "If there are still people in Germany who are frivolous in their use of the term deserter, then they demonstrate with their actions only that they have seen little of war."[83] With these comments, the tables were turned on those who would liken surrender to desertion with the insinuation that critics had obviously not spent time in the trenches. At the same time, the sharp comments reveal that more than a decade after the war's end, prisoners remained sensitive to suggestions of disloyalty or cowardice.

The ReK's activities apparently impressed the international community. According to Lersner, the ReK was the only prisoner advocacy group invited to send representatives to negotiations for the Geneva Convention of 1929. The 1929 convention improved upon The Hague Convention's generalities and addressed the sensitive issues of prisoner labor, punishment, and repatriation.[84] Its shortcomings would later be exposed by the horrendous treatment of prisoners during the Second World War, but at the time of its signing, the 1929 Geneva Convention was a significant step toward improving captivity standards.[85] While it was consulting on the principles of international law, the ReK resumed its battle for prisoner rights in Germany by once again confronting the government with captivity-related financial claims. Reparations from the Great War remained

a sore spot as the Great Depression approached. The Young Plan of 1929 aimed to restructure Germany's war debt by establishing a schedule of annual payments stretched over a span of decades. The Young Plan offered final resolution of the reparations issue, but the plan's overseers recommended that unresolved financial matters stemming from the Great War be resolved as quickly as possible in order to effectively implement the new scheme.[86]

Under the Young Plan, Germany would settle its reparations debts by 1987–88. Politicians on the far right denounced the plan as a slave contract that would place three generations of Germans in servitude.[87] The ReK opposed the Young Plan as well, but the primary source of its hostility was the settlement's impact on financial claims brought by former prisoners against their captors. Lersner's group reacted with indignation to news that German officials planned to relinquish former prisoners' unsettled damage claims in order to smooth the transition into the new reparations scheme. According to the ReK, millions of marks in claims against England, Belgium, and France were at stake, including wages demanded for work done in the devastated areas of Belgium and northern France, where German prisoners of the French had remained until at least spring 1920. When the Centre Party's Heinrich Brüning ascended to the German chancellorship in March 1930, the ReK informed him that in view of the plan to release past enemies from the obligation of paying damages to former prisoners, it held his government responsible for pending claims.[88] Brüning considered ending the Versailles reparations scheme a top priority, even if it led to increased domestic hardship.[89] It is therefore unlikely that he responded to the ReK's threats with more than a routine acknowledgment of its concerns.

Nonetheless, by the late 1920s, the ReK was actively working to protect the social and financial interests of former prisoners and reform their negative image. The organization's role, even if trivial, in the drafting of the Geneva Convention of 1929 suggested that it recognized the importance of working with the international community to improve standards for prisoner treatment. Domestically, however, the ReK's opposition to the Young Plan allied it with many of the scheme's most outspoken critics on the conservative end of the political spectrum, as well as Adolf Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party. German officials had long worried that dissatisfied prisoners might seek comfort in communist ideology, perhaps never realizing that the real danger waited in a decidedly different direction.

The ReK in Hitler's Germany

As the successor of the Volksbund, the ReK had apolitical roots. Representatives had always insisted that they would accept assistance from anyone willing to help the organization achieve its mission. Lersner and his colleagues had sought an audience with many of the Weimar Republic's numerous chancellors and lesser government officials, but they never found the willing partners they sought in their quest to rehabilitate the prisoners' collective image. With Adolf Hitler's appointment to the chancellorship in January 1933, Lersner sensed an opportunity. Hitler and the Nazis referred to the Great War's victims as the "primary citizens of the state," and their recognition of veterans eclipsed the efforts of any previous postwar government. In Nazi Germany, veterans and other war victims were typically allowed to move to the front of lines at markets and theaters, and opening ceremonies for veterans' homes featured parades, banners, and public fanfare.[90] Recent scholarship has forced historians to reevaluate Hitler's personal service in the Great War, but his success in portraying himself as a common soldier and depicting his service with the Bavarian List Regiment as a definitive period of his life remains indisputable.[91] Accordingly, he poured considerable energy into drawing attention to the men who had experienced life at the front.

Perhaps inspired by Hitler's often repeated assertion that national solidarity and the creation of a true *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) were key to ending the humiliation of the lost war, Lersner called on the new chancellor in an April 1933 letter to recognize the former prisoners' unique value to the German people.[92] Identifying himself as the leader of approximately 25,000 ReK members, Lersner expressed disappointment that none of the previous governments had understood the value of the captivity experience. Behind barbed wire, he argued, prisoners developed a distinct sense of nationalism and camaraderie. Previous Weimar politicians had failed to grasp how the lessons of such an ordeal might be utilized for the benefit of the German people. He concluded his letter by assuring the new chancellor of his confidence that as the "leader of the national revolution," Hitler would not make the same mistake.[93] By the time Lersner opened correspondence with Hitler in 1933, the ReK's membership was a fraction of what it had been in the years immediately following the war, but Hitler surely realized the political value of a vocal group that spoke to the concerns of thousands of former prisoners who were no longer official members of the organization.

This was not Hitler's first experience with former prisoners of war. In fact, returning prisoners had played a crucial role in his political career. Following Hitler's demobilization at the conclusion of the Great War, he remained with the Bavarian army as an informant for its Information Department. In this capacity, he received training in June 1919 in anti-Bolshevik instruction at the University of Munich. Several months later, Hitler's superiors selected him for an instructional team slated to offer a short course at the Bavarian military camp at Lechfeld. The camp held a large number of former prisoners waiting to be discharged, many of whom were allegedly "contaminated" with Bolshevik ideology. The task of Hitler's team, under the leadership of Rudolf Beyschlag, was to reawaken the former prisoners' sense of national pride through patriotic lectures.[94]

Hitler reportedly took on a leading role in the instructional courses and personally delivered lectures on "peace conditions and reconstruction," "emigration," and "social and economic political slogans." He made a favorable impression on many of the soldiers who attended his lectures, with several describing him as a natural and captivating speaker. Hitler found his voice at Lechfeld, and he claimed to have fond memories of the time he spent there among former prisoners.[95] Years later, he wrote in *Mein Kampf* that through his service as an educational instructor he "led many hundreds, indeed thousands, of comrades back to their people and fatherland. I 'nationalized' the troops and was thus able to help strengthen the general discipline."[96] Hitler's uncompromising nature and exaltation of stereotypically masculine attributes made him an unlikely ally in the prisoners' quest for social acceptance. Nevertheless, Nazism claimed to be a movement of national solidarity and resurrection. Perhaps Hitler would welcome the opportunity to once again "lead" former prisoners back to the fatherland.

As the Nazis attempted to tighten their grip on Germany in the months following Hitler's appointment, the ReK continued to rehabilitate the prisoners' image. By July 1933, the organization had collected sufficient prisoner memorabilia to commemorate the ReK national convention in Hamburg with an impressive exhibit at the Hotel Graf Moltke. The exhibit, arranged by national committee chairperson Dr. Joachim Givens, focused on the prisoners' camaraderie and unconquerable spirit.[97] Although it represented the culmination of years of organizational work, the exhibit was not the highlight of the gathering. In the weeks leading up to the Hamburg convention, the ReK advertised its eagerness to join the Nazi movement. Invitations to the event proclaimed that prisoners of war had been frontline soldiers from 1914 to 1918, and they were now prepared

to fight in the front lines "under the leadership of our soldier-chancellor."[98] From Hamburg, the ReK sent Hitler a telegram pledging to assist the Nazi chancellor in the building of a new Germany. Furthermore, the ReK offered its members for inclusion in the Kyffhäuserbund, the national veterans' association, as a "first step toward the collection of all combatants and soldiers."[99] This was a decisive moment for the ReK. Despite its apolitical origins, the association now openly embraced a movement that had already demonstrated a willingness to achieve its aims through whatever means necessary.

In many ways, the ReK's attempt to forge a relationship with Nazism may be viewed as a survival technique. Veterans' groups that opposed National Socialism had a short life span in Hitler's Germany, and the members of the ReK were certainly not the only veterans who sought an alliance with the Nazis after they took power.[100] It must also be remembered that the ReK represented but a fraction of Germany's repatriated prisoners by 1933, and equal numbers of former prisoners may have been actively involved in Social Democratic organizations like the Reichsbanner throughout the interwar years. Ferdinand Friedensburg, for example, spent time at the officers' camp at Holyport after being apprehended at sea. In the interwar years, he opposed the Nazi movement and eventually became one of the founding fathers of the Christian Democratic Union.[101]

While the ReK's movement toward Nazism must be viewed in this broader context, the organization's desire to cooperate with Hitler says much about former prisoners' continued quest for respect. In July 1933 the ReK's battle for recognition as equals among other veterans seemed to have finally bore fruit. In response to the association's telegram, Hitler replied with a greeting that welcomed former prisoners as honorable members of the "community of the front (*Frontsoldatentum*)" and called for their cooperation in his new Germany.[102] In Hitler's salutation, the ReK found what it had sought for more than a decade—a sense of belonging. Previous attempts to gain compensation had practical motives, but even financial claims were driven by the prisoners' desire to repair their image and have the captivity experience legitimized. Now, under the banner of National Socialism, former prisoners felt as if they were part of a coordinated struggle for national resurrection. As Dr. Joachim Givens wrote to a colleague in August 1933, the recognition Adolf Hitler offered to the former prisoners obligated the organization to assist in the task of "firmly anchoring the National Socialist state of mind (*Nationalsozialistische Staatsgedanken*) in our populace."[103]

Nazism was a cult of masculinity that demanded strength and assertiveness. Many former prisoners whose nationalism and manhood had been called into question were likely attracted to the Nazi's hypermasculine posturing. In his classic study of 581 early Nazis, Peter H. Merkl found that National Socialism attracted many veterans who felt disaffected in postwar society. Of the former prisoners and war invalids represented in Merkl's sample group, he noted that many could be considered "superpatriots."[104] Additionally, a noteworthy number of the early local Nazi leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) in his sample were also war invalids or former prisoners of war. These local leaders tended to devote themselves completely to their party offices, or as Merkl put it, were "married to the Nazi movement, so to speak."[105] Perhaps the superpatriotism and devotion of the former prisoners in Merkl's study was the outgrowth of a continued need to address suspicions of disloyalty and earn a place of prominence in a movement that never tired of flaunting its collective manliness. By the time the ReK officially allied with Hitler in July 1933, it was following a path that had already been taken by a notable number of individual former prisoners who likely shared the ReK's frustrations.

Like Benito Mussolini in fascist Italy, who led a campaign to socially integrate all veterans of the Great War, including former prisoners, Hitler recognized the prisoners' need to belong after years of physical and emotional separation from the homeland.[106] He was not the only German politician to show interest in former prisoners. In late 1933, the ReK earned yet another significant acknowledgment when Lersner and his colleagues were invited to speak with German president and war hero Paul von Hindenburg. The aging icon, who had once supported the notion that the German army had been stabbed in the back by the home front, assured his audience of former prisoners that they need not be ashamed of their captivity. He recalled that he had once heard the Kaiser explain to a group of repatriated officers that it was not the most cowardly who fell into enemy hands but the bravest and most courageous who held out at the front and refused to retreat.[107]

Hitler's acceptance of former prisoners was part of the larger consolidation of existing veterans groups that took place in summer 1933.[108] After the association became officially affiliated with the Kyffhäuserbund, the ReK used its new clout to expand its membership and publicize its programs. As self-described disciples of Hitler's revolutionary plan, the ReK spent the early years of Nazi rule attempting to solidify the prisoners' place of honor among other frontline veterans. It advertised itself as a veterans' organization actively working with Hitler and the Nazi movement,

and the establishment of a permanent archive and museum of captivity remained one of the ReK's paramount concerns.[109] The association and its members seemed to be moving in two directions at once. On one hand, the ReK sought to commemorate the virtues of the captivity experience and struggles of its organizational past. At the same time, it pledged to assist in the construction of a new Germany under Hitler's leadership—a Germany where perhaps the stigma of captivity would fade into the shadows of the promise of a "true" national community.

Membership in the ReK increased slightly following its gravitation toward Nazism, and the group's new allegiance quickly became evident in all aspects of its daily operations. Correspondence often ended with the customary "Heil Hitler" after July 1933, and regulations required members to wear the swastika armband and fly the Kyffhäuserbund's swastika-bearing standard alongside the ReK banner at public events.[110] The ReK's position as the primary association of former prisoners was further strengthened by the liquidation of the VeK in 1934. When the VeK's membership sank below the minimum number required to maintain its status as an official association, the ReK's Dr. Givens was named as one of the liquidators of the rival organization's holdings.[111] Despite the new affiliation with the Kyffhäuserbund, Lersner's members operated fairly independently and continued to focus on the needs of former prisoners. The ReK's independence troubled German leaders who simultaneously sought the unification of all veterans under one umbrella and jockeyed to ensure their own organizations' continued existence.[112] By 1936 the Kyffhäuserbund, now formally referred to as the Deutscher Reichskriegerbund e.V., increasingly came into conflict with an expanding Nationalsozialistische Kriegsopferversorgung (National Socialist War Victims' Care, NSKOV). Hitler founded the NSKOV before taking power and unified all associations of disabled veterans and their dependents under its name in 1933. The NSKOV's sudden growth, as well as its habit of advertising itself as the largest association of frontline soldiers, startled the Kyffhäuserbund and left its leadership anxious about the future.[113]

Perhaps hoping to consolidate power internally in order to present a united front to its rivals, the Kyffhäuserbund's Max von Behr suggested to the Reich Chancellery in April 1936 that the time had come for the ReK to be dissolved and its members absorbed completely into the ranks of the Kyffhäuserbund. The Kyffhäuserbund believed that the ReK had achieved the objectives it set out immediately following the war, and the continued existence of Lersner's group was problematic. Its frequent parades and festivals, which were often attended by Wehrmacht officials,

were a "public nuisance" that must be accordingly brought to an end in view of the dangerous message the events conveyed. According to Behr, the disbanding of the ReK was "a question of a perversion of the most fundamental soldierly ethics. What should a young soldier think, what should the youth think, when they see that the subject of wartime captivity has been made into a platform for public performances and celebrations, when one sees former prisoners parade through the streets with flags as they are honored alongside all other combat veterans?[114] Lersner and the ReK had apparently resisted the Kyffhäuserbund's attempts to integrate former prisoners more completely, and Behr feared that the ReK was moving toward a loose alliance with the NSKOV in order to preserve its independence.[115] He clearly had little respect for the soldierly ethics of former prisoners but had no desire to lose 30,000 members to the Kyffhäuserbund's primary rival.

The development of the ReK's relationship with the Kyffhäuserbund is revealing in several significant ways. The Kyffhäuserbund fought to keep former prisoners within its ranks, but its leadership was interested only in honoring their service as soldiers and had little interest in commemorating former prisoners' sacrifices in captivity. Behr's justification for the proposed liquidation of the ReK demonstrates that former prisoners were tolerated rather than embraced. Surrender and captivity continued to carry a stigma. The Kyffhäuserbund did not consider former prisoners to be appropriate representatives of the soldierly virtues it hoped to nurture in the next generation of German soldiers but rather a "perversion" of those values. The ReK had always sought to share its unique sense of nationalism with the German people and claim a position of honor alongside other veterans. The Kyffhäuserbund, however, demanded that former prisoners simply disappear into the crowd.

Tensions between the Kyffhäuserbund and the NSKOV persisted through the eventual signing of an agreement between the two organizations in late 1937.[116] As Kyffhäuserbund officials had feared, the NSKOV absorbed the ReK's membership the following year. However, the NSKOV did not grant former prisoners the autonomy that Behr had believed they desired. In November 1938 Lersner announced to his members that everyone must understand "we are NSKOV, no longer ReK." He appreciated that the end of the ReK would be difficult for many members to accept, particularly those who had belonged to the organization since repatriation. Lersner assured members of the old ReK that they should be proud of their fight for the dignity of soldiers who had entered captivity under honorable circumstances. The fight to commemorate the virtues of captivity

must continue but within a framework "no longer called the ReK, but called the NSKOV." Perhaps attempting to tap into the sense of belonging his members had sought for so long, Lersner insisted, "We no longer stand to the side, but in the middle among the old frontline soldiers."[117]

Lersner's optimism was unwarranted. Absorption into the NSKOV placed former members of the ReK solidly within Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party. The NSKOV was a division of "the movement," and members likewise belonged to "the movement."[118] Initial plans for the ReK's absorption into the NSKOV included continued preparations for the archive and museum of captivity, but plans for a permanent prisoner of war museum never came to fruition.[119] Despite the ReK's intention to focus on nationalism and solidarity in the face of the enemy, a Nazi movement preparing for inevitable military conflict saw little value in drawing attention to the hardships of war. During the Second World War, Hitler and Wehrmacht officers demanded that soldiers fight to the last breath, and praising the virtues of life in captivity could hardy be seen as an effective means of motivating soldiers to choose death over surrender. Like so many others, Lersner and the ReK's membership failed to recognize that for all the talk of building a new Germany, Hitler and the Nazis were far more interested in destruction.

■ The German prisoners of the British returned home in autumn 1919 to appreciative crowds eager to express gratitude for the prisoners' contributions to the war effort. As had been the case with the demobilized soldiers who returned a year earlier, the home front welcomed former prisoners as if they were returning from the front in victory. Because government officials sensed that prisoners were dissatisfied with the pace and circumstances of their repatriation, the home front sought to influence the prisoners' attitude toward the new Germany and prevent a slide toward Bolshevism. Despite concerns that captivity had placed them at an economic disadvantage, most former prisoners returned to work fairly quickly and resumed a "normal" life. When the cheers of gratitude from homecoming ceremonies faded and the welcome banners came down, many repatriated prisoners sensed that their fellow Germans continued to view them with suspicion. In the camps of the UK and elsewhere, prisoners prided themselves on rebuilding their connections with the fatherland by exalting German culture, resisting their enemies, and preparing for lives as productive citizens in postwar Germany. Nonetheless, soccer matches, celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday, and classes in foreign languages did little to destroy the stigma of surrender; it had survived the war.

At home in Germany, the ReK waged a public campaign to shed light on the prisoners' camp activities and secure for them an honorable place among the Great War's other veterans. The organization's correspondence and activities demonstrated prisoners' sense of alienation from other veterans. More precisely, the ReK held the belief that other veterans, as well as the public at large, considered former prisoners second-class soldiers. Oddly enough, the veterans that former prisoners felt estranged from struggled with a collective sense of detachment from the general public. In fact, the immediate postwar years were characterized by a "crisis of reciprocity" as even average citizens came to believe that their wartime sacrifices had not been sufficiently rewarded.[120] Disabled veterans in particular resented the lack of public recognition for their sacrifices, which often took the form of a missing limb or mutilated profile. Like former prisoners, disabled veterans sought admiration for their service, and they found it difficult not to harbor animosity toward Germans unwilling to grant them proper respect. The pensions paid to German disabled veterans were among the most generous in Europe, but their resentment toward an apparently unappreciative public often soured their opinions of the Weimar Republic.[121]

When viewed in this broader context, the former prisoners' struggles serve as a firm reminder that prisoners of war, like disabled veterans, challenged the "heroic metaphor."[122] Heroes sacrificed their lives for the fatherland. They did not surrender in order to spend the remainder of the war in enemy hands, nor did they survive treacherous wounds to wander the streets as broken paupers. The war may have destroyed the Kaiser's army, but the social mores at its foundation remained in place despite the cracks that formed in autumn 1918. One of the foremost historians of the paramilitary Freikorps movement that flourished in Weimar Germany suggested that both the Freikorps and National Socialism "answered the pressing psychological need of the confused and insecure. It gave them a chance to forget their own inefficacy by identifying themselves with a movement which promised everything they lacked as individuals: the opportunity for dramatic power and action."[123] Former prisoners fit this mold perfectly. They felt misunderstood and frustrated, and they desperately wanted their fellow Germans to appreciate their service rather than view them as potential traitors.

The Nazi movement offered the ReK and the former prisoners who filled its ranks the illusion of the respect they desired. Whereas Lersner and his colleagues felt slighted by previous Weimar politicians, Hitler publicly welcomed the men of the ReK not only as members of the

community of the front but as honorable men and comrades. The financial compensation the ReK once demanded mattered little as long as its members felt respected. Like other dissatisfied veterans of the Great War, former prisoners found in Hitler a sense of belonging and respect. When ReK members paraded at memorial ceremonies, their banners carried both the organization's logo and the swastika of National Socialism. Involvement with Nazism made the ReK's members feel as if they belonged to something greater than themselves, an experience they had been stripped of at the moment of capture. Nonetheless, Hitler's July 1933 recognition of former prisoners did not represent the end of the Great War and the stigmatization of former prisoners; it merely provided the temporary illusion of acceptance.[124]

CONCLUSION

In summer 1934 approximately 6,000 German children and adolescents visited the Hitler Youth summer camp at Aidling-Riegsee in the mountainous countryside surrounding Murnau, Bavaria. The camp's principal gathering point was its amphitheater, or "Grosser Thingplatz," where campers assembled for festivals, speeches, and the sort of pageantry so commonly associated with the Nazi movement. The amphitheater's centerpiece was a towering "wall of honor" adorned by the banners of the Nazi SA, the Hitler Youth, and the German Youth. Displayed most prominently, however, was the phrase "We were born to die for Germany" (*Wir sind zum Sterben für Deutschland geboren*), which was illuminated by two 15,000-watt spotlights after nightfall. With streets bearing names such as Langemarck-Strasse guiding campers to their destinations, the memory of the Great War was ever present in the camp.[1] The words featured on the camp's conspicuous wall of honor verified that the Nazis were especially interested in cultivating a particular legacy of the Great War—the cult of the fallen soldier. It would appear that the carnage of the Great War had failed to abolish idealized notions of soldierly masculinity. The Nazi movement was not interested in producing young men who were merely eager to serve the fatherland; it sought the cultivation of soldiers who saw battlefield death as the greatest manifestation of sacrificial manhood.

This study has demonstrated how the stigma of surrender and captivity affected the course of the 1914–18 conflict and the lives of the German soldiers who fell into British hands. By examining soldiers' responses to their separation from the struggle that had defined them as men at war, this book offers new perspectives on the Great War and the cultural forces that motivated its combatants. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker have argued that "being 'deprived' of the war was being deprived of

the whole meaning of life between 1914 and 1918."[2] Indeed, removal from the front challenged a soldier's identity as a warrior and called his manhood and loyalty into question. In spite of the commendable treatment prisoners received in the British Isles, they were saddled with feelings of inadequacy and shame that stemmed from the emotional strains of their situation. After overcoming the initial shock of capture and confinement, German prisoners dedicated themselves to finding a new sense of purpose that involved rebuilding the psychological links to the homeland that had been severed when they fell into British hands. Although prisoners were separated from the front and the "meaning of life," thousands looked for personal redemption by attempting to transform their camp into a new, nontraditional, theater of war.

The culture of captivity became one of redemption, but prisoners returned home in 1919 to discover that the stigma of surrender was difficult to leave behind. The Great War did not destroy traditional notions of manhood at war; it complicated them. Despite the homeland's efforts to welcome prisoners as citizens of the new Germany, they continued to battle their image as second-class soldiers who challenged notions of acceptable battlefield behavior. For many former prisoners, Hitler's decision to formally welcome them to the community of the front represented the culmination of their battle for redemption and acknowledgment. Redemption was possible in Hitler's Germany, and former prisoners of the British and other belligerents played key political and military roles in the Third Reich. Admiral Karl Dönitz, Hitler's successor who oversaw Germany's surrender in 1945, ended the Great War in enemy hands after the British sank his submarine in the Mediterranean.[3] Robert Ley, a fighter pilot and leader of the German Labor Front from 1933 to 1945, was shot down by a British pilot in 1917 and entered French captivity after his plane crashed behind French lines.[4] In addition, four of the six Great War veterans who attended the Wannsee Conference of 1942, where Reinhard Heydrich oversaw the escalation of the Final Solution, had been prisoners of war between 1914 and 1919.[5] Apparently, even the inner sanctum of the Nazi movement was open to former prisoners.

The ascendance of a significant number of former prisoners into local positions of power and the upper echelons of the Third Reich raises interesting questions about the relationship between wartime captivity and Nazism. Were former prisoners whose manhood and nationalism had been challenged more likely than average Germans to be attracted to overtly masculine, militaristic movements like Nazism? Or was there simply a high statistical probability that some of the nearly 1 million Germans taken

prisoner during the Great War would become high-level functionaries in Hitler's Germany? These questions require further research, but it is evident that despite the upward mobility available to former prisoners in the Third Reich, Hitler abhorred surrender and expected soldiers to fight to the death or take their own lives before falling into enemy hands. His acceptance of former prisoners had been a political move rather than a display of understanding for the prisoners' difficult decision to enter captivity.

The veneration and commemoration of sacrificial death was a hallmark of a Nazi propaganda machine that called on soldiers to sacrifice their lives in the name of German prosperity. Soldiers who died for Germany were viewed as martyrs who had entered the realm of eternal heroes, and the philosophical foundations of Nazism rejected retreat or surrender when faced with the enemy. The relationship between manhood and a willingness to fight bravely in the face of death was even clearer to Germans during the Third Reich than had been the case before and during the Great War. As the widow of a German pilot observed after his death during the Second World War, "Women will hate war and love the warrior, precisely because the best warrior is also the best man."[6]

Hitler's military advisers were well aware that breakdowns in discipline and widespread surrender had hastened the collapse of the front in 1918. To prevent similar breakdowns in the Second World War, Wehrmacht officers maintained strict discipline in the field, and the German army executed between 13,000 and 15,000 German troops for breaching military regulations. Among the most unacceptable violations of military law was cowardice, and German soldiers understood that failing to stand one's ground on the battlefield would likely lead to a court-martial and death sentence.[7] Hitler revealed his personal belief in the dishonor of retreat or surrender when he refused to allow the German Sixth Army, cut off from food and supplies, to retreat from Stalingrad. Instead, he insisted that soldiers hold out to the last man. When he promoted the Sixth Army's commander, Friedrich von Paulus, to the rank of field marshal in the battle's final hours, Hitler anticipated that the newly appointed field marshal would commit suicide before allowing himself to fall into enemy hands. Instead, Paulus surrendered to the Red Army and led more than 90,000 troops into Soviet captivity. Hitler expected his soldiers at Stalingrad to welcome the hero's death that awaited them, and when they failed to live up to his expectations, he could only angrily proclaim that they had "fallen short at the threshold of immortality."[8] In Hitler's mind, Paulus had the opportunity to ascend into "eternity and national immortality" by refusing to surrender. Instead, Hitler lamented, the field marshal preferred "to go to Moscow."[9]

For Hitler and many of his fellow National Socialists, a soldier's death, even by one's own hand, was preferable to the humiliation of surviving as a prisoner of war. He applied his personal philosophy to the German people as well. Long after Hitler knew that the war was lost, he remained unwilling to negotiate for peace, preferring to "fight to the last breath" rather than surrender.[10] As Berlin crumbled around him in May 1945, Hitler was resolute in his conviction to not surrender and took his own life before Soviet troops reached his bunker. He was not alone in his preference for suicide over surrender and captivity. In the bunker, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels and his wife ended their own lives, and those of their children, shortly after Hitler committed suicide. A significant number of other high-ranking military and political officials followed their example in the war's closing days, including fifty-three army generals, eleven admirals, fourteen air force generals, and eight regional Nazi party leaders. Fears that the enemy might reciprocate the harsh treatment that Germans had offered prisoners of war and enemy civilians prompted many officials to take their own lives out of fear. Yet they were also motivated by the opportunity to control the circumstances of their final moments by embracing a soldier's death. They identified suicide as a "distinctly masculine way of dying," one that would remove the possibility that they might suffer the shame of captivity.[11]

Historians have long debated the degree to which elements of continuity in German history may have set the country on a special path (*Sonderweg*) that led to the horrors of two world wars and the Holocaust.[12] It has recently been argued that during the Great War, the German army tended to embrace violent extremes when confronted with strategic or tactical obstacles. When the army faced defeat in autumn 1918, its tendency to gravitate toward extremes revealed itself as a preference among many officers to risk the total destruction of the German army to avoid the humiliation of surrender. Requests for peace negotiations would have likewise reflected weakness and were to be avoided. The behavioral patterns promoted by Germany's military culture of violence and destructiveness, the argument continues, left an "unintentional legacy" to National Socialism.[13]

As this book has shown, part of that legacy was the nurturing of the *Heldentod* myth and a corresponding disdain for soldiers who surrendered rather than fighting to the death. From 1914 to 1918, the German army built upon the preexisting stigma of surrender by blurring the distinctions between deserters, traitors, and prisoners. Officials did so in hopes of encouraging soldiers to hold their ground and view surrender as an act of cowardice. Soldiers who chose capture over death or inadvertently landed

in enemy captivity after being wounded accordingly carried an emotional burden that weighed upon them long after they returned home.[14] The Nazis relied upon this tradition of fanatical reverence for sacrificial death and the contempt for surrender that escalated during the Great War. In this regard, an undeniable link exists between the Imperial German attitude toward surrender and the Nazis' well-known belief that a soldier's death was infinitely preferable to an emasculating existence in captivity.

The German disdain for surrender or the feelings of emasculation and inadequacy the nation's soldiers struggled with after falling into enemy hands were not unique. British benchmarks of manhood during the Great War resembled those embraced by their German enemies. Just as in the Kaiser's Germany, the British praised soldiers who exhibited endurance and courage under fire while publicly commemorating fallen soldiers as the embodiment of sacrificial bravery.[15] British soldiers who failed to live up to the masculine ideal likewise struggled with the emotions brought on by capture. When a young British infantryman fell into enemy hands in April 1918, he voiced his disappointment by exclaiming, "It was the most horrible thing I'd ever imagined could happen to me. It made me feel as if I was a coward. I was letting my country down, I was letting my unit down, I was letting my family down. . . . I felt utterly bewildered. . . . Being taken prisoner, oh what a disgrace."[16]

Canadian soldiers likewise found little solace in the fact that capture improved their chances of surviving the war and often expressed feelings of shame and despair when discussing their capture. As one former prisoner recalled, a fellow soldier captured at Ypres could simply not believe the hand that fate had dealt him, repeating, "This is the thing my father told me to never let happen."[17] Even the highest ranks of the European military forces felt pressured to live up to idealized images of soldierly masculinity. When the Belgian general Gérard Leman was captured in the Liège Fortress after vowing to hold the position to the end, Leman asked his German captor to "bear witness" that he had been unconscious when captured and thus unable to fight to the death.[18]

Repatriated prisoners returning to Germany were similarly not the only Great War veterans who struggled with the stigma of captivity in the postwar years. Although British officers returning from captivity were not criticized as a matter of official policy, many were asked to explain the events that led to their capture.[19] Former prisoners returning to Canada often experienced difficulties reintegrating into society and felt "marginalized" by governmental policies that failed to address the specifics of their war experience.[20] In France, too, former prisoners found it difficult to persuade

government officials to acknowledge their sacrifices and struggled to overcome the implications of cowardice and desertion that accompanied having surrendered to the enemy.[21]

There was nothing exceptional about the German attitude toward raising one's hands in defeat, only the remarkable extent to which the Nazis managed to build upon existing sentiments in order to nurture a culture of no retreat, no surrender, in the Third Reich. It is worth noting that the devastating end of the Second World War seems to have left behind a mixed legacy for postwar Germany. In West Germany, the consequences of military defeat seriously weakened the popular connection between militarism and masculinity. Prisoners of war who returned from captivity in the decade after 1945 were encouraged to focus on their roles as family men and even embrace "gentle" masculine models as a means of moving away from the acts they may have committed as soldiers of the Third Reich. In East Germany, conversely, popular conceptions of manhood required men to strive to become effective workers and seek out positions within the party. As Frank Biess has suggested, East German men were to be agents of peace, yet they were also expected to take on the role of the antifascist soldier who stood guard against imperialism. In this sense, "militarized masculinities" carried over more noticeably from the Third Reich to the German Democratic Republic.[22]

Surrender and captivity were some of the most commonly shared experiences for German men, and European men in general, during the twentieth century. The implications of surrender reached far beyond the battlefield or prisoner of war camp, and we have likely only scratched the surface of what remains to be learned about the Great War through examinations of those men who served in the conflict as both soldiers and prisoners.

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Notes

ABBREVIATIONS

ADM	Admiralty Records
APC	Author's Personal Collection
B	Bestand
BABL	Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde
BAMA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau
BfZ	Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart
BHStA/IV	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abteilung IV: Kriegsarchiv
EZA	Evangelisches Zentralarchiv, Berlin
FO	Foreign Office Records
G	Gemeinde Archiv Gräfrath, 1815–1929
GLA	Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe
H	Gemeindearchiv Höhscheid, 1815–1929
HO	Home Office Records
HStAS	Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Landesarchiv Baden Württemberg
IWM	Imperial War Museum, London
M	Militärische Bestände, Landesarchiv Baden Württemberg
MilBev Berlin	Bayerischer Militärbevollmächtiger in Berlin
MKr	Ministerium des Krieges
MSg	Militärgeschichtliche Sammlungen
R	Abteilung R: Deutsches Reich 1495 bis 1945
Reichszentralstelle	Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene
ReK	Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener
RM	Reichsmarine
S	Gemindearchiv Solingen, 1815–1929
SaL	Stadtarchiv Lünen
SaS	Stadtarchiv Solingen
SCRC	Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
StaB	Staatsarchiv Bremen
Times	*The Times* (London)
Volksbund	Volksbund zum Schutze der deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen
W	Gemeindearchiv Wald, 1815–1929
WO	War Office Records

1. Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, 1.

2. Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten*, 112–13; Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18*, 80.

3. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 44.

4. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 9.

5. Gordon, *War Office*, 313.

6. Weiland and Kern, *In Feindeshand*, 428, 473.

7. Adams, *Great Adventure*, 49.

8. Overmans, "In der Hand des Feindes," 9; Scheidl, *Die Kriegsgefangenschaft*, 97.

9. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 9. Hinz uses the term "eine vergessene Geschichte." Prisoners of war have also been largely excluded from studies of gender and masculinity during the war. See, for example, Karen Hageman's report on gendering modern German military history, "Military, War, and the Mainstreams."

10. See Chickering and Förster, *Great War, Total War*.

11. Jones, "Missing Paradigm?," 19–20.

12. Scheipers, *Prisoners in War*; Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*; Oltmer, *Kriegsgefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs*; Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*; Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*.

13. See Jackson, *Prisoners*; Panayi, "Normalität hinter Stacheldraht," 126–46; and Pöppinghege, *Im Lager Unbesiegt*.

14. Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*.

15. Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 371; Ferguson, "Prisoner Taking and Prisoner Killing."

16. Ulrich and Ziemann have suggested that many soldiers looked forward to the prospect of leaving the trenches for enemy captivity. Ulrich and Ziemann, *Frontalltag*, 171.

17. On the historical treatment of prisoners of war, see Krammer, *Prisoners of War*, 3–8; and Afflerbach and Strachan, *How Fighting Ends*.

18. Fay and Epstein, *Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia*, 110.

19. This phrase is borrowed from Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?"

20. Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 167, 299.

21. On the shame of surrender, see Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18*, 83; Pöppinghege, *Im Lager Unbesiegt*; and Rachamimov, "Disruptive Comforts of Drag."

22. Confino, *Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 3–15.

23. Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst*, 15–32.

24. On the history of "everyday life," see Lüdtke, *History of Everyday Life*, 3–40.

25. For a discussion of the manner in which emotions are socially "framed" and the ways that emotions influence behavior, see Frevert, *Emotions in History*.

26. For an outstanding analysis of wartime correspondence between family members, see Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*.

27. Ziemann, *War Experiences*, 11–14.

28. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, September 1920, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 47–48.

29. Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 408–9.

CHAPTER 1

1. Zuckmayer, *Als wär's ein Stück von mir*, 198. See also Ulrich and Ziemann, *Frontalltag*, 35.

2. Zuckmayer, *Als wär's ein Stück von mir*, 199.

3. Kessel, "Whole Man," 2. On the fluidity of masculinity, see Cornwall and Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinity*, 11–47.

4. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West*, 11.

5. On "hegemonic masculinity," see Connell, *Masculinities*, and Tosh, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 41–56.

6. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West*, 15–17.

7. Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 283.

8. Ibid., 252.

9. Kimmel and Messner, *Men's Lives*, 10–11.

10. Frevert, *Nation in Barracks*, 39–50.

11. Ritter, *Frederick the Great*, 61.

12. Hagemann, "German Heroes," 117.

13. Frevert, "Citizens at War," 101.

14. Frevert, "Soldaten, Staatsbürger," 81–82.

15. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 44; Frevert, *Nation in Barracks*, 49, 71.

16. Breuer, "Competing Masculinities," 271.

17. Frevert, *Men of Honour*, 177.

18. Kessel, "Whole Man," 18.

19. Kitchen, *German Officer Corps*, 115, 120–21.

20. Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 236–38.

21. Frevert, *Nation in Barracks,* 149, 170.

22. Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 264–70.

23. Strachan, *First World War*, 45–46. See also Kitchen, *German Officer Corps*, 143–86. Jews, in particular, were often depicted as the masculine "countertype" and found it nearly impossible to gain a reserve officer's commission from 1885 to 1914—despite the fact that they were entitled to such distinctions under the German constitution. See Mosse, *Image of Man*, 56–76; and Angress, "Prussia's Army," 93–115.

24. Frevert, *Nation in Barracks*, 221.

25. Ibid., 158, 170.

26. Baker, *Seen in Germany*, 61–62.

27. On the relationship between honor and manhood, see Mosse, *Image of Man*, and Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.

28. On the middle classes, sexual norms, and respectability, see Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 191.

29. Frevert, *Nation in Barracks*, 158.

30. Watson, "Junior Officership," 433.

31. Funck, "Meaning of Dying," 38.

32. Funck, "Ready for War?," 49–51, 57–61.

33. Detmer, *Das Deutsche Offizierkorps*, 47; Förster, "Militär und Militarismus," 43.

34. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 44.

35. Dennis, "Seduction on the Waterfront."

36. See Goldstein, *War and Gender,* 265–69. On war, ritual, and performance, also see Turner, *Anthropology of Performance*, 72–75.

37. Watson, "Junior Officership," 433.

38. Hagemann, "German Heroes," 120–23, 128.

39. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 18.

40. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment," 312–13.

41. Snyder, *Ideology of the Offensive*, 108, 127, 141–47.

42. Herwig, *The Marne*, 34.

43. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment," 325.

44. Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 170.

45. Kluck, *March on Paris*, 7.

46. Quoted in Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 77–78.

47. Snyder, *Ideology of the Offensive*, 15–16.

48. Quoted in Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 78.

49. Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 255.

50. Howard, "Men against Fire," 522. The military theorist Carl von Clausewitz likewise believed that iron willpower could overcome the "frictions" of war. He also realized that courage could not be calculated or counted upon. See Clausewitz, *On War*, 114, 86, 119. See also Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War."

51. Hagemann, "German Heroes," 128.

52. Schilling, *Kriegshelden*, 15–16, 375. David D. Gilmore has demonstrated that in most societies, achieving manhood involves aggression and participation in rituals, such as war, which allow men to display their toughness. See Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*.

53. McAleer, *Dueling*, 109.

54. Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*, 28.

55. Ibid., 25–28, 286. According to Kristin L. Hoganson, Americans similarly pursued war with Spain in 1898 because of a belief that American men lacked the soldierly virtues necessary to elevate the United States in international affairs. War, it was argued, would provide the combat experiences needed to produce effective political leaders. See Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.

56. Verhey, *Spirit of 1914*, 53, 231–32.

57. Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 56.

58. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 114. Goldstein offers a broad analysis of the test of manhood as a motivation to fight in *War and Gender*, 251–301.

59. On the lack of war enthusiasm in rural communities, see Ziemann, *War Experiences*, 19.

60. Erzberger, *Die Mobilmachung*, 14.

61. Verhey, *Spirit of 1914*, 97–100.

62. Strachan, *First World War*, 45.

63. Watson, "For Kaiser and Reich," 59–61, 70–71.

64. Toller, *I Was a German*, 64.

65. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 53–60.

66. Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 301.

67. Jelavich, "German Culture in the Great War," 42–47.

68. Quoted in Stromberg, *Redemption by War*, 3.

69. *Armee-Verordnungsblatt*, Nr. 1, 6 August 1914, BABL, R 67/1519. Collection R 67, Archiv des Ausschusses für deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Frankfurter Vereins vom Roten Kreuz/Archiv für Kriegsgefangenenforschung, was held at the Bundesarchiv Koblenz when I accessed the collection in 2005. I have listed the collection's current location, the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, in all footnotes.

70. Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten*, 112–13; Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18*, 80.

71. Rachamimov, "Disruptive Comforts of Drag," 5.

72. For a discussion of military penalties for desertion in the German armies, see Seidler, *Fahnenflucht*, 32–44.

73. Frevert, "Honor, Gender, and Power," 243.

74. On the shock of mechanized warfare, see Strachan, *First World War,* 51.

75. Baird, *To Die for Germany,* 1.

76. See Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 70–75.

77. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 119.

78. Stibbe, *German Anglophobia*, 16–32.

79. Strachan, *First World War*, 51.

80. Strachan, "British Army," 94.

81. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632.

82. With the addition of naval prisoners, the British held 10,000 soldiers and sailors in the UK in January 1915. Statistics quoted in Jones, "Encountering the 'Enemy,'" 36–37.

83. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 92.

84. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632.

85. Percival Charles Cobb, diary entries for 12–17 September 1914, IWM, Papers of Percival Charles Cobb.

86. Falkenhayn, *German General Staff*, 12.

87. Testimony of Reserve Lieutenant Eduard R., Halberstadt, 18 February 1918, BABL, R 901/86438, Nr. 25, pp. 2–3.

88. Falkenhayn, *German General Staff*, 38–39.

89. Quoted in Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 317–18.

90. Hirschfeld, "Der Somme-Schlacht von 1916," 79.

91. Summary of Official Communiqués, 5 July 1916, TNA, WO 157/11.

92. Ibid., 17 July 1916.

93. Ibid., 27 July 1916, p. 2. B. H. Liddell Hart also refers to this order in *Real War*, 247–48.

94. Palmer, *My Second Year of the War*, 217–18. The British New Armies, or Kitchener Armies, were the product of the expansion of the British army that began in August 1914 as a result of recruiting drives and the establishment of "Pals" battalions made up of men from the same geographical area or social background. After the British abandoned voluntary recruiting in May 1916, the New Armies consisted largely of conscripts. See Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*.

95. Palmer, *My Second Year of the War*, 219–20.

96. Gibbs, *Battles of the Somme*, 41.

97. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 640.

98. Ibid., 632.

99. Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten*, 150.

100. Seidler, *Fahnenflucht*, 32–33.

101. Jahr, "Der Krieg zwingt die Justiz, ihr Innerstes zu revidieren," 194–95.

102. Ibid., 190.

103. Weber, *Hitler's First War*, 90.

104. Ziemann, *War Experiences*, 55, 102–3.

105. Kramer, "Surrender of Soldiers in World War I," 266.

106. Witkop, *German Students' War Letters*, 374.

107. Hugo Frick, Ancre, to his mother, Ellwangen, 17 February 1917, in Hirschfeld, Krumeich, and Renz, *Die Deutschen an der Somme*, 151.

108. See Ulrich and Ziemann, *Frontalltag*, 171; and Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 74.

109. In fact, surrenders comprised only a fraction of the more than 200,000 losses suffered by the Germans at the Somme in July and August 1916. See Herwig, *First World War*, 204.

110. Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 74.

111. Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 95.

112. Lipp, *Meinungslenkung im Krieg*, 144.

113. Georg S., "P.O.W.: Erinnerungen an englische Kriegsgefangenschaft," BAMA, MSg 200/2269, p. 1.

114. International Committee of the Red Cross, and Great Britain, *Reprisals against Prisoners of War*, 4.

115. Walther P. to his father, in Die Erinnerungen des Soldaten Walther P. (1898–1977) aus den Jahren 1913–19, BfZ, p. 135.

116. Deist, "Military Collapse of the German Empire," 194–95.

117. Herwig, *First World War*, 408.

118. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632.

119. Kuhl, *Die Kriegslage im Herbst*, 9.

120. Oberstleutnant Giffenig, VII. Armeekorps Stellvertr. Generalkommando. Abt. Abw. I Nr. 1091, Münster, 1 March 1918, SaS, W/3233.

121. Kriegsministerium Communication Nr. 1545/4. 18. A1., 16 May 1918, BHStA/IV, MKr/2244, p. 1.

122. Ibid.

123. Generalmajor Friedrich (Heimatdank für heimkehrende deutsche Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene), Berlin, to the Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Solingen, 24 July 1918, SaS, S/5765.

124. "Instructions and Rules of Guidance for the Conduct of Every German Soldier Who Is Taken Prisoner" (translation), July 1918, TNA, ADM 137/3868, p. 1.

125. Ibid., 2.

126. Ibid.

127. "Merkblatt: Zehn Gebote für Kriegsgefangene," in Befehlshaber der Unterseeboote (gez. Michelsen) to the I–IV.U. Flottille, 30 Juni 1918, Betr. Verhalten in Kriegsgefangenschaft, BAMA, RM 52/76, p. 1.

128. Ibid., 2.

129. Ziemann, *War Experiences*, 57–61.

130. Jahr, "Der Krieg zwingt die Justiz, ihr Innerstes zu revidieren," 210–11; Seidler, *Fahnenflucht*, 43.

131. Herwig, *First World War*, 419.

132. According to Alexander Watson, by mid-1918, the morale of the German army was in a state of "unstoppable decline," which was closely related to heavy losses of junior officers who had filled key leadership roles. See Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 186–87.

133. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632; For a slightly lower estimate, see "Summary of Intelligence received on 1st and Morning of 2nd September, 1918," TNA, WO 157/35.

134. Crown Prince Frederick William, *Memoirs*, 246.

135. Ibid., 262; Ludendorff, *Meine Kriegserinnerungen*, 551.

136. Kuhl, *Die Kriegslage im Herbst,* 27.

137. On fears of Bolshevism within the German army, see Ludendorff, *Meine Kriegserinnerungen*, 407–11.

138. Chickering, *Imperial Germany*, 184.

139. "Extracts from the Examination of a Deserter (Lance-Corporal) of the 5th Bavarian Regiment, II Bavarian Corps, who surrendered north of Wulverghem-Messines Road on 12th August," TNA, WO 157/1, p. 1.

140. Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, 304.

141. Ibid., 310–11.

142. Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 318.

143. Ibid., 309–23, esp. 311.

144. Geyer, "Insurrectionary Warfare," 494.

145. Hindenburg, *Aus Meinem Leben*, 292, 301.

146. Hull, "Military Culture," 256.

147. Deist, "Military Collapse of the German Empire," 206–7. One of the difficulties of determining prisoner losses is that prisoners and the missing are often grouped together. For a year-by-year table of prisoner and missing losses, see *Sanitätsbericht über das Deutsche Heer im Weltkriege*, Table 151.

148. "Summary of Intelligence Received on 6th and Morning of 7th Novr. 1918," TNA, WO 157/37.

149. Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 368.

150. Boff, *Winning and Losing*, 117.

151. Einem, *Ein Armeeführer erlebt den Weltkrieg*, 435. Einem served as war minister from 1909 to 1913, a position from which he advocated increasing the quality of the army rather than its size. See Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 251.

152. Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 368.

153. See Boff, *Winning and Losing*.

154. Winter, "Breaking Point," 308.

155. Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern, Letter to Father, 14 October 1918, in *Mein Kriegstagebuch*, 3:28.

156. Quoted in Deist, "Military Collapse of the German Empire," 205.

157. Watson, "Junior Officership," 452.

158. Maurice, *Last Four Months of the War*, 221. On the relationship between morale and surrender, see Boff, *Winning and Losing*, 115–22.

159. Kuhl, *Die Kriegslage im Herbst*, 9.

160. Ludendorff, *Kriegsführung und Politik*, 153–54.

161. On military defeat's impact on German society, see Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 189–288.

162. Crown Prince Frederick William, *Memoirs*, 262.

163. Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 215.

164. On the Great War and continuity, see Winter, *Sites of Memory*.

165. Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 408–9.

166. Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 367.

CHAPTER 2

1. Capture Report by Hauptmann d. R. R. to his Bataillonskommandeur, 15 October 1918, Bayreuth, BHStA/IV, MKr/2244, p. 4.

2. Quoted in Heimerzheim, *Karl Ritter von Halt*, 47.

3. Palmer, *My Second Year of the War*, 96.

4. Schmidt, "Was der junge Tag uns heut bringen mag?," 19.

5. According to The Hague Convention of 1907, prisoners' personal property was to remain in their possession following capture. Article 23 forbade the destruction or seizure of enemy property "unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war" (Scott, *Hague Declarations*, 108, 116–17). On British regulations, see Great Britain, General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Regulations*, 149.

6. Bourke, *Intimate History of Killing,* 27.

7. For an in-depth discussion of the prevalence and implications of the British looting and killing of German prisoners throughout the war, with reference to numerous specific examples, see Feltman, "Tolerance as a Crime?" On the powerlessness experienced by prisoners as a result, see ibid., 438–40.

8. Ibid., 440–41.

9. Kersting, *Meine Erlebnisse,* 3.

10. Feltman, "Tolerance as a Crime?," 441–46.

11. Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 368. For recent discussions of prisoner killing, see Ferguson, "Prisoner Taking and Prisoner Killing," 148–92; Cook, "Politics of Surrender"; Feltman, "Tolerance as a Crime?"; and Kramer, "Prisoners in the First World War," 75–90.

12. Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 62–63.

13. Feltman, "Tolerance as a Crime?," 448–51.

14. Ibid., 451–57.

15. See Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 373–84.

16. Feltman, "Tolerance as a Crime?," 455–58.

17. Razac, *Barbed Wire*, 89.

18. "Dignity in Captivity: German Officer Prisoner in Kid Gloves," *Times*, 2 August 1916, 9.

19. Sir John French, Commanding in Chief [*sic*], British Army in the Field, to the Secretary of the War Office, London, 19 September 1914, TNA, WO 32/5365.

20. Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Francis Bertie, London, 22 September 1914 (copy), TNA, WO 32/5365.

21. Judd and Surridge, *Boer War*, 194–96.

22. Report of the Committee (Inter-Departmental) on the Custody, Maintenance, and Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1906, TNA, WO 33/390.

23. Snape, *Back Parts of War*, 119–21.

24. E. Landwehr, "Mein Aufenthalt in Dyffryn Alled [*sic*]," BAMA, MSg 1/598, p. 1.

25. See Jones, "Encountering the Enemy," 138–60.

26. Testimony of Reserve Lieutenant Eduard R., Halberstadt, 18 February 1918, BABL, R 901/86438, Nr. 25, pp. 5–6.

27. Testimony of Paul L., Döbeln, 11 January 1918, BABL, R 901/86438, Nr. 19, p. 2.

28. Lt. W. B. P. Spencer, Camberley, to his mother, undated, IWM, Papers of W. B. P. Spencer. Although Spencer's letter is undated, his visit likely took place early in the war since he mentions that civilians and military prisoners were held in the same facility. For a description of the development of camps for civilian internees alongside military prisoners, see Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 78–114.

29. Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*, 223–28.

30. Report on the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, TNA, WO 162/341, p. 1. On employee borrowing, see Sir Paul Harvey to the Secretary of the Treasury, Whitehall, 18 August 1915, TNA, Records of the Treasury, Treasury Board Papers and In-Letters, 11739.

31. Report on the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, TNA, WO 162/341, Section III.

32. Roxburgh, *Prisoners of War Information Bureau*, 32.

33. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 5–6.

34. Scott, *Hague Conventions*, 108–9.

35. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 16. The Great War was not the first conflict during which the British held prisoners of war in the UK. During the Napoleonic Wars, the British held as many as 56,000 French prisoners in barracks, castles, and salvaged ships off the coasts of England and elsewhere. See Pelzer, "Il Ne Sera Fait Aucon Prisonnier Anglas Ou Hanovrien," 206–10.

36. Belfield, "Treatment of Prisoners of War," 137.

37. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 50.

38. The standards for camp staffs were not finalized until 1917. For the official scale of staff, see ibid., 134.

39. Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, 158–59.

40. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 26–27.

41. Jackson, *Prisoners*, 135.

42. Report by John B. Jackson, London, to James W. Gerard, Berlin, 27 February 1915, BABL, R 901/83825, p. 17. According to a civilian internee sent to Dorchester in

August 1914, the first military prisoners of war arrived there on 27 August 1914. See Schmidt-Reder, *In England kriegsgefangen!*, 52.

43. Report by Edward G. Lowry, Head of the German Division of the American Embassy in London, to Walter Hines Page, American Ambassador in London, 12 July 1915 (Abschrift zu IIIb 23808) in Kriegsministerium Nr. 612.15 U5, 26 October 1915, BAMA, RM 3/5379, pp. 23–25.

44. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 43–44.

45. Ibid., 45–46, 131.

46. Macpherson, Horrocks, and Beveridge, *Medical Services*, 2:140.

47. Belfield, "Outline of Arrangements Made for Prisoners of War in Our Hands," BABL, R 901/83825.

48. On class on Britain, see Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*.

49. Note Verbale, German Foreign Office to American Embassy, Berlin, 28 February 1915, in James W. Gerard to Walter Hines Page, 2 March 1915, TNA, FO 383/32.

50. Ibid.; also see the Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 15.

51. Belfield, "Outline of Arrangements Made for Prisoners of War in Our Hands," BABL, R 901/83825.

52. Macpherson, Horrocks, and Beveridge, *Medical Services*, 2:133.

53. Captain Wallis, Dyffryn Aled, to American Embassy in London (translation), 14 September 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 4 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/34, pp. 1–3.

54. Report by Edward G. Lowry, Head of the German Division of the American Embassy in London, to Walter Hines Page, American Ambassador in London, 12 July 1915 (Abschrift zu IIIb 23808), in Kriegsministerium Nr. 612.15 U5, 26 October 1915, BAMA, RM 3/5379, pp. 19–21.

55. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 21.

56. Report by John B. Jackson, London, to James W. Gerard, Berlin, 27 February 1915, BABL, R 901/83825, p. 6.

57. Ibid., 9.

58. Report on Donington Hall by William H. Buckler, Special Attaché of the Austro-Hungarian Division of the American Embassy in London, to Walter Hines Page, 9 August 1915 (Abschrift zu IIIb 22099), BAMA, RM 3/5379, p. 4.

59. Rintelen allegedly worked to sabotage American ships carrying supplies to the Entente prior to the United States' entry into the war. The British captured him as he attempted to return to Germany. See Rintelen, *Dark Invader.*

60. "How the Money Has Been Spent," *Times*, 9 March 1915, p. 12.

61. Bericht des Oberleutnants z. See Plüschow über englische Gefangenlager, Berlin, 19 August 1915, BAMA, RM 3/6865, pp. 11–12.

62. Report on Donington Hall by William H. Buckler, Special Attaché of the Austro-Hungarian Division of the American Embassy in London, to Walter Hines Page, 9 August 1915 (Abschrift zu IIIb 22099), BAMA, RM 3/5379, pp. 1–4, 10–12.

63. Williams, *British Theatre in the Great War*, 125.

64. "German Prisoners at Donington Hall," *Times*, 2 March 1915, p. 9. See also Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 234–46.

65. Maglic, *Dandy Hun*, 181.

66. Spindler, *Gun Running for Casement*, 176.

67. See Prisoners of Information Bureau Memo I.B./6(a), 30 March 1915; and Otto V., Donington Hall, to Wardle, Leek, 22 August 1915, and Wardle, Leek, to the Officer Commanding the Prisoners of War, 5th Southern General Hospital, Southsea, 31 March 1915, APC.

68. Joshua Wardle & Sons, Leek, to the Commandant at Donington Hall, Derby, 14 February 1916, APC.

69. Otto V., Donington Hall, to Wardle, 5 March 1916, APC.

70. G. C. Wardle, Leek, to the Commandant at Donington Hall, Derby, 12 April 1916 (copy), APC.

71. F. S. Picot, Commandant at Donington Hall, to Wardle, Leek, 15 April 1916, APC.

72. In addition to the examples of the reaction to arriving German prisoners already provided, see Smith, *German Prisoner of War Camp at Leigh*, 13–26.

73. "Brief from Mr. Oldham an Pfarrer Würz. Vom 20. November 1914," EZA, ZA 5036/11, Sign. 45/17.

74. Aside from early American inspection reports, see "Bericht von Dr. H. C. Rutgers an die Deutsche Kriegsgefangenenhilfe über seine Reise, die er in deren Auftrag in englische Kriegsgefangenenlager gemacht hat," in Dr. H. C. Rutgers, Nunspeet, NL, to Dr. Gerhard Niedermeyer, Berlin, 3 August 1915, EZA, ZA 5036/11, Sign. 45/31.

75. Brose, *History of the Great War*, 114.

76. W. Graham Greene, Secretary to the Admiralty, to the British Foreign Office, 29 March 1915, in Prisoners and Aliens Confidential, Section 1, No. 1, TNA, FO 383/32.

77. Press Bureau, Serial No. B. 625, 8 March 1915, TNA, ADM 116/1418.

78. Report on the Naval Detention Barracks at Chatham by Edward G. Lowry, to Walter Hines Page, London, 3 May 1915 (Abschrift zu A.IV.10138, zu 1022/5.15.Z2.), BAMA, RM 3/5374.

79. Lieut. Commander Alfred S. to Commander P. V. Oliver, Chatham Detention Quarters, 9 March 1915, TNA, ADM 116/1418, p. 1.

80. Walter Hines Page to Sir Edward Grey, London, 20 March 1915, in Prisoners and Aliens Confidential, Section 2, No. 1, TNA, FO 383/32.

81. W. Graham Greene, to the British Foreign Office, 29 March 1915, in Prisoners and Aliens Confidential, Section 1, No. 1, TNA, FO 383/32.

82. Edward Grey to Walter Hines Page, 19 April 1915, in Prisoners and Aliens Confidential, Section 1, No. 1, TNA, FO 383/32.

83. James W. Gerard to Gottlieb von Jagow, German Imperial Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, 14 June 1915, BABL, R 901/84691.

84. *Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in Feindesland*, 2.

85. Scott, "Captive Labour," 319–21.

86. Jones, "Final Logic of Sacrifice?," 773, 777.

87. Scott, "Captive Labour," 319–21.

88. Ibid., 320–21.

89. "Report of Military Depot Rouen," 12 June 1916, BABL, R 901/83097, p. 7.

90. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 138.

91. Scott, "Captive Labour," 319.

92. Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front*, 27.

93. G. S. O., *G.H.Q (Montreuil-Sur-Mer)*, 165.

94. *Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in Feindesland*, 6.

95. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 43.

96. Ibid., 43. The British establishment of a separate camp for ethnic minorities living inside Germany was not exceptional. The Russians attempted to take advantage of "national discontents" among their prisoners and formed a Czechoslovak Legion of prisoners willing to take up arms against Austria-Hungary. The Germans offered special privileges to Irish prisoners prepared to fight the British, although not many were willing to do so. See Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, 115–22; and Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, 122–26.

97. Report on Feltham by Boylston A. Beal, 29 May 1916, Enclosure No. 13, in United Kingdom, Parliament, *Reports of Visits of Inspection*, 25–26.

98. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 57.

99. G. R. Warner, Secretary of the Interdepartmental Committee of Prisoners of War, Revised Minutes of the Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on Prisoners of War on 16 August 1918, TNA, FO 383/433, p. 4.

100. Johann P., Stobs in Scotland, to the Swiss Legation in London, 1 February 1918 (copy), in the Swiss Minister to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London, 20 February 1918, TNA, FO 383/433.

101. On the recognition of Feltham's "friendly" status, see "Kapitänleutnant S., beauftragt mit der Befragung aus England ausgetauschter Militärgefangenen, 1. Bericht," BAMA, RM 5/4681.

102. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 15, 51–52.

103. Prisoners of War Employment Committee, First Interim Report, TNA, WO 33/3083, p. 1.

104. Notes on the Conditions Regarding the Employment of Prisoners of War, TNA, Ministry of National Service Records, 1/567, p. 1.

105. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 51.

106. Ibid., 15, 51–52.

107. Ibid., 50–51.

108. List of All Prisoners of War Camps in England and Wales and Scotland with Postal and Telegraphic Addresses, May 1918, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466.

109. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 39, 50–51.

110. Report on Leigh by Francis E. Brantingham, Special Attaché to American Embassy, London, to Irwin Laughlin, Chargé d'Affaires of the American Embassy, London, 19 September 1916, in Note Verbale, American Embassy, Berlin, to Imperial Foreign Office, 2 October 1916, BABL, R 901/83098, p. 4.

111. Report on Dorchester by Boylston A. Beal, London, to Walter Hines Page, London, 26 June 1916 (Abschrift zu IIIb 23604), BABL, R 67/808.

112. Macpherson, Horrocks, and Beveridge, *Medical Services*, 2:140.

113. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 46.

114. Report on Harperly by A. L. Vischer and F. Schwyzer, Special Attachés of the Swiss Legation in London, to Gaston Carlin, Swiss Minister in London, 7 September 1917, in Verbalnote, Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin (Vertretung deutscher Interessen) to the Auswärtige Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 19 May 1917, BABL, R 901/83098.

115. Report on Henbury by F. Schwyzer to Gaston Carlin, London, 31 May 1917, BABL, R 67/810, pp. 1–2.

116. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 15.

117. Davis, *Home Fires Burning*, 22, 180.

118. "Prisoners of War Camp. Brocton. Staffs," 10 January 1919, IWM, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant, p. 9.

119. Lt. Col. H. B. Thornhill, Report on the Brocton Camp Complaints, 14 April 1918, IWM, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant. For further allegations against Grant and other British camp personnel, see BABL, R 901/86438, Schwarze Liste derjenigen Engländer, die sich während des Kriegs gegenüber deutschen Heeresangehörigen völkerechtswidrigen Verhaltens schuldig gemacht haben.

120. Report on Brocton by A. de Sturler to Gaston Carlin, London, 8 August 1918, in Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin (Vertretung deutscher Interessen) to the Auswärtiges Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 2 September 1918, BABL, R 901/83041a, pp. 2–3.

121. See Eckhardt and Maul, *Was wir in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft erlebten und erlitten*, 69–82.

122. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*.

123. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 41.

124. Undated report by V. Leutnant D. Res. A.D. W. M., Oehringen, BHStA/IV, MKr/2146. See also Hans K., Donington Hall, to Oberleutnant D. R. M., Regt. 29, 6. Battr., 9 May 1918 (copy), HStAS, M 1/3 Bü 527.

125. Report on Donington Hall by Francis E. Brantingham and W. H. Buckler, London, to W. H. Page, London, 24 October 1916, in Note Verbale, American Embassy, Berlin, to German Foreign Office, 31 October 1916, BABL, R 901/83052.

126. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, NA, WO 106/1451, p. 15.

127. Report on Donington Hall and Kegworth by F. Schwyzer to Gaston Carlin, London, 8 August 1917, in Verbalnote, Swiss Legation in Berlin (Vertretung deutscher Interessen) to German Foreign Office, Berlin, 15 August 1917, BABL, R 901/8352.

128. Report on Skipton by A. de Sturler, Special Attaché to the Swiss Legation in London, to Gaston Carlin, 27 June 1918, in Verbalnote, Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin (Vertretung deutscher Interessen) to the Auswärtiges Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 23 Juli 1918, BABL, R 901/83146, pp. 1–2.

129. Macpherson, Horrocks, and Beveridge, *Medical Services*, 2:133.

130. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, *Correspondence with the United States Ambassador*, 1–6. Regarding the Franco-German agreement, see Favre, *Swiss Internment of Prisoners of War*.

131. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 66, 68.

132. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, *Correspondence with the United States Ambassador*, 4–6. See also Abteilung für Gefangenenfragen der Kaiserlich Deutschen

Gesandschaft in Bern, *Die deutschen Kriegsgäste der Schweiz*, which dates England's inclusion in the agreement to May 1916.

133. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 28–29, 31–33.

134. Ruchti, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 408.

135. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 28–29, 31–33.

136. Ruchti, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 411.

137. Report on the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, TNA, WO 162/341, p. 7.

138. R. H. Brade, Precis for the Army Council, No. 843, "Responsibility of the War Office for Questions Regarding Prisoners of War," November 1916, TNA, WO 32/5373.

139. Revised Minutes of Meeting of Inter-Departmental Committee, 30 October 1916, TNA, WO 32/5373.

140. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 7.

141. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 71–72; Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 37–38.

142. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 37–38.

143. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 29. For the most recent work on internment in the Netherlands, see Wolf, *Guarded Neutrality.*

144. Abbenhuis, *Art of Staying Neutral,* 109–11.

145. Newton, *Retrospection*, 240–42.

146. Note Verbale F.O. 14705, in American Embassy, Berlin, to Imperial Foreign Office, Berlin, 6 December 1916, BABL, R 901/83066.

147. A. de Sturler, Swiss Legation in London, to Gastin Carlin, London, 8 June 1918, in Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin an das Auswärtiges Amt, Nr. E II 283/25010, 2 Juli, 1918, BABL, R 901/83066.

148. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 39–40.

149. Ibid., 41–42, 175.

150. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 630–32.

151. Winter, *Great War and the British People*, 242–43.

152. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 105. Panayi has likewise concluded that the German prisoners in the UK were treated well and managed to live "relatively comfortable" lives there. See Panayi, "Normalität hinter Stacheldraht," 146.

153. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 376.

154. Winter, "British National Identity," 262, 265–68.

155. Statistics taken from Weiland and Kern, *In Feindeshand*, Statistical Appendix. For higher estimates of death rates in the England and France, see Kundt, *Kriegsverbrechen der Allierten,* 6.

156. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 246; Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 75. As Alan Kramer notes, death rates could differ dramatically between officers and soldiers of other ranks. See Kramer, "Prisoners in the First World War," 78.

157. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 185.

CHAPTER 3

1. Becker, "Art, Material Life and Disaster," 28.

2. Heimerzheim, ed., *Karl Ritter von Halt*, 47.

3. Report on the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, TNA, WO 162/341, pp. 131–32.

4. For a typical schedule at the officers' camp at Dyffryn Aled, see Major E. Landwehr, "Mein Aufenthalt in Dyffryn Aled," BAMA, MSg 1/598, p. 35.

5. Overmans, "In der Hand des Feindes," 4.

6. Scott, *Hague Conventions*, 111.

7. Wünnenberg, *Die Entlassung der Kriegsgefangenen auf Ehrenwort*, 113–14.

8. "Bericht des Oberleutnants z. See Plüschow über englische Gefangenenlager" (copy), Berlin, 19 July 1915, BAMA, RM 3/6865, p. 14.

9. Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger*, 63.

10. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt Hinter Stacheldraht*, 35.

11. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 27–50, 53.

12. See Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 123, 134.

13. Razac, *Barbed Wire*, 75.

14. Adolf H., Colsterdale, to Ida von Scheven, Bergenstadt, 5 November 1917, BAMA, Nachlass 643/52.

15. On the history of emotions, see Plamper, *Geschichte und Gefühl*. For the relationship between emotions and manhood, see Borutta and Verheyen, *Die Präsenz der Gefühle*.

16. Graham Mark suggests that the standardized sheet was introduced in 1916. It was glazed in order to prevent prisoners from sending hidden messages through the use of secret inks. See Mark, *Prisoners of War in British Hands*, 15.

17. Crompton, *Englands Verbrechen an U41*, 161.

18. Heinz G., Stobs near Hawick, Scotland, to Adolf G., Weißenfels an der Saale, 20 July 1918, APC.

19. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 51.

20. Report of the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 124.

21. Mark, *Prisoners of War in British Hands*, 24–25.

22. Alfred S., Chatham Naval Detention Quarters, to his family (Abschrift zu A.IV.6232), 17 March 1915, in Staatssekretär des Reichs-Marine-Amts to the Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin, 2 April 1915, BABL, R 901/84691, p. 1.

23. Heider, *Großkampftage*, 246–47.

24. Albert T., Larkhill near Dorchester, to the Rothe Kreuz der Stadt Solingen, SaS, S/5926.

25. Richard S., Handforth near Manchester, to the Stadtgemeinde Höhscheid, Kreis Solingen, 11 November 1917, SaS, H/3191.

26. Ludwig G., Belmont, Surrey, to Fanÿ G., Munich, 22 October 1917, APC.

27. Ludwig G., Blandford, Dorsetshire, to his family, Rain am Lech, 23 November 1917, APC.

28. Ibid., 20 December 1917.

29. Ibid., 18 January 1918.

30. Ludwig G., Blandford, Dorsetshire, to Fanÿ G., Munich, 29 January 1918, APC.

31. Ludwig G., Working Camp at Chiseldon, to his family, Rain am Lech, 25 June 1918, APC.

32. Ludwig G., Working Camp at Chiseldon, to Fanÿ K., Munich, 3 September 1918, APC; Ludwig G., Working Camp at Chiseldon, to Fanÿ K., Rain am Lech, 31 October 1918, APC.

33. "Aussage aus den Briefen eines in England Gefangenen Offiziers," in Dr. A. W. S. to the Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin, 9 August 1918, BABL, R 901/84680, p. 1.

34. Mecklenburgischer Hilfsverein für deutsche Kriegsgefangene und Vermisste, *Arbeits-Bericht*, 7.

35. Verein vom Roten Kreuz, Frankfurt am Main, Ausschuss für deutsche Kriegsgefangene, "Bericht vom. 1 Januar 1916," BABL, R 67/1554; *Organization und Ziele des Unterausschußes für Kriegsgefangene Deutsche*, 3; Davis, "National Red Cross Societies," 43. Also see the finding-aid introduction for collection R 67 at the BABL.

36. Baden, *Erinnerungen und Dokumente*, 75–88; Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 234, 295.

37. Arbeitslinien und Geschäftsordnung der "Deutschen Kriegsgefangenenhilfe," EZA, ZA 5036/11, Sign. 45/31.

38. Grüneisen and Brekenfeld, *Das Deutsche Rote Kreuz*, 150.

39. Cölner Rundschreiben Nr. 1, BABL, R 67/1265; "Bestimmungen über den Verkehr mit den in England und den englischen Kolonien befindlichen Zivil- und Kriegsgefangenen," BABL, R 67/299.

40. Cölner Rundschreiben Nr. 1, BABL, R 67/1265; Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 246. For more on K. E. Markel's Prisoner of War Agency, see Thomas, *St. Stephen's House*, 57–58.

41. Mecklenburgischer Hilfsverein für deutsche Kriegsgefangene und Vermisste, *Arbeits-Bericht*, 10.

42. Major Friedrich (Hauptarbeitsausschuß) of the Volksspende für die deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen, Berlin, to the Stadt Solingen, 4 June 1916, SaS, S/5765; "Bericht über das Ergebnis der Volksspende für die deutsche Kriegs- und Zivil-Gefangenen," BABL, R 901/83845; Heinrich Lismann, Berlin, to the Zweigverein vom Roten Kreuz, Solingen, 17 June 1916, SaS, S/5765.

43. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 217.

44. Carl Z., Dorchester, to the Bürgermeister Amt der Stadt Gräfrath, 21 February 1917, SaS, G/509.

45. Johann D., Brocton in Staffordshire (Working Camp at Catterick Yorks), to the Zweigverein vom Roten Kreuz, Solingen, 25 November 1917, SaS, S/5913.

46. Otto B., Dorchester in Dorset, to Herr Bürgermeister Pölig, Höhscheid bei Solingen, SaS, H/3191.

47. Willi S., Stobs, Scotland, to the Liebesgaben-Ausschuss der Stadt Rastenburg, 28 January 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/1483.

48. Alfred M., Larkhill, to Pastor Buscholz, Rastenburg, 19 August 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/1483.

49. Paul P., Pattishall in Northamptonshire, to E. Alsl, Rastenburg, 18 January 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/1483.

50. Leland H. Littlefield, London, to James W. Gerard, Berlin, 13 June 1916, Nr. B 592, BABL, R 901/83853.

51. Adolf F., Rouen, France, to the German Division of the American Embassy in London, 10 June 1916 (copy), in Edward G. Lowry, London, to James W. Gerard, Berlin, 21 June 1916, BABL, R 901/83853.

52. Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger*, 63.

53. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 217.

54. On camaraderie, see Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, 30–36; and Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 194–99.

55. "Anlage zum Rundschreiben betrifft: Bittgesuche von Kriegs- und Civilgefangenen: Gefälschte Briefe deutscher Kriegsgefangenen," undated, SaS, H/3191.

56. See Württemberg Regiment Nr. 126 to Der General-Adjutanter Sr. Kgl. Hoheit des Großherzogs von Baden, Karlsruhe, 11 November 1917, GLA 59/1199, in which a major from the regiment states that correspondence between active units and prisoners of war is forbidden.

57. Friedrich L., Towcester, to the Liebesgaben-Ausschuss der Stadt Rastenburg, 25 February 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/1483.

58. Jünger, *Kriegstagebuch,* 310–11.

59. "Bestimmungen über den Verkehr mit den in England und den englischen Kolonien befindlichen Zivil- und Kriegsgefangenen," BABL, R 67/299.

60. "Major Ducrot's Weekly Report for the Week Ending the 5th of June, 1915," TNA, FO 383/65. For photos of German correspondence, see TNA, ADM 137/3855.

61. Lieutenant S., "Bericht No. 13, Angaben der in Rotterdam internierten Unteroffiziere über Stimmung unter den Kriegsgefangenen und ihre Behandlung in England–Arbeitslager in England und Frankreich," 28 January 1918, The Hague, in Generalstab des Feldheeres, Abteilung IIIb, Sektion Front No. 46842, Grosses Hauptquartier, to the Admiralstab der Marine, Grosses Hauptquartier, 1 February 1918 (Abschrift zu A.IV.2998), BAMA, RM 3/5396.

62. "Kapitänleutnant S., beauftragt mit der Befragung aus England ausgetauschter Militärgefangenen, 1. Bericht" (copy), Rotterdam, undated, BAMA, RM 5/4681, p. 2.

63. Hermann B., Holyport near Maidenhead, to Captain B., Wilhelmshaven, undated, in Der Chef des Admiralstabes der Marine to the Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin, 7 November 1917, BABL, R 901/84690.

64. Hans K., Donington Hall, to H. Mathis, Regt. 29, 6. Battr., 9 May 1918, HStAS, M 1/3, Bü 527, p. 1.

65. Ibid., 2.

66. Schindler L., Pattishall, to the Großherzogliche badische Ordenskanzlei, Karlsruhe, 4 September 1917, GLA, 59/1199.

67. See, for example, M. Pfälzer, Hemsbach, to the Grossh. Hofmarshallamt, Karlsruhe, 1 August 1917, GLA, 59/1199.

68. Moritz von Lyncker, Der Chef des Militärkabinetts, Großes Hauptquartier, to sämtl. mobile und immobile Immediatstellen der Armee, 4 September 1915, Kr. II 548/8.15., GLA 59/1199.

69. Der Chef des Militärkabinetts, Gr. Hauptquartier, 8 February 1917, to sämtliche mobile Immediatstellen der Armee einsch. selbständig Divisionen, Kr. II 50/2.17., GLA 59/1199.

70. See Großherzoglisches Badisches Ministerium des Innern to the Generaladjutanter Seiner Königlichen Hoheit des Großherzogs, Karlsruhe, 25 October 1918, No. 63093, GLA 59/1199.

71. Ironically, the German Supreme Army Command did much to diminish the status of the Iron Cross by handing out 5.2 million awards, 1st and 2nd Class, during the war. See Herwig, *First World War*, 192.

72. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 18.

73. Crompton, *Englands Verbrechen*, 178.

74. Scott, *Hague Conventions*, 110; Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, *14–18*, 141.

75. For another treatment of escapes from the UK, see Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 264–71.

76. For a description of the early guard, see Smith, *German Prisoner of War Camp at Leigh*, 12–13.

77. Naish, "German Prisoners of War Camp at Jersey," 271.

78. History of the Prisoner of War Camp at Brocton labeled "Prisoners of War Camp. Brocton. Staffs," 10 January 1919, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant, IWM, pp. 2–3.

79. Jackson, *Prisoners*, 147.

80. Report labeled "Royal Defence Corps," TNA, Air Ministry Records, 1/1190/204/5/2596. pp. 1–2.

81. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 52.

82. Ibid., 47–48.

83. History of the Prisoner of War Camp at Brocton labeled "Prisoners of War Camp. Brocton. Staffs," 10 January 1919, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant, IWM, p. 3.

84. Chief Constable of Nottingham to the Under Secretary of State of the Home Office, London, 1 October 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466, p. 2.

85. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, pp. 47–48. For a detailed but perhaps incomplete list of escapes, see Mark, *Prisoners of War in British Hands*, 235–47. It is very difficult to determine the number of escape attempts, or even the number of men who successfully returned to Germany after an escape. Panayi states that only three prisoners managed to return to Germany after fleeing Britain. See Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 264.

86. Plüschow, *Die Abenteuer des Fliegers von Tsingtau*, 65–82.

87. Ibid., 101.

88. Ibid., 103–43.

89. Ibid., 139–89.

90. Ibid., 189.

91. Plüschow, *Gunther Plüschow*, 195–96.

92. Schneider, "Flucht an die Front," 106–7. Sales figures for *Die Abenteuer des Fliegers von Tsingtau* are located in ibid., 107 n. 6. The English translation of Plüschow's

account appeared in 1922 under the title *My Escape from Donington Hall: Preceded by an Account of the Siege of Kaio-Chow*.

93. Wilson, *Great War*, 413.

94. Plüschow, *Gunther Plüschow*, 195.

95. Tholens, "Rendezvous with a Submarine," 281–82. There are often slight variations in the spelling of German surnames in British documents. Thus, Hennig is sometimes spelled Henning, and Helldorff is sometimes spelled Helldorf. For the purposes of citation, I have maintained the spelling used in archival sources.

96. Valentiner, *Der Schrecken der Meere*, 79–80. Tholens recalled that he escaped Dyffryn Aled on 13 August 1915 and was scheduled to be picked up on 14 or 15 August. Valentiner claimed that von Hennig's letters specified 22 and 23 August as the pick-up dates. Valentiner seems to have recalled the incorrect date, as British documents support Tholens's recollections. Also, the British Q ship *Baralong* sank the *U-27* and killed all survivors on 19 August 1915 in one of the war's most infamous cases of atrocity at sea. See Strachan, *First World War*, 225.

97. Tholens, "Rendezvous with a Submarine," 283–88; Valentiner, *Der Schrecken der Meere*, 82–86.

98. Von Helldorff, Chester, to American Embassy in London (translation), 1 September 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/65, p. 1.

99. Von Henning, Chester, to American Embassy in London (translation), 1 September 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/65, p. 1.

100. Captain Wallis, Dyffryn Aled, to American Embassy in London (translation), 18 August 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 September 1915, TNA, FO 383/65, pp. 1–2.

101. Captain Wallis, Dyffryn Aled, to American Embassy in London (translation), 14 September 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 4 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/65, p. 16.

102. War Office to Under Secretary of State of the British Foreign Office, London, 14 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/65. On the British officers' disapproval of prisoner handcuffing, see copy of "Trial of Captured German Officers. Protests against Handcuffing," *Morning Post*, 28 August 1915, in BABL, R 901/85158.

103. "Escape of More German Officers. Flight from Welsh Camp," *Times*, 16 August 1915, p. 6.

104. Von Sandersleben, Donington Hall, to American Embassy in London, 5 December 1915, TNA, FO 383/65, p. 1.

105. The DPW's postwar report stated, "It is universally recognized that it is the duty of a prisoner of war to escape if opportunity offers" (Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 18).

106. British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to American Ambassador in London, No. 179591/15, 29 November 1915, BABL, R 901/85159, p. 1.

107. "Escapes of Germans at Dorchester. Commandant's Resignation," *Times*, 16 October 1915, p. 5.

108. German General Staff, *War Book*, 26.

109. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 17.

110. Emil Friedrich, Kriegsministerium, to Reichs-Marineamt (copy), Nr. 585.15. U5, 30 October 1915, BAMA, RM 3/5379.

111. Report by Lieutenant S. E. Buckley, in Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War to the Secretary of the Prisoners of War Department, London, 3 July 1917, TNA, FO 383/285.

112. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 17.

113. See Army Council Instruction 1209 of 1917, 2 August 1917, TNA, FO 383/285.

114. "13 Prisoners at Large. Two of Zeppelin Crew," *Times*, 25 August 1917, p. 3.

115. Chief Constable of Nottingham to Under Secretary of State of the Home Office, London, 1 October 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466, pp. 1–2; "Escape of 23 War Prisoners. Three Months' Tunneling Work in Camp," *Times*, 26 September 1917, p. 3. The camp referred to as Sutton Bonington by the chief constable of Nottingham was referred to as Kegworth in War Office and American Embassy reports. Since it is called Sutton Bonington in newspaper reports and police documents pertaining to the escape, I have chosen to refer to the camp as such.

116. Chief Constable of Nottingham to Under Secretary of State of the Home Office, London, 1 October 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466, p. 3.

117. Fregattan-Kapitan von M., Chelmsford, to the Swiss Legation in London, 21 November 1917, in Verbalnote, Schweizerische Gesandschaft (VdI) to the Auswärtigen Amt des Deutschen Reiches, Berlin, 12 April, 1918, BABL, R 901/85163.

118. Chief Constable of Nottingham to Under Secretary of State of the Home Office, London, 1 October 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466, p. 2.

119. Ibid., 3.

120. "German Officers' Escape," *Times*, 29 September 1917, p. 5.

121. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 47.

122. Colonel Kell, Military Intelligence Section 5 (M.I.5), London, to all Chief Constables in England, Scotland, and Wales, 7 September 1917, in War Office to A. L. Dixon, Home Office, London, 18 September 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466.

123. "Escape of 23 War Prisoners. Three Months' Tunneling Work in Camp," *Times*, 26 September 1917, p. 3.

124. "Procedure to Be Followed on the Escape and Recapture of Prisoners of War, Both Combatant and Civilian," 8 November 1917, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466, p. 1.

125. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

126. E. Blackwell, Home Office, to all Chief Constables, 7 January 1918, TNA, HO 45/10883/345466.

127. Justus, "Unconducted Tour of England," 201–5.

128. Ibid., 208–12.

129. "Disguised as a Woman. German Officer's Escape," *Times*, 26 October 1918, p. 3.

130. Justus, "Unconducted Tour of England," 212–15.

131. Unnamed German submariner, Stobs, Scotland, to his wife, 2 December 1917 (copy), BAMA, RM 5/4681, Nr. 107–9.

132. Hans K., Donington Hall, to H. Mathis, Regt. 29, 6. Battr., 9 May 1918, HStAS, M 1/3, Bü 527, p. 2.

133. Representative of the Field Marshal of the Home Forces, London, to Secretary of the War Office, 20 April 1918, H.F.C.R. 17609 (RDC/A), TNA, HO 144/1450/309852.

134. See Colonel G. S., Inspector Vulnerable Points, Minute Sheet labeled "Royal Defence Corps: Requirements now affecting the Corps, and possibilities of complying with them in view of existing strength," Register No. 17609 (RDC/A), TNA, HO 144/1450/309852.

135. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 47.

136. For examples of guard increase, see Tholens, "Rendezvous with a Submarine," 282; and "Escape of 23 War Prisoners. Three Months' Tunneling Work in Camp," *Times*, 26 September 1917, p. 3.

CHAPTER 4

1. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 215.

2. For general guidelines on prisoner punishment, see "Army Council Instruction. No. 1209 of 1917," 2 August 1917, TNA, FO 383/285.

3. On the overall conduct of the Germans in the UK, see Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 44.

4. Report on the Military Detention Barracks at Strafford to Gaston Carlin, 8 August 1918, in Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin to the Auswärtige Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 2 September 1918, BABL, R 901/83073.

5. British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to American Ambassador, 5 January 1916, No. 229/P, in Note Verbale, American Embassy, Berlin, to Imperial Foreign Office, 14 January 1916, BABL, R 901/85159.

6. Lt. Col. H. B. Thornhill, Report on the Brocton Camp Complaints, 14 April 1917, IWM, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant.

7. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 53. See also Dewey, *British Agriculture*, 120–27; and Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 212–24.

8. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 17, 198.

9. "Lazy German Prisoners. Shirk Work on Land and Wreck Workhouse Garden," *Daily Chronicle*, 28 June 1918, article clipping in BABL, R 901/54389.

10. British Empire Delegation, "Copy of reply approved by Council of Principal Allied and Association Powers to letter from Herr Brockdorff-Rantzau dated 10th May, 1919," 20 May 1919, TNA, FO 608/167.

11. "Hun Prisoners on Strike: Mutinous Squad Refuses to Work," *Daily Express*, 24 June 1918, article clipping in BABL, R 901/54401.

12. "German Prisoners Strike: Prompt Disciplinary Measures," *Times*, 12 September 1918, p. 3.

13. Lt. Col. H. B. Thornhill, Report on the Brocton Camp Complaints, 14 April 1917, IWM, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant.

14. Walter P. to his father, undated, in Die Erinnerungen des Soldaten Walter P. (1898–1977) aus den Jahren 1913–19, BfZ, pp. 228–30.

15. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 18–21.

16. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6, 145.

17. On local and national memory in Imperial Germany, see Confino, *Nation as a Local Metaphor*.

18. Lamm, *Das Frontkämpferbuch*, 280.

19. Winter, "British National Identity," 266–69.

20. Report by Edward G. Lowry to Walter Hines Page, 15 May 1915, in American Embassy in Berlin to German Foreign Office, 27 May 1915, BABL, R 901/83826, p. 2.

21. Report on Holyport by Francis E. Brantingham to Walter Hines Page, in Note Verbale, American Embassy in Berlin to the German Foreign Office, 31 October 1916, BABL, R 901/83077, p. 6.

22. "Nell Gwynn Castle Holds War Captives," *New York Times*, 19 December 1915, p. 4.

23. Kröpke, *Meine Flucht aus englisher Gefangenschaft*, 36–37.

24. For photos of soldiers with pictures of military leaders and war maps, see BAMA, MSg 200/1247, and *German Prisoners in Great Britain*, 42.

25. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7, 44.

26. Pöppinghege, *Im Lager Unbesiegt*, 145. For a listing of publications in civilian and military camps in the UK, see the table in ibid., 319–20.

27. Ibid., 200, 226.

28. Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 16.

29. Ibid., 95–96.

30. Ibid., 27.

31. "Ziele und Wege," *Stobsiade*, Nr.1, 15 October 1916, pp. 1–2. Stobs in Scotland originally contained both civilian and military prisoners. Civilian internees produced the first version of *Stobsiade* on 5 September 1915. In July 1916, the camp's civilians were transferred to the Isle of Man, where *Stobsiade*'s original editors created the *Knockaloe Lager Zeitung*. By October 1916, an editorial board of military prisoners was once again publishing *Stobsiade* at Stobs. For the details of this transition, see the first military edition of *Stobsiade*, Nr. 1, 15 October 1916; and Draskau, "Relocating the *Heimat*," 83–90.

32. "Zukunfts-Arbeit," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 2, 5 November 1916, pp. 2–3.

33. "An Unsere Leser," *Deutsche Blätter*, Nr. 1, 29 March 1916, BAMA, MSg 200/1483, p. 1. Pöppinghege likewise cites this passage in *Im Lager Unbesiegt*, 230.

34. Ketchum, *Ruhleben*, 210–19.

35. Confino, *Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 50–51.

36. Pult, *Siebzehn Monate in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft*, 44.

37. Ernst Jünger (*Kriegstagebuch*, 81, 364) discusses celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday on several occasions.

38. See the program in Major E. L., "Mein Aufenthalt in Dyffryn Aled vom Sept. 1914," BAMA, MSg 1/598.

39. Program for "Vaterländische Abend aus Anlaß des Geburtstages S.M. des Kaisers, Sonnabend, den 26 u Sonntag, den 27.1.18 in Deutschen Theater," Brocton Camp, BAMA, MSg 200/1966. Black, white, and red were the colors of the Imperial German flag.

40. Ernst Ewald H., Kriegstagebuch, 1914–17, entry for 28 January 1917, BfZ.

41. "Kaisers Geburtstag," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 6, February 1917, p. 3.

42. Applegate, *Nation of Provincials*. See also Confino, *Nation as a Local Metaphor*.

43. "Geburtsfest S. M. des Koenings Ludwig III, "Geburtsfest S. M. des Kaisers," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 18, February 1918, pp. 3–4.

44. Erich G., "Mit dem Tod auf Du und Du!," BAMA, MSg 200/2021, p. 51.

45. Plüschow, *Die Abenteuer des Fliegers von Tsingtau*, 130.

46. Smith, *German Prisoner of War Camp at Leigh*, 23.

47. Report on Jersey by Boylston A. Beal to Walter Hines Page, 27 April 1916, in American Embassy in Berlin to German Foreign Office, 6 May 1916, BABL, R 901/83081, p. 1.

48. Applegate and Potter, "Germans as the 'People of Music,'" 1–18.

49. Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism*, 61–62.

50. Heideking, "Festive Culture and National Identity," 228–32.

51. Applegate and Potter, "Germans as the 'People of Music,'" 17–18.

52. Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 244.

53. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 244–51.

54. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 232–35.

55. Program for "Konzert zu Donington Hall Sonntag, den 16 Juli 1916," in Oberleutnant S., "Tagebuch begonnen im Juli 1916 zu Donington Hall [England-Derby]," BAMA, MSg 1/602.

56. National Council of Young Men's Christian Association, *Heimatlieder,* 19.

57. *Holyport,* March–June 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/681, p. 10. On choral activities at Holyport, see Friedensburg, *Lebenserinnerungen*, 87–89.

58. Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism*, 61.

59. Goltermann, *Körper der Nation*, 61–62.

60. Ibid., 134–40, 217.

61. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 44–45.

62. Tauber, *Vom Schützengraben*, 277.

63. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 253.

64. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 199–202.

65. See photos of gymnastic maneuvers in BAMA, B 433/1304.

66. "Turnen," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 4, December 1916, p. 4.

67. "Wer rastet—rostet," *Deutsche Blätter*, Nr. 3, 24 December 1916, MSg 200/1878, p. 4.

68. "Vereine im Lager Stobs," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 20, April 1918, p. 4.

69. "Letters Found on Prisoners. Significant Extracts," *Times*, 6 September 1917, p. 5.

70. Tauber, *Vom Schützengraben,* 311.

71. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 48–63, 114–18; Mosse, *Image of Man*, 95–98. On the history of manhood and the male body, see Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West*.

72. Connell, *Masculinities*, 54.

73. Heimerzheim, *Karl Ritter von Halt*, 49.

74. Captain Wallis, Dyffryn Aled, to American Embassy in London (translation), 14 September 1915, in American Ambassador in London to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 4 October 1915, TNA, FO 383/34, pp. 8–10.

75. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 18.

76. Kriegsministerium Communication Nr. 30573, 7 April 1915 (Betreff: Ehrenwortsgabe kriegsgefangener Offiziere usw.), BHStA/IV, MilBev Berlin/35.

77. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 41.

78. "Sport und Bewegung," *Deutsche Blätter*, Nr. 3, 24 December 1916, MSg 200/1878, p. 3.

79. Report on Leigh by Boylston A. Beal to Walter Hines Page, 7 March 1916, in Note Verbale, American Embassy in Berlin to German Foreign Office, 27 March 1916, BABL, R 901/83098, pp. 2–3.

80. Report on Shrewsbury by Boylston A. Beal to Walter Hines Page, 29 May 1916, Enclosure No. 3, in United Kingdom, Parliament, *Reports of Visits of Inspection*, 6. On Eugen Sandow and the early history of bodybuilding, see Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*.

81. Report on Donington Hall by Boylston A. Beal to Walter Hines Page, 27 March 1916, in American Embassy in Berlin to German Foreign Office, 31 March 1916, BABL, R 901/83052, p. 2.

82. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 253; Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 192.

83. Ernst Ewald H., Holyport, to his family, 9 December 1916, in Ernst Ewald H., Kriegstagebuch, 1914–17, BfZ, p. 37.

84. Heimerzheim, *Karl Ritter von Halt*, 48.

85. "Sport-Satzungen. Hauptaufgaben der Unterhaltungs-Kommission," BHStA/IV, MKr/1707a.

86. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 194–96.

87. "Sport," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 2, 5 November 1916, p. 3; Tauber, *Vom Schützengraben*, 310–11.

88. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 202–3.

89. Schafer, "Sports," 280–82.

90. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics*, 160–65.

91. Jaruasch, "German Students in the First World War," 311–12, 319.

92. For an evaluation of the war's impact on German higher education, see Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics*, 394–99.

93. Erich G., "Mit dem Tod auf Du und Du!," BAMA, MSg 200/2021, p. 62.

94. "Nell Gwynn Castle Holds War Captives," *New York Times*, 19 December 1915, p. 4.

95. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 253–54.

96. Report on Frongoch by Boylston A. Beal to Walter Hines Page, 6 April 1916, in American Embassy in Berlin to German Foreign Office, 14 April 1916, BABL, R 901/83067, p. 3.

97. Report on Kegworth by F. Schwyzer and A. L. Vischer to Gaston Carlin, 24 March 1917, in Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin to the Auswärtige Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 25 April 1917, BABL, R 901/83095, p. 6.

98. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 253–54; Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 154–56; "An Unsere Leser in Deutschland," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 2, 19 September 1915, BAMA, MSg 200/2232, p. 3.

99. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics*, 398.

100. "Die Lagerschule: Ziele und Werdegang," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 5, January 1917, BAMA, MSg 200/2232, pp. 1–4.

101. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 162–64.

102. Taft, *Service with Fighting Men*, 254.

103. "Die Lagerschule: Ziele und Werdegang," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 5, January 1917, BAMA, MSg 200/2232, p. 1.

104. Ibid., 2.

105. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics*, 397.

106. "Die Lagerschule: Ziele und Werdegang," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 5, January 1917, BAMA, MSg 200/2232, p. 3.

107. "Translation of Letter from Pabst von Ohain, P/W at Donington Hall, to his Wife," TNA, ADM 137/3855, pp. 1–3.

108. Friedrich S., Stobs, to Wilhelm S., Dissen am Teutoburgerwald, 14 August 1917, SCRC, Friedrich S. Papers. For further discussion's of Friedrich S.'s agricultural studies and plans for the future, see Friedrich S., Stobs, to Heinrich S., Hannover, 10 August 1917, and Friedrich S., Stobs, to Heinrich S., Hannover, 20 July 1917, SCRC, Friedrich S. Papers.

109. *Gedenkbuch des Vereins kriegsgefangener deutscher Lehrer in Oswestry (England)*, 100–101.

110. Hofer, "Woran 'Der Fels' zerbrach," 9–11.

111. Liebmann, *Der Malerdichter Otto Nebel*, 8–9.

112. Justus, "Unconducted Tour of England," 207.

113. Spiegel, *U-Boot im Fegefeuer*, 217.

114. "Zukunfts-Arbeit," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 2, 5 November 1916, p. 3.

115. Rachamimov, "Disruptive Comforts of Drag," 364, 372.

116. Pörzgen, *Theater ohne Frau*, 6.

117. Ibid., 166–87.

118. Ibid., 28–32.

119. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 225–26.

120. Pörzgen, *Theater ohne Frau*, 27. For lists of popular productions in the UK, see ibid., 166–87.

121. Photo labeled "Stobs beim Schminken und Frisieren," BAMA, MSg 200/2730.

122. William Whiting, "Christmas and New Year at Frongoch," BABL, R 67/805.

123. Hirschfeld and Gaspar, *Sittengeschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges*, 370–72; Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 241–43.

124. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 40. Further information on relationships between women and prisoners, as well as the sexual life of the Great War's prison camps in general, may be found in Hirschfeld and Gaspar, *Sittengeschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges*, 367–86, and Beck, *Die Frau und die Kriegsgefangenen*.

125. *Faschingszeitung Holyport* 1919, March 1919, BAMA, MSg 200/681, pp. 3–5; see also Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 151.

126. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 42.

127. Pörzgen, *Theater ohne Frau*, 77–79.

128. *Das Kriegsgefangenenlager Oswestry-Westlager*, 42.

129. "Das Lied vom Korsett," in *Festschrift des Deutschen Theaters Broctonlager*, BAMA, MSg 200/1966, pp. 16–17.

130. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18*, 43.

131. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 42.

132. Rachamimov, "Disruptive Comforts of Drag," 379–82.

133. Garber, *Vested Interests*, 32–7.

134. On the history of theater in prisoner of war camps, see Vance, "Theater," 288–89. On the ubiquity of transvestite theater, see Garber, *Vested Interests*, 39.

135. Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, 95–101; Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, 184–87.

136. Baumeister, "Fronttheater."

137. For a discussion of cross-dressing in British frontline theater, see Boxwell, "Follies of War."

138. Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers*, 65–66.

139. Forwarded copy of an article to be published in *New York World* by H. M. Hall, in James W. Gerard to von Jagow, Imperial Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 March 1915, BABL, R 901/83825, p. 8.

140. "Lagerchronik," *Stobsiade*, Nr. 12, July 1917, p. 3.

141. B. B. Cubitt, London, to G. O. C. in Chief Northern Command, 11 April 1918, in Verbalnote, Schweizerische Gesandschaft in Berlin to the Auswärtige Amt des Deutschen Reiches, 22 June 1918, BABL, R 901/84680.

142. Ketchum, *Ruhleben*, 229.

143. See Kessel, "Whole Man."

CHAPTER 5

1. On the armistice and German demobilization, see Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, 69–90.

2. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632.

3. "Royal Defence Corps Memorandum re. Reductions in strength during the last 6 months and Duties performed and hours of work," 27 July 1918, TNA, HO 144/1450/309852, p. 2. It is difficult to calculate exactly how many prisoners captured in August–November 1918 wound up in the United Kingdom, but British records indicate that at least 4,000 officers were taken in France during that period, all of whom would have been sent across the English Channel. See Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 632.

4. "German War Prisoners: Over 113,000 in England on March 12," *Times*, 15 March 1919, p. 7. Other prisoners, of course, had already been exchanged on medical grounds, interned in the Netherlands or Switzerland, or transferred to France for employment in prisoner labor battalions.

5. Karl. K., Dorchester, letter to parents, 13 November 1918, in Letters of Karl K., P.O.W. Camp Dorchester (1916–19), BfZ, B 10, p. 27.

6. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 123.

7. Scott, *Hague Conventions and Declarations*, 115.

8. Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg*, 332.

9. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 174–75.

10. Van der Vat, *Grand Scuttle*, 102–3, 129–35.

11. Ludwig G., Working Camp at Woodford (Parent Camp Dorchester), to his family, Rain am Lech, 29 November 1918, APC.

12. Hans K., Kegworth, to Harry K., New York, 31 January 1919, APC.

13. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 123.

14. Haupt, *Die Deutsche Insel*, 13; Lamm, *Das Frontkämpferbuch*, 280–81.

15. See, for example, the religious services commemorating the Kaiser's 1919 birthday at the officers' camp at Wakefield, in Schmidt, *Aus der Gefangenschaft*, 117–22.

16. "Ansprache des Lageraltesten, Korv. Kpt. S. zum 27.1.19," *Zeitung des Lagers Skipton, Yorks*, 20 April 1919, BAMA, Msg 200/1560.

17. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 164.

18. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 169–78.

19. *Das Kriegsgefangenenlager Oswestry-Westlager*, 51–53.

20. "Disziplin der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in England," *Reichsbote*, 27 November 1918, clipping in BABL, R 901/54430.

21. Report on Dorchester by A. de Sturler and R. de Sturler, 7 April 1919, BABL, R 901/83055, p. 3.

22. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 25.

23. See the program for the event at Holyport between 26 May and 8 June 1919, in BAMA, MSg 200/2065.

24. Program titled "Sportfest der Kriegsgef. Deutschen Offiziere in Ripon/Engl. Mittwoch, d. 4 Sonntag, d. 8 VI 1919," BAMA, MSg 200/1573.

25. Bogenstätter and Zimmermann, *Die Welt hinter Stacheldraht*, 194.

26. "Körperpflege," *Ost-Westlcher Divan*, Oswestry, Nr. 12, Himmelfahrt 1919, BAMA, Msg 200/2123, p. 7.

27. Offizier Stellvertreter R., Handforth, to the Deutsche Regierung, Berlin, 7 March 1919 (Abschrift zu IIIb 5881), BABL, R 901/86416.

28. Machinist Alfred B., Pattishall, to German Minister of National Defense Noske, Berlin, 4 April 1919 (original in English), BAMA, RM 20/501.

29. Georg F., Stobs, to Sophie W., Ritterhude bei Bremen, 3 March 1919, SCRC, Georg F. Papers, 225/2/2. Georg F. speaks of his plans to marry Sophie throughout his extended correspondence with her.

30. Sophie W., Ritterhude bei Bremen, to Georg F., Stobs, 6 March 1919, SCRC, Georg F. Papers, 225/2/2.

31. Report on Leigh by A. de Sturler and R. de Sturler to Gastin Carlin, 19 March 1919, BABL, R 901/8309, p. 7.

32. For examples of continued escape attempts, see the report on the camp at Redmires by Corragioni d'Orelli, Counselor of Legation in Charge of the Swiss Legation in London, to Carlin, 30 August 1919, BABL, R 901/83144; and "German Officers' Escape: Flight in a Snowstorm," *Times*, 24 March 1919, p. 9.

33. Corragioni d'Orelli, Swiss Legation in London, to Sir Arthur Grant, Brocton, 10 April 1919, IWM, Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Grant.

34. "The Shot German Prisoner," *Times*, 29 May 1919, p. 24.

35. Report on Frongoch and satellite camps by A. de Sturler and R. de Sturler to Gaston Carlin, 27 June 1919, in Schweiszerische Gesandschaft an das Auswärtiges Amt des Deutschen Reiches (No. E II 403/44332), BABL, R 901/83067, p. 4.

36. Report on Holyport by Corragioni d'Orelli to Gaston Carlin, London, 1 July 1919, BABL, R 901/83077, pp. 1–2.

37. Van der Vat, *Grand Scuttle*, 164–75.

38. Ruge, *Scapa Flow*, 113.

39. Reuter, *Scapa Flow*, 121–23.

40. Ludwig G., Working Camp at Woodford, to his parents, Rain am Lech, 6 June 1919, APC.

41. *Treaty of Peace with Germany*, 87–88.

42. Lieutenant Hans J., 153 Infantry Regiment, Oswestry, to Dr. Vershofen (Deutsche demokratische Partei), Weimar, 18 July 1919 (Abschrift zu IIIb 13401), BABL, R 901/86458.

43. "German Prisoner Shot Dead: Mutineers at a Camp," *Morning Post*, 14 July 1919, clipping in BABL, R 901/54388.

44. Karl K., Working Camp at Little Fernhill, to his parents, 4 July 1919, Letters of Karl K., P.O.W. Camp Dorchester (1916–19), BfZ, B 112.

45. Karl K., Little Fernhill, to his parents, 9 August 1919, Letters of Karl K., P.O.W. Camp Dorchester (1916–19), BfZ, B 10. For other published letters expressing discontent with the government's efforts to ensure timely repatriation, see "Kriegsgefangenen-Briefe: Die Wut auf Erzberger ist grenzlos," *Die Post*, 20 August 1919, clipping in BABL, R 901/54490.

46. Ludwig G., Working Camp at Woodford, to his parents, Rain am Lech, 4 August 1919, APC.

47. Wilhelm S., Brocton in Stafford, to Else S., Stellingen-Hamburg, 3 August 1919, APC.

48. Ibid., 28 August 1919.

49. Rear Admiral von Reuter, Donington Hall, to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 7 August 1919 (translation), TNA, FO 383/502.

50. "German Prisoners to Be Sent Home," *Times*, 30 August 1919, p. 10.

51. Scott, "Captive Labour," 328–29.

52. "REPORT NO. 8," A. de Sturler to Monsieur J. L. Isler, Charge de' Affaires, Swiss Legation in London, BABL, R 901/84688, pp. 7–8.

53. Haupt, *Die Deutsche Insel*, 87.

54. *Das Kriegsgefangenenlager Oswestry-Westlager*, 81.

55. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 303; Haupt, *Die Deutsche Insel*, 87–9.

56. Flyer labeled "Help the Prisoners of War to Go Home!," in Die Errinnerungen des Soldaten Walther P. (1898–1977) aus den Jahren 1913–19, BfZ, p. 224 h.

57. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 303. For additional examples of flyers sent out in late 1919, see BAMA, MSg 200/1537.

58. Report on Redmires by Corragioni d'Orelli to Gaston Carlin, London, 30 August 1919, BABL, R 901/83144, p. 3.

59. "German Prisoners," *Times*, 30 August 1919, p. 11.

60. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 301.

61. A German civilian discussed the balloon campaign in a letter to his son at Pattishall. See Herr W., Hamburg, to his son, Paul W., Pattishall, 22 August 1919, APC.

62. Although some estimates suggested that more than one million German prisoners remained abroad after the armistice, 800,000 is the number most frequently used in German documents. See also Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, 161.

63. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 169–70.

64. "Satzungen des Reichsbund zum Schutze der deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen," 24 December 1918, BAMA, MSg 200/2159.

65. Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 50–51. See also Wilhelm Freiherr von Lersner, "Der inneren Motive des Zusammenschlusses der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," BAMA, MSg 200/341.

66. See the letter from Schlesinger, Beauftragter des Zentralrats im Kriegsministerium Unterkunftsdepartement, which appears to be addressed to Friedrich Ebert, 27 November 1918, BABL, R 43/2512, p. 1.

67. "Verhandlungsbericht zur Sitzung am 7.12.1918," BABL, R 901/86451.

68. Reichsregierung, "An die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," 24 December 1918, Berlin, BABL, R 43-I/234 (Block 243).

69. "Bekanntmachung betreffend die Errichtung einer Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene. Vom 2 Januar 1919," Nr. 6615, BABL, R 901/86451.

70. On Stückeln's appointment, see *Nachrichtenblatt der Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene*, Nr. 1, January 1919, BABL, R 901/86452, p. 1.

71. Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 50–51.

72. "Bericht über Vorstandsbesprechung des Volksbundes, Besprechung am 30 Januar 11 Uhr vormittags," BAMA, MSg 200/2160, pp. 3–4.

73. "Verhandlungsbericht über die am 3 Januar 1919 stattgehabte Sitzung der Reichszentralstelle im Hotel Prinz Albrecht," BABL, R 901/86451, pp. 1–3.

74. *Mitteilungen des Volksbundes zum Schutze der deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen*, Nr. 4, 1 February 1919, BABL, R 901–86419; Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 83–84.

75. Herr Siebel (Volksbund), Hamburg-Altona, 22 January 1919, to Senior Grimm of the Evangelischer Kirchenausschuß, Hamburg, EZA, ZA 5036/11, Sign. 1/788.

76. Drucksache 1b, "Anweisungen für Redner," Volksbund—Der Vorstand, Berlin, SaS, S 5765.

77. Volksbund, Ortsgruppe Kaltennordheim, to the deutsche Reichsregierung in Berlin, 20 February 1919, BABL, R 901/86456. One of the Volksbund's leaders claimed that while the exact number of members was impossible to determine, it exceeded five million. See Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 51.

78. Volksbund, Berlin, to the Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin, 17 March 1919, BABL, R 901/86455.

79. Volksbund, Landesgruppe Oldenburg, to Reichspräsident Ebert, Berlin, 17 April 1919, BABL, R 901/86457.

80. Reichszentralstelle to Oberst von Fransecky, Unterkunftsdepartement des Kriegsministeriums, Berlin, 26 March 1919, BABL, R 43-I/233.

81. "Protest der Frauen gegen unsere armen Kriegsgefangenen in Feindeshand," delivered to Herr Landrath in Sonneberg, 19 March 1919, BABL, R 901/86456.

82. Volksbund, Provinzialgruppe Magdeburg, to Reichspräsident Scheidemann, Weimar, 18 March 1919, BABL, R 901/86455. Although the Volksbund's Magdeburg representatives addressed him as such, Scheidemann was never actually Reichspräsident.

83. "Niederschrift einer Besprechung über Gefangenenfragen am Donnserstag, den 10 April 1919, vormittags 11 Uhr in den Geschäftsstelle fur die Friedensverhandlungen," BABL, R 901/86443, p. 11.

84. Ibid., 47.

85. "Translation of a speech delivered by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, First German Plenipotentiary at the Peace Congress at the meeting held at Versailles on May 7th, 1919," TNA, FO 608/167, p. 1.

86. Ibid., 4.

87. "Letter from Herr Brockdorff-Rantzau to Mr. Clemenceau, German Peace Delegation, Versailles, 10 May 1919," TNA, FO 608/167, p. 2.

88. "Copy of Reply Approved by Council of Principal Allied and Associated Powers to Letter from Herr Brockdorff-Rantzau dated 10th May 1919, Paris, 20 May 1919," TNA, FO 608/167, p. 3.

89. "Protokoll der Sitzung am 23 Januar 1919 in Sitzung der Reichszentralstelle," BABL, R 901/86451, p. 1.

90. *Nachtrichtenblatt der Reichszentralstelle fur Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene*, Nr. 4, March 1919, BABL, R 901/86452, p. 1. On the appointment of honorary board members, see Reichszentrallstelle to Seine Exzellenz Graf Brockdorff-Rantzau, Berlin, 17 April 1919, Nr. 3639/19, and the unaddressed letter on Hilfswerk letterhead, both in BABL, R 901/86451.

91. *Sondernummer der Mitteilungen des Volksbundes zum Schutze der deutschen Kriegs- und Zivilgefangenen*, Nr. 15, 24 April 1919, BABL, R 901/86419, pp. 1–3.

92. *Nachrichtenblatt der Reichszentralstelle fur Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene*, Nr. 6, April 1919, BABL, R 901/86452, p. 1.

93. "Letter from Herr Brockdorff-Rantzau to Mr. Clemenceau, German Peace Delegation, Versailles, 10 May 1919," TNA, FO 608/167, pp. 2–3.

94. "Copy of Reply Approved by Council of Principal Allied and Associated Powers to Letter from Herr Brockdorff-Rantzau dated 10th May 1919, Paris, 20 May 1919," TNA, FO 608/167, p. 3.

95. I. Winneberger, Präsidium des Bayerischen Kriegerbundes in Munich, to the deutsche Nationalversammlung, Weimar, 14 February 1919, Nr. 573, BHStA/IV, MKr/6051.

96. Regierungs-Präsident, Düsseldorf, to the Landräte and Oberbürgermeister, 22 March 1917 (I.G. 2866), SaS, W 3223.

97. Torpedo. Masch. Paul W., Pattishall, to his father, Herr G. W., Hamburg, 18 August 1919, APC.

98. G. W., Hamburg, to Paul W., Pattishall, 20 September 1919, APC.

99. Reichsminister des Innern, Berlin, to sämtliche Landesregierungen, 11 December 1919, SaS, W 3225.

100. Reichszentralstelle, Berlin, to Reichsministerpräsident Scheidemann, Weimar, 13 March 1919, No. 2020/19, BABL, R 43/233.

101. "Sitzung des Arbeitsausschusses der Reichszentralstelle am 19 März 1919 im Hotel Prinz Albrecht, Berlin, Prinz Albrechtstr.9," BABL, R 901/86451, pp. 8–9.

102. Ibid., 9.

103. Ibid., 10.

104. Reichsminister der Finanzen Maeder to the Reichszentralstelle in Berlin, 15 April 1919, BHStA/IV, MKr/6051.

105. Reichszentralstelle & Kriegsministerium to the Reichsministerpräsident, Berlin, 27 June 1919, BABL, R 43-I/233.

106. Matthias Erzberger, Reichsminister der Finanzen, to the Reichsministerium, Berlin, 27 June 1919, BABL, R 43-I/233.

107. Unterstaatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei, Weimar, to the Kriegsminister, 2 July 1919, BABL, R 43-I/233.

108. Stücklen to the Verfassungsgegebende Deutsche Nationalversammlung, Weimar, 22 July 1919, BABL, R 43-I/233.

109. Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 53, 251.

110. "Prisoners and Slaves," *Daily Express*, 21 February 1919, clipping in BABL, R 901/54387.

111. On protests by labor organizations and parliamentary debates on the subject, see "Employment of German Prisoners: A Chepstow Protest," *Times*, 7 April 1919, p. 9.

112. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 178–79.

113. For an overview of prisoner repatriation from other belligerents from 1918 to 1922, see Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception."

114. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 78.

115. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangen in Skipton*, 311–14.

116. Report on Handforth by A. de Sturler and Rodolphe de Sturler to Gaston Carlin, London, 24 October 1919, BABL, R 67/810.

117. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 79.

118. Telegram from the PWIB, London, to the Verein vom Roten Kreuz in Frankfurt A/M., Ausschuss für deutsche Kriegsgefangene, 18 October 1919 (G.46/290), BABL, R 67/1664.

119. Wilhelm S., Brocton, to Else S., Stellingen-Hamburg, 26 October 1919, APC.

120. Otto M.'s untitled repatriation account, BAMA, MSg 200/2414.

121. Report on Donington Hall by A. de Sturler and Rodolphe de Sturler to Gaston Carlin, London, 18 November 1919, BABL, R 67/806.

122. Report on Donington Hall by Corragioni D'Orelli to Gaston Carlin, London, 20 December 1919, BABL, R 901/83052.

123. Report on the Directorate of Prisoners of War, TNA, WO 106/1451, p. 79.

CHAPTER 6

1. Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, 84–85, 160–64.

2. Ibid., 161.

3. See passage from the *Bayerischer Krieger Zeitung* quoted in Ziemann, *War Experiences*, 250.

4. Zentralkomitee der Deutschen Vereine vom Roten Kreuz, Berlin, to Vorstände der Landes- und preußischen Provinzialvereine vom Roten Kreuz, 10 April 1919, BABL, R 67/529, p. 4.

5. Krammer, "Soviet Propaganda," 254–56. Prisoners of war returning from Russia also led communist uprisings in Hungary and Austria. See Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, 224, 239.

6. Torpedo. Masch. Paul W., Pattishall, to his father, Herr G. W., Hamburg, 18 August 1919, APC.

7. Otto M.'s untitled repatriation account, BAMA, MSg 200/2414.

8. *Das Kriegsgefangenenlager Oswestry-Westlager*, 107–9.

9. Bergmann, *Einer geht durchs Ziel*, 128.

10. Otto M.'s untitled repatriation account, BAMA, MSg 200/2414.

11. Sachsse and Cossmann, *Kriegsgefangenen in Skipton*, 323.

12. Welcome Certificate issued by the Volksbund Ortsgruppe Barmen, APC.

13. Brey, *Willkommen Daheim!*, 11.

14. Ibid., 20–21.

15. Flyer titled "An unsere aus der Gefangenschaft zurückkehrenden Soldaten," BHStA/IV, MKr/1707a.

16. Dr. Böhme, Deutscher Kirchenausschuß in Berlin-Charlottenburg, to the Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenkonferenz, 11 July 1919, EZA, ZA 5036/11, Sign. 7/2919, pp. 3–4.

17. Kommandantur des Durchgangslagers Gießen to the Bürgermeister der Stadt Wald B./Solingen, 22 February 1919, SaS, W 3224.

18. Kriegsministerium (Unterkunfts-Departement) and the Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene, *Merkblatt für heimkehrende Kriegsgefangene*, 7–20. On the hygienic importance of soap and shaving cream, see Wuertt. Kriegsministerium Verwaltungs-Abteilung (No. 90791.B.4.), Stuttgart, to the Intendantur XIII.A.K., 30 July 1919, HStAS, M 17/1 813.

19. "Bericht über eine Besprechung mit der Kommendantur des Durchgangslagers Bremen," 22 June 1919, StaB, B 4.65/1478.

20. Regierungsschutztruppe für Bremen Abtlg. 1c., "Bericht! Über die Sitzung am 7 Juli 1919 im neuen Rathaus, Bremen, 8 Juli 1919," StaB, B 4.65/1498.

21. Durchgangslager Bremen, 1 November 1919, to the Regierungsschutztruppe Bremen, StaB, B 4.65/1478.

22. Kriegsministerium (Unterkunfts-Departement) and the Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene, *Merkblatt für heimkehrende Kriegsgefangene*, 7–20. On the items offered to demobilized soldiers in November and December 1918, see Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, 82–83.

23. See the collection of "Kriegsgefangenensendung" communications in SaS, S 5763.

24. "Telegramm des Wuertt. Landtags an die heimkehrenden Kriegsgefangenen," HStAS, E 130 B 3830.

25. Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene, *Was ist in Deutschland geschehen?*, 14–16.

26. Kriegsministerium (Unterkunfts-Departement) and the Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene, *Merkblatt für heimkehrende Kriegsgefangene*, 15, 26–29.

27. Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception," 178.

28. Abwicklungsstelle 3. Inft. Regiment, Augsburg, to the Höh. Auflösungsstab 103, (Betreff Rückkehr aus Kriegsgefangenschaft), 27 June 1919, BHStA/IV, MKr/2245.

29. See the report labeled "Zu Nr. 100 443 P, M.M., (Betreff: Rückkehr aus Kriegsgefangenschaft), Munich, 25 July 1919, to Durchgangslager Lechfeld and Hammelburg, the Landesverband e. V. des Deutschen Offiziersbund and sämtliche Abteilungen des Ministerium f. mil. Angel.," BHStA/IV, MKr/2245.

30. Kriegsministerium (Unterkunfts-Departement) and the Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene, *Merkblatt für heimkehrende Kriegsgefangene*, 12–13.

31. Entschädigungs-Anspruch des aus englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft Zurückgekehrten Alfred S., Journ. No. 4626, Bezirkskommando Kissingen, 6 October 1919, an das Gen, kdo. II A. K. Würzburg, BHStA/IV, MKr/12695.

32. Entschädigungs-Anspruch des aus englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft Zurückgekehrten Alfred R., Journ. No. 4724, Bezirkskommando Kissingen, 11 October 1919, an das Gen, kdo. II A. K. Würzburg, BHStA/IV, MKr/12695. For numerous examples of damages paid to former prisoners by military authorities, see BHStA/IV, MKr/12695.

33. Smith, *Unsere Kriegsgefangenen und Ihre Unterbringung auf dem Lande*, 6–7.

34. On fears of Bolshevism, see Vorsitzender des Vertrauensausschusses der antibolsh. Organisationen Deutschlands, Berlin, 7 October 1919, to the Reichsregierung, Berlin, BABL, R 43-I/234.

35. Donation letter from J. A. Henkels Zwillingwerk, Solingen, 14 May 1919, SaS, S 5763.

36. Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, 161–63.

37. "Sales by Auction," *Times*, 26 June 1920, p. 26; "Property Investments," *Times*, 3 July 1920, p. 25.

38. P. Schulz, Bülow bei Vollrathsruhe in Mecklb., undated pamphlet titled "Gefangen," BABL, R 67/139.

39. See Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 159–81.

40. Robert G. L. Waite estimated that 200,000–400,000 men actively participated in the Freikorps. See Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 40. See also Theweleit, *Women, Floods, Bodies, History*.

41. Röhl, *From Bismarck to Hitler*, 119.

42. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 338–39.

43. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, 51.

44. Kuhl, *Die Kriegslage im Herbst*, 9; Crown Prince Frederick William, *Memoirs*, 246.

45. Ludendorff, *Kriegsführung und Politik*, 153–54.

46. Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 215.

47. See Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?"

48. On repatriation, see Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception," 175.

49. "Aktenvermerk," 16 August 1928, BABL, R 8095/3; Wilhelm Freiherr von Lersner, "Der inneren Motive des Zusammenschlusses der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," BAMA, MSg 200/341, p. 3.

50. Arbeitsausschuß deutscher Verbände, Berlin, 17 March 1922, to the Rheinische Volkspflege, Berlin, BABL, R 1603/2734.

51. Mertens, *Unermüdlicher Kämpfer für Frieden und Menschenrechte*, 20–21; Grossmann, *Ossietzky*, 80–81.

52. Schoeps, "Der Deutsche Herrenklub," 251.

53. Rose, *Krieg nach dem Kriege*, 159; Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 400–406.

54. "Denkschrift," in ReK, Berlin, to the Reichskanzler, Berlin, 30 September 1920, BABL, R 43-I/236.

55. Bestimmungen über die Gewährung von wirtschaftlichen Beihilfen an ehemalige Kriegsgefangene, 1 September 1919, SaS, S 5763; Niederschrift über die Beratung am 7 July 1921 im Reichsfinanzministerium, betrefend Bearbeitung der bei den Kriegsgefangenenstellen vorliegenden Anträge auf Löhnungsnachzahlungen, sowie auf Entschädigung fur abgenommene Gegenstände usw., SaS, G 511.

56. Reichsfinanzministerium-Reichzentralstelle, Nr. 1.5.21. A IX, 12 May 1921, Berlin, SaS, 01028.

57. Hermann B., Wald, to the Kriegsgefangenenheimkehrstelle, Wald, 15 July 1921, SaS, W 3225; Hermann B., Wald, to the Kriegsgefangenenheimkehrstelle, Wald, 24 July 1921, SaS, W 3225.

58. Richard S., Reichskrankenhaus Cöln, to the Kriegsgefangenen-Fürsorge der Gemeinde Höhscheidt, 21 January 1920, SaS, H 3190.

59. Karl S., Wald, 4 November 1921, to the Hilfsausschuß Wald, SaS, W 3225.

60. ReK, "Denkschrift," Berlin, to the Reichs-Präsidenten et al., 26 April 1920, BABL, R 43-I/707.

61. ReK Bundestag, Leipzig, to the Reichskanzler, Berlin, 3 September 1921 (telegram), BABL, R 43-I/237.

62. Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 408–9. For an example of early ReK demands, see ReK, Berlin, to the Reichskanzler, Berlin, 12 February 1920, BABL, R 43-I/235. Prior to the decline of the Volksbund and the ReK's ascent as the premier prisoner of war organization, the two organizations conflicted with other veterans' groups, including the Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten, which represented wounded veterans, over how to best serve former prisoners. This was problematic because many former prisoners had been wounded and counted among the disabled. See "Bericht über die Besprechung des Volksbundes, der Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegs- und Zivilgefangener und der Reichsbundes der Kriegsbeschädigten, ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener und der Kriegshinterbliebenen am 13 Juni 1919, 10½ Uhr," BAMA, MSg 200/2160.

63. Arbeitsausschuß deutscher Verbände, Berlin, to the Rheinische Volkspflege, Berlin, 17 March 1922, BABL, R 1603/2734; Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 341.

64. Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 400–6.

65. Lutz, *Causes of the German Collapse in 1918*, 85, 142, 171.

66. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 350, 352.

67. "Die Reichsvereinigung ehem. Kriegsgefangener: Ihre Entwicklung und Aufgaben," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 35, p. 2.

68. "Die ReK: Ihre Entwicklung," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 35, p. 3; Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 342–43; "Entwurf einer Aktennotiz: R.e.K. und V.e.K.," BABL, R 8095/5.

69. "Stellungnahme der Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener zur Löhnung- und Guthaben-Frage," in ReK Bundesleitung, Berlin, to Ministerialdirektor Dr. Pünder, Berlin, 24 March 1916, BABL, R 43-I/237.

70. Der Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei, Rk. 2249, Berlin, 20 March 1926, BABL, R 43-I/237 (Block 177–78). On the ReK's wishes as a "thorn in the side" of the Reich Finance Ministry, see "zu RK. 2484," Berlin, 8 April 1925, BABL, R 43-I/237.

71. Crowe, British Foreign Office, London, to Friedrich Stahmer, Berlin, 19 May 1926 (translation of original from 30 April 1926), BABL R 43-I/237; Reichsminister der Finanzen, Berlin, 7 June 1926, to the Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin, "auszahlung der englischen Kriegsgefangenen-Guthaben," R 43/I-237.

72. Der Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei, Rk. 4234, Berlin, 5 June 1926, BABL, R 43-I/237 (Block 211).

73. "Die ReK: Ihre Entwicklung," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 35, pp. 3–4.

74. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 345.

75. Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception," 168.

76. ReK, *Festschrift anläßlich des zwölften Gautages des Gaues Rheinland-Westfalen*, 10.

77. V. Lersner, "Gefesselte Mannschaft," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 80.

78. ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, to Herr Bauunternehmer M., Brambauer, 25 February 1929, SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 2.

79. Wilhelm M., Brambauer, to the ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, 1 March 1929, SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 2. Rainer Pöppinghege has likewise referred to this incident in Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 394.

80. Wilhelm Freiherr von Lersner, "Der inneren Motive des Zusammenschlusses der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," BAMA, MSg 200/341, p. 3.

81. Beier, *Kriegsgefangen*, 12–13.

82. "*Kriegsgefangene Deutsche aller Welt*: Ein Wort zur Einleitung" (undated), BAMA, MSg 200/2428, pp. 1–2.

83. Ibid., 8.

84. Wilhelm Freiherr von Lersner, "Der inneren Motive des Zusammenschlusses der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," BAMA, MSg 200/341, pp. 3–4. See also Wylie, "1929 Prisoner of War Convention."

85. See Vance, "Geneva Convention of 1929."

86. Bank for International Settlements, *Documents*, 85–87.

87. Peukert, *Weimar Republic*, 196.

88. ReK Bundesleitung, Berlin, to Reichskanzler Herrn Dr. Brüning, Berlin, 23 May 1930, BABL, R 43-I/238.

89. Peukert, *Weimar Republic,* 260–61.

90. Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 176–77.

91. See Weber, *Hitler's First War*.

92. On Nazism and national solidarity, see Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, 195.

93. Wilhelm von Lersner, Berlin, to Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler, 3 April 1933, BABL, R 43-I/238, p. 1.

94. Kershaw, *Hitler*, 122–23. Available sources do not mention the power from which the former prisoners had been released, but it is likely that they had returned from Russia. In August 1919, when the lectures took place, the British had scarcely begun releasing prisoners from France and general repatriation from the UK had not commenced. It is unlikely that any former prisoners from the UK attended Hitler's lectures.

95. Davidson, *Making of Adolf Hitler*, 124–26; Kershaw, *Hitler*, 122–24. Hitler was apparently not always enthusiastic about the anti-Bolshevik lectures he gave while with the Bavarian army in the postwar period, as he reportedly complained that the soldiers, and especially the officers, did not seem to enjoy his talks. See Weber, *Hitler's First War*, 257. See also Seipp, *Ordeal of Peace*, 186–88.

96. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 216.

97. Beier, *Kriegsgefangen*, 13.

98. ReK Bundesleitung, Berlin, to the Deutsch-Evangelischer Kirchenausschuss, Berlin, undated, "Einladung," EZA, 5036/11, Sign. 1/791.

99. Telegram from the ReK, Hamburg, to Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler, Berlin, 22 July 1933, BABL, R 43-I/238.

100. Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 173–76; Ziemann, *Contested Commemorations*, 261–65.

101. Friedensburg, *Lebenserinnerungen*; Ziemann, *Contested Commemorations*, 152–53.

102. See the text of the memo from Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler, Berlin, to the ReK, Hamburg, labeled "Der Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei," RK 9097, 21 July 1933, BABL, R 43-I/238. See also Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer zweiter Klasse?," 420–21.

103. Dr. Joachim Givens, Berlin, 1 August 1933, to Fr. Heyenga, Brambauer/Westfalen, SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 15.

104. Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika*, 167.

105. Ibid., 623–24.

106. On Mussolini's social integration campaign for veterans, see Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception," 176.

107. See the clipping from a Magdeburg newspaper that describes the meeting, in BAMA, MSg 200/106.

108. Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 174–75.

109. Flyer labeled "Ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener! Deine Kameraden rufen Dich!," BAMA, MSg 200/2462.

110. "Führeranordnung des Bundesführers des 'Kyffhäuserbundes' General v. Horn vom 26.11.1933," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 5.

111. Geheime Staatspolizei, Bremen, to the Amtsgericht, Abteilung fur freiwillige Gerichtsbarkeit, Bremen, 2 February 1937, StaB, 4.65/1481.

112. Landesführer, Reichskriegerbund, Landesverband Schliessen, Breslau, to Staatssekretär Hans-Heinrich Lammers, Berlin, 23 April 1936, BABL, R 43-II/823b.

113. Bundesführer W. Reinhard, Deutscher Reichskriegerbund "Kyffhäuser," Berlin, to Adolf Hitler, Berlin, 5 March 1936, BABL, R 43-II/823b.

114. Stabsführer V. Behr, Deutscher Reichskriegerbund (Kyffhäuser) e.V., Berlin, to Ministerialdirektor Dr. Wienstein, Berlin, 23 April 1936, BABL, R 43-II/823b, pp. 1–3.

115. Ibid., 2.

116. "Abkommen zwischen dem Deutschen Reichskriegerbund und der NSKOV," 15 December 1937, in Hauptmann A. D. Wiedemann, Adjutant des Führers, Berlin, to Reichsminister Dr. Lammers, Berlin, 7 February 1938, BABL, R 43-II/823b.

117. V. Lersner, Berlin, to the ReK–Obmänner bei den Gaudienststellen der NSKOV, 5 November 1938, SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 32.

118. Die National-Sozialistische Kriegsopferversorgung, Aalen, "Soldaten des grossen Krieges! Frontkameraden!," April 1936, BABL, R 43-II/823b.

119. Beier, *Kriegsgefangen*, 13; "NSKOV–ReK," SaL, ReK Ortsgruppe Brambauer, Nr. 32.

120. See Seipp, *Ordeal of Peace*.

121. See Deborah Cohen's discussion of pensions in postwar Germany, *War Come Home*, 62–91.

122. Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 23–30.

123. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 43.

124. On the meaning of Hitler's acceptance of the ReK, see Pöppinghege, "Kriegsteilnehmer Zweiter Klasse?," 421.

CONCLUSION

1. Wagner, *Hochlandlager*, 73–81.

2. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18*, 80.

3. Dönitz, *Memoirs*, 1–4.

4. Smelser, *Robert Ley*, 15–16.

5. Jones, "Missing Paradigm?," 41.

6. Quoted in Baird, *To Die for Germany*, 228.

7. Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 95–105.

8. Baird, *Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda*, 189–90.

9. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 392.

10. Geyer, "There Is a Land Where Everything Is Pure," 136.

11. Goeschel, "Suicide at the End of the Third Reich," 155–58.

12. For recent work on this subject, which includes an introduction to the *Sonderweg* debate, see Smith, *Continuities of German History*.

13. Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 309–19, 333.

14. On the post–World War II experiences of German prisoners of war, see Biess, *Homecomings*.

15. Meyer, *Men of War*, 5–7, 74–96.

16. Quoted in Heyman, *Daily Life during World War I*, 136.

17. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, 27.
18. Keegan, *First World War*, 81–87.
19. Heyman, *Daily Life during World War I*, 150.
20. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, 80–98.
21. Abbal, "Die Französische Gesellschaft der Zwischenkriegszeit."
22. Biess, "Men of Reconstruction," 344–46.

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  - Adolf Heusinger
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  - 2: Kriegsministerium
  - 3: Preußische Armee Generalstab (Großer Generalstab, Generalstab des Feldheeres, Stellvertretender Generalstab, Oberste Heeresleitung)
  - 27: Dienststellen für Waffenstillstand und Demobilmachung
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