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**The Danish Scheme: The Repatriation of British Prisoners of
War through Denmark at the end of the First World War**

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in British First World War Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Between 11 November 1918 and mid January 1919 almost a quarter of the British Prisoners of War (POWs) held in Germany were returned to Britain via Denmark and the Baltic ports. The operation became known as the ‘Danish Scheme’.¹ This paper explains how the scheme came about, what it entailed and who was involved. It also seeks to explain why the operation has been virtually lost to history. See Appendix 1 for details of the people involved in the scheme.

Terms

For the purposes of this paper the following conventions will be used. The term prisoner of war will be rendered POW, the plural being POWs. The term British POWs includes civilians and men of the armed services of Britain, its colonies and dependent territories who were imprisoned or interned by an enemy power during the First World War. The Permanent International Armistice Commission will be referred to as the Spa Commission. The term British will be used instead of English when it is more accurate to do so. Officers will be referred to by the rank they held at the time. A glossary is included at Appendix 2.

Statistics

The number of British POWs in Germany on 11 November 1918 cannot be given exactly, no-one at the time had an accurate figure, nor does one exist now. Statistics published in 1922 show a total of 191,652 British military POWs, but this figure covers all theatres and the period 04 August 1914 to 31

¹ The Danish Scheme is the name given by its originator Captain C.C. Dix

December 1920.² Ministry of Shipping (MoS) figures show the numbers repatriated up to the 23 January 1919, when repatriation was virtually complete. Their figure of 162,650 includes civilians.³ Exchanged, escaped and those POWs who died in captivity will, of course, not be included in the MoS figures. It will be assumed that the number of British POWs in Germany at the time of the Armistice would have been between 150,000 and 175,000. Given these numbers, the 40,000 who are estimated to have been repatriated via the Danish Scheme is not an insignificant proportion. Using MoS figures and ignoring the numbers returned under medical care, for which no departure port is given, some 29 percent of repatriated POWs travelled home via Denmark, or Danish waters. For officers the proportion is 44 percent, see Appendix 5.

Sources

Although the main beneficiaries of this scheme were British POWs, I can find no published account of the enterprise in English. Almost all of the material for this paper has come from archival sources, both British and Danish.⁴ Despite the large contribution made to the scheme by members of the British Red Cross (BRC) there is no mention of it in Beryl Oliver's *The British Red Cross in Action*, nor in Caroline Moorhead's more recent history *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross*. What mention there is of the scheme in the BRC reports which were published in 1922 is

² HMSO, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War 1914-1920* (London: HMSO, 1923) Part IV Casualties

³ *ibid* p333. The MoS figures are similar to those published in the War Cabinet minutes - CAB/24/150 Western General Report No 103 Week ending 22 January 1919. These were supplied by the Inter-departmental Committee on Prisoners of War (ICPOW) and show that 7,111 officers, 150,218 other ranks and 4,626 civilians had been repatriated since the date of the armistice.

⁴ Translations from the Danish have been provided by my sister, Dorothy Fjordside Jones, now a naturalised Dane.

scanty and inaccurate.⁵ The relevant volume of the Official History describes the setting up of the Spa commission and explains the importance of the POW question as a term of the Armistice agreement but does not contain details of the repatriation process itself except for those prisoners who found their own way back to the British lines in France and Belgium.⁶ Douglas Newton's *British Policy and the Weimar Republic, 1918-1919* describes the situation in Germany just before and after the Armistice.⁷ Reference to Danish participation in the repatriation process appears in several Danish works and in the published memoirs of participants.⁸ Unpublished memoirs and diaries have been found in both national and private family archives. Items written without the benefit of contemporaneous notes or diaries have been treated with caution but do offer corroborative information. Danish involvement in the repatriation of British POWs is not mentioned in Tage Kaarsted's influential book *Great Britain and Denmark 1914-1920*⁹ which suggests it had little or no effect on British/Danish relations. Newspapers in Denmark and Britain give a good indication of how prominent an issue it was to both the Danes and the British between November 1918 and January 1919.

⁵ Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John's *Reports by the Joint War Committee and the Joint War Finance Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England on voluntary aid rendered to the sick and wounded at home and abroad and to British prisoners of war 1914-1919*

⁶ Sir J. Edmonds, *Official History – Occupation of the Rhineland 1918 – 1929* (London: HMSO, 1987) work started in 1930 and it was published on a very limited basis in the 1940s.

⁷ D. Newton, *British Policy and the Weimar Republic, 1918-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) p246 the detail here is not quite correct as Ewart was sent to Berlin as a BRC representative and did not revert to a military role until well into January.

⁸ B. Blüdnikow, *Krigsfanger - et Billedrama om Krigsfanger i Danmark under 1. Verdenskrig* (Odense, Denmark: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1988);

S. Thorsøe et al, *Skandinaviens-Amerika Linien: DFDS' passager- og fragtfart på Amerika* (2001)

B. Koop, *Interneret i Danmark under første verdenskrig* (København: Forlaget Skilling/DAKA, 2007);

C. Lütken, *Livserindringer og Rejseoplevelser* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busch, 1944);

E. Wessel, *Orlogsminder – Skildringer og Skitser fra danske Orlogstogter 1878-1919* (Copenhagen: V Pois Boghandel, 1926)

⁹ T. Kaarsted, *Great Britain and Denmark 1914-1920* (Odense, Odense University Press, 1979) this book is almost alone in its consideration of the relationship between Britain and Denmark in the period.

CHAPTER ONE

BRITAIN

The treatment of British POWs in Germany was an active political topic during the latter part of 1918. The number held by Germany had doubled as a result of the German Spring offensives. Many more families were affected. Questions were being asked in the House of Commons and newspapers, not only about how POWs were being treated, but about who in government was doing anything about it. Also keeping the plight of the POWs in the public eye were the negotiations aimed at extending to the rank of private the scheme for exchanging POWs who had been incarcerated longest. It is not perhaps surprising that the director of the Prisoner of War Department (POWD), Lord Newton, opened a meeting on 07 November warning ‘that there would be great public dissatisfaction unless arrangements are at once made for the repatriation of prisoners of war.’¹⁰ Despite many organisations having been established during the war to deal with matters concerning British POWs, there do not appear to have been any plans prepared for their repatriation.

POWs and Government

The Prisoner of War Department (POWD) became independent of the Foreign Office (FO) in October 1916. Its purpose was to supervise all matters affecting British POWs, including the coordination of the functions of other departments.¹¹ The forum for discussing POW issues was the Inter-departmental Committee on Prisoners of War (ICPOW) and its transport sub-committee (TSICPOW). Differences of

¹⁰ TNA FO 383/471 minutes of the Transport Sub-Committee of the Interdepartmental Committee on Prisoners of War held on 07 November.

¹¹ TNA FO 383/471 a very full description of its duties is given in a letter from Robert Vansittart, secretary of the POWD, to Bernard Mallet of the General Register Office.

opinion had to be referred to Cabinet. In the summer of 1918 dissatisfaction with the way POW matters were being handled led to a discussion in the War Cabinet. A chairman of cabinet rank was appointed to the ICPOW; Sir George Cave, He was to be responsible for settling any differences.¹² By 11 November the organisations were working well together, each with their own area of responsibility. However, the repatriation of more than 150,000 POWs was a very different task to any they had tackled before. At the second TSICPOW meeting held on 11 November Cave ‘enquired who was making the arrangements for the return of the prisoners from Germany.’¹³ This indicates the degree of unpreparedness. It is not surprising therefore that they got off to a very hesitant start. During October and November 1918 the British government was content to leave details of the Armistice to Marshal Foch and his advisors. Leading politicians were busy with the imminent general election and the coming peace negotiations. Government departments were dealing with the many and complex issues involved in dismantling a society geared up for total war and returning it to a civil society. The ICPOW does not seem to have been given any direction from above – just the public desire that something be done for the POWs as soon as possible.

POWs and other Government Departments

The Directorate of Prisoners of War (DPOW) and the POW Information Bureau were set up in 1914 as departments of the War Office (WO). The former dealt with the prisoners of the British and the latter answered queries about them. Both were headed by Lieutenant General Herbert Belfield. He or his

¹² TNA FO 383/471 contains a memo written by the Army Council circulated by Lord Milner on 05 August 1918 and an extract from War Cabinet minutes 18 September . Sir George Cave took up the post in late September 1918

¹³ TNA FO 383/384 contains the minutes of this TSICPOW meeting

assistant, Major General John Adye, often represented the WO at ICPOW and TSICPOW meetings.¹⁴ Regularly represented at the ICPOW and TSICPOW meetings were the WO, Admiralty, MoS, and the Central Prisoner of War Committee (CPOWC) of the British Red Cross (BRC).¹⁵ It is clear from the TSICPOW minutes that there was an expectation that they and the government would come in for some criticism from the POWs themselves for a number of reasons and they were anxious to minimise this. The committees do not appear to have discussed how the repatriation was to be handled before the Armistice and it is clear there were no inter departmental plans in place. On 01 November a suggestion was sent to the FO/POWD from Captain C.C. Dix, the naval attaché at the British legation in Copenhagen.¹⁶ He sketched out an idea that British POWs could be brought out of the Baltic ports with the help of Red Cross agencies and Danish shipping. The POWD clerk copied the telegram to the WO and filed it noting that they presumed prisoners would be repatriated over the land frontier. Over the next few days Dix sent a number of telegrams on the same topic outlining more details of the plan. The POWD circulated them to the WO, Admiralty and Air Ministry and replied to Dix that the proposals were being considered. Newton noted ‘HMG will probably be faced by public opinion to adopt all sorts of routes for getting prisoners back, however unpractical some of them may be.’¹⁷ It does not look as if this proposal was discussed at the committee meetings and it seems that it was assumed, by POWD staff at least, that the repatriation was to be a task undertaken by the WO.

¹⁴ TNA FO 383 series - minutes of these committee meeting are held in a number of FO 383 boxes.

¹⁵ Between November 1918 and January 1919 occasionally present were representatives of the Air Ministry, Home Office, Colonial Office, India Office, Board of Trade, Local Government Board, and representatives from Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. The French made attempts in December and January to send a delegate. These were repulsed by Cave

¹⁶ TNA FO 383/471 - sent from Lord Kilmarnock the chargé d'affaires on behalf of the naval attaché Captain Dix. Lord Kilmarnock is the conduit for all messages to and from legation staff to the FO during this period.

¹⁷ TNA FO 383/471 Newton's note is dated 08 November 1918

POWs and the Army

The vast majority of POWs were soldiers. Apart from the administrative task of recording those of its personnel who had become prisoners and informing their relatives, the care of POWs in Germany was left in the hands of various care committees and the CPOWC, overseen by the POWD. In November, the Quarter Master General (QMG) at General Head Quarters (GHQ) made plans for the return of POWs from Germany. 'The governing principle of his policy as regards the prisoners was that whatever the resources Armies in France could provide should be employed without the ordinary considerations of economy, to feed, clothe, comfort and transport home.'¹⁸ A reception camp was prepared in Dunkirk capable of accommodating 40,000. He made representations, through the Commander in Chief, to the War Office, that his control should extend into Germany. This aspect of the repatriation was never satisfactorily addressed by the Army. No army personnel were directed to enter Germany for the purposes of getting the POWs out until concern for missing POWs led to medical units being despatched into Germany early in 1919. Very soon the armies in France and Belgium had more than enough POWs to care for. Thousands of POWs, who had been held in occupied territory and just behind the German lines, were 'released' to make their own way home as best they could. These men were passed down the lines of communication and found their way back to reception camps from where they were sent back to Dover.

One of the documents produced in response to Cave's question as to who was making the arrangements for the return of the prisoners from Germany was a WO memo dated 14 November. It briefly laid out

¹⁸ Sir J Edmonds *Official History – Occupation of the Rhineland 1918 – 1929* (London: HMSO, 1987) p31 The QMG was Lieutenant General Sir Travers Clarke. This attitude of 'nothing is too good for our boys' seems to have been widespread, see the report in the Politiken newspaper on 17 January 1919, p5 - Professor Mygind in an interview states 'one has to admire what the British government has done for its Tommies. Absolutely nothing has been economised on. ... The motto has been when it's for the Tommies then nothing is too good'.

the division of responsibilities for the transport, reception and disposal of returning POWs. It gave the DPOW responsibility for receiving information as to the location of the POWs and for their transportation to a British port. This was to be done through the Director General of Movements and Railways (DGMR), the MoS and QMG. The QMG had responsibility for making adequate provision for food and clothing on the journey, to arrange for the POWs' reception in the UK, to prepare camps in the UK in conjunction with the General Staff and Director General Mobilisation (DGM) and to make arrangements for their transport to these camps. The DGM was also to be responsible for their final disposal.¹⁹ As a plan it leaves a lot to be desired. It is still not clear how the men were to be removed from Germany or how the supplies of food and clothing were to be taken to them in Germany. No reference is made here to the Spa conference. Edmonds states that it was announced at GHQ on 14 November that the WO had made arrangements for 100,000 prisoners to be sent through Rotterdam, and 40,000 near Swiss border were to be taken across France. 'Thus two authorities the War Office and GHQ, had begun to deal with POW – and a third, the Spa Commission, was soon to take a hand.'²⁰

POW and the British Red Cross

The organisation which will be referred to as the British Red Cross (BRC) was from October 1914 a combined organization of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England.²¹ The Central Prisoners of War Committee (CPOWC) of the BRC was established in September 1916 to standardize the work done previously by innumerable care committees in ensuring

¹⁹ TNA FO 383/471 appended to TSICPOW meeting of 14 November. It is not clear whether the QMG mentioned in this document is that in the WO or at GHQ.

²⁰ Sir J Edmonds *Official History – Occupation of the Rhineland 1918 – 1929* (London: HMSO, 1987) p31

²¹ The title of this temporary body was the 'Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England'. Thekla Bowser's *The Story of British V.A.D. work in the Great War* (London: Andrew Melrose Ltd., 1917) contains an explanation of the formation and operation of the combined organisation.

all registered POWs were sent regular supplies of food and clothing.²² The BRC commissions in Copenhagen and Berne were autonomous groups responsible to the CPOWC, but self financing and run by local committees. BRC staff in Copenhagen gave P.D. Agnew, the CPOWC's managing director, early intimation of the Danish Scheme when they requested authorisation to consult with Danish Red Cross (DRC) representatives with regard to facilities in Denmark.²³ The CPOWC took no action apart from forwarding the communication to the POWD.

POW and the Netherlands

Until 1917 the USA acted as 'protecting power' for British interests. When it entered the war the Dutch took over. A section of Dutch embassy in Berlin was devoted to looking after British interests. It was headed by M. von Rappard who operated with his staff from the British legation building. Communication with Rappard involved sending telegrams to Sir William Townley, British minister to The Netherlands in The Hague who forwarded them to Berlin. The welfare of POWs, the conditions in the camps and the distribution of relief supplies had become primary concerns of the protecting power's diplomats.²⁴ By mid 1918 the POWD had become increasingly sceptical of and frustrated by the inaccuracies in camp inspection reports which it was able to discern from the reports of returning

²² Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John's *Reports by the Joint War Committee and the Joint War Finance Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England on voluntary aid rendered to the sick and wounded at home and abroad and to British prisoners of war 1914-1919* Part XXIX is an extract from the CPOWC's own report;

British Prisoner of War is a monthly magazine published by the CPOWC during 1918 whose articles explain many aspects of their work.

²³ TNA FO 383/471 a letter was sent on the 29 October 1918 followed by a telegram on the 02 November. Agnew sent these onto Lord Newton as he did not think they fell within his province.

²⁴ R.B. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (London: Greenwood Press, 1990) p21

POWs.²⁵ At the time of the Armistice the POWD may have felt that the Dutch had been less effective than they might have been.

Holland contained a number of interned British servicemen and a considerable number of sick, injured and long serving POWs. Occasionally groups of the sick and injured would be exchanged for German POWs held in Britain using chartered Dutch vessels. Of major concern to the POWD and TSICPOW during October and early November 1918 was the continuation of these exchanges. The Dutch shipping firms were refusing to continue their sailings throughout the winter months. They had provided a service throughout the winter of 1917/18 but had given notice that journeys would cease at the end of October 1918. They resisted all pressure the British government could apply and were seeking both an increase in payment and permission to sail into the Thames rather than to Boston.²⁶ As the Armistice approached the route across the North Sea from Holland gained in significance. Soon hundreds of POWs found their way into Holland expecting to find ships to carry them home. Eventually the TSICPOW cancelled the contracts with the Dutch shipping companies. Accommodation was found in sheds at the quayside at Rotterdam and the MoS found ships to bring the POWs out of Holland.²⁷ The reaction of the Dutch authorities was not always helpful. When threatened with a flood of POWs across their border they closed it and stopped trains arriving from Germany. Eventually Sir William Townley and his staff coped with the influx of prisoners but they were never fully in control of the situation.

²⁵ TNA FO 383/400 When the Dutch were challenged on the accuracy of their accounts they suggested that the Germans in authority in a camp were more likely to make improvements when their camp was given a good report.

²⁶ TNA FO 383/384

²⁷ TNA FO 383/545 In the MoS's report on the repatriation it states that a liner being prepared to repatriate New Zealand invalids was taken for use on the Rotterdam Hull route. Ships being used to return Belgian refugees were also commandeered.

POW and the Armistice

The tenth condition of the Armistice agreement signed by Marshal Foch and Admiral Wemyss on 11 November 1918 specified that allied POWs were to be repatriated immediately without reciprocity. Condition seven dealt with the handing over of railway equipment and trucks by the Germans. The two issues became closely interconnected. Edmunds states that due to forgetfulness on the part of Foch the allies failed to make fully defined provision for return of Allied POW, 'the Germans were not slow to take advantage of this in order to evade handing over railway locomotives and wagons, and to obtain certain ameliorations.'²⁸ The Germans and anyone who was involved in the POW repatriation process in Germany soon became aware of the dire condition of the railway rolling stock and tracks in Germany. Many in Britain, France and Spa continued to believe that any mention of problems with fulfilling the Armistice condition relating to railway rolling stock was just a means of forcing amelioration of the conditions.

So Who was going to get the POWs out of Germany?

The TSICPOW held two meetings on 11 November and decided henceforth to hold meetings every day. They dealt with a number of matters but it is from the documents appended to the minutes of the meetings held on the 14 and 15 November that we begin to see details relating to POW repatriation being supplied by the delegates. That from the WO, mentioned earlier, merely described the division of responsibilities. The lack of detail is explained by a comment from Cave who 'pointed out that the arrangements for the repatriation of British prisoners from Germany are to be discussed by the Conference which is to assemble tomorrow November 15th at Spa.'²⁹ The British army was thus to be

²⁸ Sir J Edmonds *Official History – Occupation of the Rhineland 1918 – 1929* (London: HMSO, 1987) p6

²⁹ TNA FO 383/489 Transport sub-committee minutes

prevented from taking any action pending the discussions at Spa. The details provided by the MoS showed it had started allocating ships to take POWs from Rotterdam to Hull and reported that naval transport staff was to go to Rotterdam to superintend embarkation there. Dix had continued to send telegrams to the POWD with increasing amounts of detail relating to his scheme. His was the only plan which involved British personnel going into Germany to assist in the evacuation of POWs.

POWs and the Spa Commission

The Spa Commission was set up to ensure the terms of the Armistice were carried out. Its delegates were Army personnel from France, Britain, the United States and Belgium. Lieutenant General Sir Richard Haking was the chief British delegate. Major General Sir John Adye was charged with looking after POW issues. The delegates assembled in Spa on the 15 November and were joined by a German delegation a few days later.³⁰ The Commission was to make proposals and recommendations to Marshal Foch, who was to be the sole decision making agent. On 17 November, the French made the suggestion that Germany be divided into four zones West to East and in order to avoid congestion on the railways have the POW transported along the rivers, Oder, Elbe, Wesser and Rhine, to their mouths. Those in the south of Germany were to be taken across the Swiss border. A good idea possibly, but who was to put it into action? There was a dislocation between the German delegates at Spa, who were all officers of the old German army, and those working in the POW department of the WO in Berlin. Here all actions had to be approved by Hr Schlesinger a delegate of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council. No-one at Spa had a realistic view of the situation in Germany.³¹ Communication between the TSICPOW and the British delegates at Spa was slow as messages went via GHQ and WO.

³⁰ Major-General von Winterfeldt was the main German representative and Major von Papst was responsible for POW matters. Adye refers to him as Pabst in letters written to General Belfield.

³¹ D. Newton, *British Policy and the Weimar Republic, 1918-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) pp233- 240

Haking sent a daily report to GHQ, Abye wrote letters to Belfield listing his problems, foremost of which was lack of direction from the WO and information from any source. He initially appears to have believed he had a role in directing repatriation operations but on 30 November he wrote 'Haking has always been of opinion that we have no executive functions but are purely an advisory body.'³² Some good ideas were produced at Spa but because they were distanced from what was going on in Germany and had no effective means of putting them into effect, the delegates at Spa contributed nothing positive to the repatriation process they just introduced a layer of muddle and confusion and caused unnecessary delays.

The Danish Scheme

Captain Dix first tried to interest the POWD in his ideas on 01 November. His frequent telegrams to the POWD gave increasing amounts of detail as his plans developed. They elicited no great interest. On 07 November Lord Kilmarnock, charge d'affaires at Copenhagen, sent a despatch to the foreign secretary, A.J. Balfour recommending to his favourable consideration an enclosed letter and memo from Dix. The memo sets out Dix's reasoning for the scheme: Denmark was a favourable collecting and distributing centre for 30,000 to 50,000 POWs who might otherwise have to wait for months before they could be transported; the breakdown of the German railways and the potential congestion if the majority of POWs made their way through France, Belgium and Holland; the resource and information available in the BRC organisation in Copenhagen; the closeness of potential collecting ports of Stettin and Danzig to Copenhagen; the willingness of directors of Danish shipping companies to assist in the scheme, chartering ships and victualling them on a no profit basis; use of Northern UK ports to hasten turnaround times; the need to send a commission to Berlin to arrange collection of the men at the ports

³² TNA FO 383/474 letter to Belfield

and the willingness of BRC personnel in Copenhagen to undertake this task. The memo concludes 'I venture to think that there are no details which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by the staff of the Legation and the British Red Cross in Denmark if they are given the necessary powers, for the goodwill of both the Danish government and individual Danes is unquestionable.'³³ The confidence and certainty of this young man in his ability to run this scheme is certainly breathtaking. To repatriate tens of thousands of British POWs using a combination of British legation and BRC staff along with the goodwill and assistance of the Danish people may have appeared unrealistic to the authorities in Britain. Who would be willing to authorise it? Cave and the ICPOW or TSICPOW committees did not seem able to do so. The WO did not show any interest in it, they were reluctant to take action independent of the French and the decisions which were to be made at Spa.

When neither the despatch to Balfour, nor the sixth telegram to POWD on 12 November had resulted in a positive response, Dix had Kilmarnock send the following telegram to the Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI) at the Admiralty:

I have partly worked out a scheme to ship all British prisoners in camps East of Elbe via ports of Warnemunde Sassnitz and Danzig. Stettin is unsuitable being a centre of bolshevism. Personal relations Cold and Andersen will materially assist scheme as far as shipping goes. Good will of Danish Red Cross and Mr Abrahamson's personal knowledge and executive ability mark him out as most suitable man to proceed to Berlin and arrange transport of men from camps to ports we have organisation here quite able to run scheme rate between 20 and 30 thousand a month in my opinion it is absolutely necessary to give legation here free hand to run this scheme. If people out of touch with local feeling interfere with it deland [sic] confusion

³³ TNA FO 383/471

are certain. FO have been informed of shipping Companies' terms and main outline of scheme and seem vaguely interested. If general principle is accepted will you use your influence to get it started on lines of free hand to legation here.

The Admiralty was in possession of the earlier telegrams from Copenhagen which the POWD had copied to the WO and Admiralty. The telegram to the DNI was passed to the Deputy Director of Operations Department (DDOD) with the remark 'I approve scheme.' The DDOD(H) responded the next day with a telegram to Dix:

Feeling here is that it is vitally important to get the prisoners of war over as quickly and comfortably as possible. Arrangements should provide for heating, proper bedding and hot meals on board. British ships will be sent if necessary to Copenhagen but some little time at least a week will probably elapse before they arrive. Would prefer term of charter submitted for approval but if time and local conditions do not permit this you are authorised to make best arrangements possible reporting particulars at once. Report if you consider a hospital ship essential. Route to be followed by vessels to UK will be telegraphed tomorrow. Number and time your telegrams and address them to Admy.³⁴

It appears that the Admiralty did not feel constrained by the imminent discussions at Spa, at which there was no British naval delegate. At last Dix had obtained permission to go ahead with his scheme, which was in some quarters referred to as the Admiralty scheme. 'Blinker' Hall, the DNI, had appointed Dix to his position as naval attaché and was in a better position than most to appreciate his capabilities and the merit of his proposals.³⁵ The acceptance shows a willingness to treat the

³⁴ TNA FO 383/489 These telegrams survive as they were appended to the TSICPOW minutes of the 14 November

³⁵ Commander Dix was given the rank of acting Captain for this posting.

repatriation of POWs as urgent, and a concern for the welfare of the prisoners themselves, features missing from WO documents at this time.

Developing situation

On 15 November the TSICPOW 'decided that there is no objection to members of the British Red Cross Society proceeding to Berlin from Copenhagen to make arrangements for the repatriation of prisoners.' The question of the rolling stock to transport prisoners was to be the responsibility of the Spa delegates only.³⁶ The tussle over the handing over of railway locomotives and wagons continued to be discussed at Spa without sign of resolution. The lack of independent information on the state of Germany was made worse by 'the Entente and American decision to isolate Germany diplomatically'.³⁷ Unfortunately the abysmal state of the German railways and its rolling stock turned out to be the most limiting factor in the repatriation processes. Abrahamson, on his arrival in Germany, in trying to determine the situation with regard to the railways inadvertently got embroiled in the political machinations surrounding this issue.

³⁶ TNA FO 383/489 TSICPOW minutes of the 14 November. Belfield was asked by the TSICPOW to request the Army Council to telegraph GHQ, to direct Adye to deal with it there. The communication route between the TSICPOW and Spa did not improve.

³⁷ D Newton, *British Policy and the Weimar Republic, 1918-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) p233. Newton explains that during the next eight months the Armistice Commission in Spa was to provide the chief point of formal contact between the new government in Germany and the victorious powers

Admiralty versus Army Council

Once given authority, work on the Danish Scheme started immediately. The first shipload of POWs, embarked under this scheme, sailed from Sassnitz on 23 November. The irony of this is that the delegates at Spa had done nothing operationally to organise the movement of POWs out of Germany at this time and yet the Army Council sent a letter to Lord Newton, dated 23 November noting that there were properly accredited representatives at Spa and unaccredited representatives at Berlin and that Lord Kilmarnock should adhere to the resolutions of the former and ignore those of the latter.³⁸ On 29 November Dix, when warned by BRC personnel in Berlin that a complete scheme for repatriation was being devised at Spa, responded immediately with a telegram to the Admiralty. He expressed his fear that arrangements made at Spa would interfere with the running of the Danish scheme and cause it to fail. He believed his scheme could remain completely independent of any other repatriation arrangements being made.³⁹ A letter was sent on 01 December from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Lord Newton praising Captain Dix for 'his foresight in preparing in advance a scheme for the repatriation of prisoners of war' and asking that the foreign secretary be asked to pass on these expressions of appreciation to Captain Dix via Lord Kilmarnock. The timing of such a letter only makes sense if it is viewed as the Admiralty showing support for the Danish Scheme in the face of an attack on it from the WO and from Spa.

³⁸ TNA FO 383/384 letter addressed to the secretary POWD for the information of Lord Newton was marked 'Immediate'

³⁹ TNA FO 383/384 this urgent telegram was sent to the Admiralty and indicated that work was well under way with Abrahamson and Mayne and increasing number of Danish Red Cross officers.

Attacks on Danish Scheme personnel

When pressed on the issue the TSICPOW found little difference between the work being done in Berlin and the plans being made at Spa and were content to let both carry on. However, controversies arose at this time which could have resulted in the removal of both the Danish Scheme' representatives from Berlin. Abrahamson's problems arose when the French minister in Denmark took an exaggerated exception to reports he made to Dix and Kilmarnock on the conversations he had had with German politicians. The French demanded Abrahamson be removed from the Red Cross. A telegram from Kilmarnock on 28 November contained an explanation from Abrahamson that he had no intention of going beyond his brief, he had been merely seeking information to help in the repatriation and regretting any annoyance caused to the French. Kilmarnock ends 'Abrahamson has displayed conspicuous ability in making arrangements for prisoners and I trust French Minister's request for his removal from Red Cross will not be acceded to as his services are of utmost importance to success of repatriation scheme.'⁴⁰ The TSICPOW discussed the situation and decided that the request to remove him from the Red Cross would not be acceded to but that they would prevent him from returning to Berlin. This telegram was not sent however, a note on the file explains why - Balfour was prepared to let him return to Berlin, which he did on 01 December.

The controversy over Mayne had a political basis. A German press bureau report suggested that Mayne, whilst addressing a large group of POWs in Berlin, had spoken of his support for the Labour Party.⁴¹ Kilmarnock was instructed to recall him to Denmark. Kilmarnock responded saying that

⁴⁰ TNA FO 383/384 urgent telegram sent by Kilmarnock on 28 November along with other documents relating to issue including response to French minister in London dated 07 December.

⁴¹ TNA FO 383/384 contains many items relating to this incident, including Mayne's own explanation. He was reported as having proclaimed himself to be a Fabian Socialist at a large meeting organised by Schlesinger, delegate of the Soldier's

removal of Mayne, who was the only BRC representative currently in Berlin, would wreck the work of moving the POWs from the camps to the ports, and that the Soldiers' and Workmen's councils who were currently assisting might object to his being removed on political grounds. He added that Dix considered his retention essential.⁴² This happened towards the end of November and although both controversies were considered serious enough to be made known to the King and the War Cabinet a worse possibility also arose at this time.⁴³ According to Mr Snouk his assistant, Rappard was on the point of resigning. He said he had become confused about the relative authority and responsibilities of the British section of the Dutch legation of which he was head, and the BRC representatives from Copenhagen. The TSICPOW acted quickly and decisively to prevent the resignation and a fracture with the Dutch legation. They informed everyone concerned that all BRC delegates in Berlin were to work under Rappard's authority. They further decided to ask Major General Sir Richard Ewart to go to Berlin as senior BRC representative to take charge of repatriation of POWs from all parts of Germany.⁴⁴ Despite these events the Danish Scheme and its personnel survived. It is a measure of its acceptance into the mainstream that press releases issued by the ICPOW around this time started to mention Copenhagen and the Baltic Ports in reports of the preparations being made for the repatriation of POWs.

and Workmen's councils for the POW department, to which over 800 British POWs had been invited from the nearby camps. The Germans wanted the POWs to understand that Germany was now very different, and that those in power now were not responsible for their suffering and the treatment they had endured. An account of this meeting and Mayne's part in it can be found in P. Brown, *Germany in Dissolution* (London: Andrew Melrose Ltd., 1920). Brown was a British journalist who had been interned in Ruhleben. Instead of accompanying his fellow POWs back to the UK he went to Berlin to take up his work again.

⁴² TNA FO 383/384

⁴³ TNA CAB/24/150 Cabinet minutes on 27 November and 04 December

⁴⁴ Ewart was a BRC representative in Berne at the time.

CHAPTER TWO

DENMARK

British Legation in Copenhagen

Denmark acquired a military attaché, Lieutenant Colonel H.A.L.H. Wade, in November 1916 and a naval attaché, Captain Charles Cabry Dix, in August 1917. Previously the Danes had shared the services of naval and military attachés with other Scandinavian countries. Sir Ralph Paget, the British minister in Copenhagen, appears to have played virtually no part in the repatriation effort. Lord Kilmarnock, first secretary and chargé d'affaires, was closely involved in the scheme throughout. He was the route by which communication was made with London.⁴⁵ The FO archives provide the skeleton of the story on which we can wrap the details obtained from other sources. Dix's own account, written in the 1940s without access to official material is devoid of some specific details. It gives us a good picture of a young man who, recognising a good idea, had the strength of personality and determination to act upon it and make it the success it undoubtedly was.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ M. Seligmann *Spies in Uniform: British Military and Naval Intelligence on the Eve of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) describes how documents were weeded out from the archives of the Admiralty and the War Office during the post war years. It is only because Military and Naval attachés were repeatedly told to send their reports through the Foreign office, who then forwarded a copy to the relevant department, that information sent by them survives in the Foreign Office archives. Unfortunately Dix, when his scheme was endorsed by the Admiralty, was told to communicate directly with the Admiralty. It is probable these direct communications do not now exist. Kilmarnock continued to communicate with the POWD through the FO and passed Wade's messages to the WO/Army Council the same way.

⁴⁶ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p369. This account was written during the early 1940s after Dix was evacuated from Singapore to Australia. It was presumably written without access to official papers and therefore gives no specific dates. Most of the events however can be corroborated from other sources.

British Red Cross (BRC) in Copenhagen

BRC staff arrived in Copenhagen in late 1916 when it was decided to set up a bread bureau along the lines of that operating in Berne. A committee was formed and Mr Martin Abrahamson a businessman living in Copenhagen became its vice president.⁴⁷ In late 1918 he was joined by Mr Arthur Mayne, a BRC commissioner who had been working in the Berne bread bureau.⁴⁸ At the time of the Armistice there was about 200 paid and volunteer staff involved in the BRC organisation in Copenhagen. It was sending out 10,000 parcels of bread daily to POW camps throughout Germany.⁴⁹ They had an alphabetic card index containing the names and whereabouts of about 165,000 POWs in Germany. Clearly this was a fund of information which would be very useful to anyone involved in the repatriation process. Additionally they had some useful contacts. They had worked with the German Red Cross (GRC) in Copenhagen and the Danish Red Cross (DRC).⁵⁰ The DRC had an excellent relationship with the German authorities because of the work they had done for German POWs in Russia, and they had offices in Berlin.

⁴⁷ Abrahamson family private archive contains several draft autobiographies. He has described discovering, when the war first broke out, that he was English and he went to the British legation to register as such. Despite having travelled in Germany before the war nationality had not been an issue as passports were not required. From mid 1917, when the director of the bread bureau was removed from his post, Abrahamson became involved in its day to day running to the detriment of his two businesses. By his efforts alone the BRC in London were persuaded to keep the bread bureau in Copenhagen open in 1917 after they had decided it was to be closed down.

Other members of the original committee were: Lady Paget wife of the British Minister was its President, Mrs Picton-Warlow who came out from Britain to set it up, Mr Slade who was to be the Director, Reverend Kennedy the chaplain to the legation, Pastor Storm the chaplain to the Citadel church in Copenhagen, two Danish business men Messrs Jarl and Olsen, Robert Erksine the British consul, and a member of the legation to be chosen by Lady Paget.

⁴⁸ Arthur Mayne had retired from the Indian civil service by 1916. He is described by Percy Brown in *Germany in Dissolution* (London: Andrew Melrose Ltd., 1920) as a retired Indian judge. He could speak both French and German. The BRC reports contain descriptions of the working of the Bread Bureau in Copenhagen. There are reports also in the March issue of BRC magazine 'The Prisoner of War'.

⁴⁹ Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England *Reports by the Joint War Committee and the Joint War Finance Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England on voluntary aid rendered to the sick and wounded at home and abroad and to British prisoners of war 1914-1919* (London: HMSO, 1921) pp562-565

⁵⁰ Abrahamson's private family archive - suggests that Dr Schairer, head of the GRC in Copenhagen, had worked with the BRC to ease the lot of British prisoners in Germany and look into reports of mis-treatment. The Danish Red Cross had to handle all BRC parcels passing through Denmark.

Genesis of the Danish Scheme

Dix describes how, as the war was coming to an end, he began to consider the situation of the British POWs. He realised that given the condition of the German railways and the great shortage of Allied shipping, Danish passenger ships and friendly feelings might be put to good use.⁵¹ Dix's first discussions were with Mr Cold, director of the United Shipping Company, whom he found very willing to help.⁵² Knowing it was possible to charter a number of passenger ships which could transport men from the Baltic ports to Copenhagen, Dix began to develop his plan during discussions with Wade and Kilmarnock at the legation. He sought information from Abrahamson about the numbers and whereabouts of the British POWs. Abrahamson took up Dix's idea immediately and started making his own suggestions about how the DRC could be of assistance, what could be asked of the Danish authorities and how they could be approached. Prior to the Armistice a meeting was held between members of the legation, Abrahamson and Mayne at which DRC members were present. Then after broaching the topic with the POWD Dix started detailed discussions with Cold about the number of ships which could be chartered and how they were to be fitted up. It was arranged that six ships would be run by the company with the sailing directions issued by Dix. A scale of rations was worked out which included a bottle of beer a day for each POW.⁵³ The victualling was to be done by the company

⁵¹ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p399

⁵² A.C. Bell *A History of The Blockade of Germany and of the countries associated with her in the Great War Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey 1914-1918* (Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence, 1937) Mr Cold's shipping interests had been affected by the changes in regulations during the blockade with large amounts of goods being held up in British ports. Although referred to in most documents as the United Shipping Company it is more commonly known as DFDS.

⁵³ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p400

without profit.⁵⁴ By 07 November Dix was able to inform the POWD that he had also been offered the use of two large ships by Mr Andersen of the East Asiatic line.⁵⁵

Dix realised that success of the scheme would depend on close liaison between those working in Denmark and the German War Office. He looked for a volunteer to go to Berlin to help make arrangements for the care of British prisoners as they travelled from the camps to the ports. This involved ensuring supplies of food and warm clothing, especially underclothes and overcoats, were taken into Germany and distributed to camps and staging posts on the routes to the Baltic ports. Professor Mygind volunteered to travel to Germany but it was decided that both Abrahamson and Mayne would go to Berlin and base themselves in one of the DRC offices there.⁵⁶ They did not travel until clearance for them to go into Germany was given by the TSICPOW. Permission to travel into Germany was obtained from the German ambassador in Copenhagen. Kilmarnock provided Abrahamson with a letter of authorisation which spelt out his task. He was 'to proceed to Germany to make the best possible arrangements with German authorities towards the early repatriation of British prisoners of war in that country by way of German ports of Danzig, Sassnitz and Warnemunde.'⁵⁷ There followed a list of points described as orders and instructions for guidance. On arrival in Berlin they were to communicate with the Dutch Legation and work with their official as far as was expedient. Any American POWs found in the camps being cleared were to be included in the arrangements. The

⁵⁴ TNA FO 383/ 471 telegram numbered 3343 from Dix dated 12 November

⁵⁵ H.N. Andersen was well known in court and FO circles in London as he was advisor to and unofficial ambassador of King Christian X. He had travelled to London on a number of occasions during the war. These two ships became known to the British as the *Russ* and *Mitau* although during the chartering process they are usually referred to as *Russia* and *Burma*. Both needed repairs before they would be fit for use.

⁵⁶ Professor Holger Mygind was an eminent doctor. He was married to an Englishwoman, Annie Mygind who was an honorary secretary to the BRC committee in Copenhagen. By November 1918 Professor Mygind was on the committee of the DRC and a member of the BRC in Copenhagen.

⁵⁷ Abrahamson's private family archive contains the transcript of the letter from Kilmarnock to Abrahamson setting out their task and giving authorisation.

organisation in Germany was to be in the hands of Abrahamson who could delegate authority to Mayne as he saw fit. Ships were not to leave the German ports until full, unless otherwise desirable and not more than five to ten percent of each shipload should be officers. With such guidance and 1000kgs of food in their luggage Abrahamson and Mayne, along with Miss Gulstad, Abrahamson's secretary, left for Berlin on 18 November.⁵⁸

British Red Cross (BRC) Copenhagen Ambulance Section

Professor Mygind was asked to provide doctors and nurses for the Scheme's chartered ships. Thus the BRC Copenhagen Ambulance Section came into being.⁵⁹ Advertisements for doctors and nurses were placed in Danish newspapers and even though the influenza epidemic was at its height, hundreds of volunteers were forthcoming. After appointing thirty eight doctors and sixty four nurses, other suitable applicants were placed on a reserve list.⁶⁰ Many of those engaged had done Red Cross work earlier in the war, some working in the lazaret camps in Denmark, some elsewhere in Europe and Russia.⁶¹ The volunteers seem to have had a keen sense of adventure and have felt they were taking part in a unique historical event. Most took leave of absence from their daily work. One such was Dr Abrahamsen, who after helping Mygind decide which applicants to accept, and what equipment was required on each of the ships, then had to requisition the medical supplies, much of which was initially loaned from the Danish army. As senior surgeon on the *Russ*, he then had to organise the 'hospital area' and facilities

⁵⁸ Abrahamson's private family archive. they were accompanied by Dr Schairer, head of the GRC in Copenhagen.

⁵⁹ I have found no mention of this organisation in the BRC reports, but they did have their own letter headed stationery.

⁶⁰ The maximum numbers engaged were 44 doctors and 77 nurses. Payment ranged from thirty five shillings per day for the most senior medical men to nine shillings and sixpence for the nurses. Amounts of between three and six hundred pounds was guaranteed to be paid in the event of death or injury from accidents or mines.

⁶¹ In 1916 Denmark, at the request of the ICRC, built two lazaret camps. Ready in 1917 they were occupied until mid 1918 by sick and injured soldiers. Those of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies were accommodated in Hald, near Aarhus and those of the Russian army at Horserød, in North Zealand. All the belligerent nations had been offered these facilities. Britain had turned the offer down saying they had sufficient capacity for sick and injured POWs in Switzerland. see TNA FO 383/243.

on his own ship.⁶² The first ships of the scheme to sail were the *Dronning Maud* and *Kong Haakon*; they left Copenhagen on 21 November for Sassnitz to pick up POWs from Ruhleben. Cecilie Lütken, a senior Danish army nurse, was on this first trip. On return to Copenhagen she transferred with the POWs onto the modern trans-atlantic liner *Frederik VIII* of which she was to be the matron. These were the first POWs evacuated from Germany and shipped by the Danish Scheme to land in Britain, at Hull on 27 November. *Frederik VIII* made three more voyages between Copenhagen and Hull.⁶³ All other ships of the Danish Scheme which sailed to the UK disembarked their passengers at Leith.

The Danish Government and the Danish Committee for the Repatriation of Prisoners of War

Dix writes that Paget arranged for him to speak to Hr. Erik Scavenius, the Danish foreign minister. He explained his scheme and that he believed it would be desirable to allow the POWs to stay for a few days in Denmark where they could be fed and kitted up before recommencing their journey back to Britain. Dix records that Scavenius was more than helpful and immediately arranged for three Danish army camps to be put at the disposal of the scheme, ‘absolutely and for as long as I wanted them.’⁶⁴ The Danish government established a committee under the Justice ministry to deal with all Danish government matters in connection with the scheme. This ‘Danish Committee’ was in existence by the end of November.⁶⁵ The Danish Committee were called upon to do and provide a wide variety of

⁶² Abrahamsen’s private family archive - Letters & diaries of Dr Abrahamsen and the diary of his wife Karen Abrahamsen. They also give a description of how the Russ was transformed.

⁶³ C. Lütken *Livserindringer og Rejseoplevelser* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busch, 1944) This book of her life memoirs and travel adventures was written towards the end of her life but as it is based on diaries it has proved to be accurate in such details as the dates of sailings.

⁶⁴ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography pp400-401.

⁶⁵ It was headed jointly by Dr Thorvald Madsen and Commander Gotschalk. Dr Madsen was the director of Serum Institute in Copenhagen and the officer of health for the city. Commander Gotschalk was a retired army officer. Their office was situated a couple of minutes walk from the British Legation office.

things.⁶⁶ Initially the Danish authorities seem to have responded positively to every request and suggestion made of them.

British Military Repatriation Office (BMRO)

Dix was over optimistic in believing that the staff at the legation would be sufficient to run the scheme, more manpower was soon needed. The Admiralty had responded quickly, getting a Divisional Naval Transport Officer (DNTO) and his team, and a hospital ship to Copenhagen by the 23 November.⁶⁷ At some point two Army officers had arrived from the UK with NCOs to handle supplies and ordnance. Wade applied, unsuccessfully, to the WO for a senior administrative officer to be sent from the UK to organise a staff in the repatriation office. It had been decided to separate off the repatriation work from that of the legation. The British Military Repatriation Office (BRMO) was created and housed in a separate building. Major C.J. Hazard, a returning POW, volunteered to stay in Copenhagen to help.⁶⁸ Hazard took over the day to day administration from Wade. As the extra staff requested from the WO were not sent the majority of those working in the BMRO were returning POW officers. Nine volunteers, officer POWs from Holzminden camp were sent to Copenhagen at the end of November. Most were deployed as Senior British officers (SBO) in the Danish rest camps. On 03 December Wade

⁶⁶ Rigsarkivet 1253 Statens Krigfangelejr Kt. for Hjemsendelse af fremmede tropper 1918-1920 Korrespondence Boxes 32 and 33 contain a wealth of detail about the setting up of the camps and the work of the Danish Committee which was asked to loan army rations, clothing, benzene, motor trucks and motor cycles; open up and staff the two lazaret camps, Hald and Horserød; provide extra telephones so the British in the rest camps could be in contact with the Copenhagen office; provide train passes to allow POWs to visit Copenhagen; organise a system to allow officers to cash cheques; provide English speaking officers for the camps, and so on.

⁶⁷ TNA FO 383/489 Captain Crawford wrote a report on his work as DNTO in Copenhagen, dated 18 January 1919. He explained that he did not interfere in any way with the existing scheme which was using the chartered vessels but instead endeavoured to fit the British transports and hospital ships into that scheme.

⁶⁸ Major C.J. Hazard was an early returning POW who got off a boat bound for the UK and volunteered to assist the scheme. Wade sent a telegram requesting he be given GSO2 rank. He was promoted and appointed Officer Commanding British Troops in Denmark. The London Gazette supplement 20 March 1919 p3734 shows Temp. Major C.J. Hazard being promoted from 10 December 1918 'whilst specially employed' and in the supplement 29 March 1919 p4141 that he was reverted to Temp. Major 'on ceasing to be specially employed' on 16 February 1919.

asked for fourteen more. In the middle of December Wade sent a number of increasingly urgent telegrams to the Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) asking why no response had been made to his earlier requests and asking again for specialist Army officers. He needed more doctors for the camps, a financial expert or paymaster to deal with the division of expenses with the French and other administrative staff.⁶⁹

Rest Camps in Denmark

Dix stated that it had always been his intention that the military POWs would be given the chance to rest in Denmark before the final part of their journey home. 'I determined that our men should go home looking like soldiers and feeling that their government had gone out of its way to look after them.'⁷⁰ Discussions with the Danish WO had indicated that 4000 POWs could be accommodated, in fully equipped camps.⁷¹ These were army camps, some of which had been constructed during the war as part of the defence arrangements against German invasion.⁷² The Danish Government agreed to the proposal in principle but offered only 2,800 places immediately. The camps were to remain under Danish army administration but British officers would be provided for each camp. Having gained this degree of assistance from the Danish government Kilmarnock was asked to convey the British government's thanks and endeavour to obtain more places. The situation was soon made much more

⁶⁹ TNA FO 383/385 ?? telegram from Military Attaché sent to the DMI on 15 December. He added 'we are working with improvised staff consisting of young regimental officers on their way home from Germany.'

⁷⁰ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p403

⁷¹ TNA FO 383/384 telegram from Kilmarnock to FO/POWD on 28 November. This also stated that the Danish government's had yet to agree but were discussing it today. Danish army personnel billeted in these camps had first to be found accommodation elsewhere. It was also agreed that the Danish government would supply bedding and fuel to begin with, which would be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

⁷² K. Becker-Larsen, *Tunestillingen: Feltbefæstningen fra Roskilde fjord til Køge bugt* (Roskilde, Roskilde Museums Forlag, 1986);

M.H. Clemmesen, *The Danish Armed Forces 1909-1918: Between Politicians and Strategic Reality* (Copenhagen –from author's web site)

difficult by the decision to allow the organisation to assist in the repatriation of allied POWs.⁷³ Kilmarnock approached Scavenius on 04 December to ask if it was possible to increase accommodation capacity to 10,000. He also asked for accommodation for 800 officers, suggesting they could invite offers of hospitality from Danish families who would take two or three officers each into their homes.⁷⁴ Despite the number of offers from Danes to accommodate small groups of officers, the Danish authorities never permitted it. Instead officer accommodation was found in some of the large hotels situated on the East and North coast of Zealand which had closed for the winter. Wade asked the British military attaché in Sweden whether accommodation could be found in army camps in southern Sweden.⁷⁵ Accommodation in the barrack ship *Fyen* was offered and accepted.⁷⁶ Kilmarnock reported when having to repeatedly request more accommodation from the Danes that their response increasingly was to ask why more ships were not sent.

Operation of the Scheme

Dix himself controlled the movements of the chartered ships, the DNTO the transports and hospital ships. The *Russ* and *Mitau* each made four voyages evacuating POWs from Danzig. Other Danish ships made this direct voyage from Danzig to Leith when required.⁷⁷ Sassnitz was only used for those first trips which brought out the Ruhleben internees. Thereafter *Dronning Maud* and *Kong Haakon*, worked

⁷³ This was done unwillingly and against the advice of most participants as it was realised that it would result in delays in getting British POWs home. The French accepted that The Danish Scheme would expand to handle French POWs and that costs would be split. Dix initially chartered two Danish ships for the French, *St Croix* and *St Thomas*, to work as Baltic feeders. Later the French looked into the possibility of chartering Swedish vessels.

⁷⁴ Rigsarkivet Foreign office box UM 6 U 186

⁷⁵ On 06 December the Swedes offered Ljungbyed camp near Helsingborg which would accommodate 2000 and would be ready in ten days. This was to be run by the Swedish army, but supplied from Copenhagen

⁷⁶ E. Wessel, *Orlogsminder – Skildringer og Skitser fra danske Orlogstoger 1878-1919* (Copenhagen: V Pois Boghandel, 1926). The *Fyen* could accommodate over 600 men, but unfortunately the POWs had to sleep in hammocks. Nevertheless she sheltered hundreds of POWs in the six weeks she was occupied.

⁷⁷ The Danish government did not want POWs evacuated from Danzig to be brought to Denmark as there were cases of dysentery in the East German camps

together taking POWs from Stettin. Extra ships were chartered and used as Baltic feeders. Evacuation was later started from Warnemünde, the port of Rostock, and Lübeck. The voyage through the Baltic waters was not without danger as both German and Danish minefields had been laid in 1914. There were also minefields to the north of Jutland, in the Skagerrak, and it was not unusual for passengers on the journey back to the UK to see free-floating mines. To minimise the risk, ships sailed in the vicinity of the minefields only during daylight and when the seas were relatively calm. The whole task was made more difficult by the unpredictable wintry weather which could severely affect the arrival and departure of ships.

The scheme's busiest period was the five weeks beginning 04 December. There were thirteen chartered Danish ships bringing POWs out of the Baltic ports, some travelling to Copenhagen some to Leith. Eventually five British transport vessels were added to the Copenhagen Leith route. Appendix 3 shows details of the vessels involved. *Frederik VIII* sailed between Copenhagen and Hull. There were eight rest camps in use in Denmark one of which was used exclusively for French POWs, and one in Sweden, as well as a barrack ship, more than a dozen hotels, a stationary hospital ship, and three mobile ambulance ships. The medical staff onboard the Baltic feeders identified those who needed hospital treatment and these men were placed in one of three hospitals in Copenhagen or transferred to a hospital ship.⁷⁸ Most arrivals were disembarked at Frihavn in Copenhagen and travelled to their

⁷⁸ Less serious cases were placed in the improvised hospital ship the *Reval*. The *Formosa*, an ambulance transport, was used to carry sick and badly injured POWs back to the UK. Two more hospital ships *Western Australia* and *Garth Castle* were added to the scheme later and each made one trip back to the UK with patients. Later the hospital ship *Berbice* was used as a feeder ship in the Baltic. POWs who died during the voyage to Copenhagen, or whilst in Denmark were buried in the Vestre Kirkegaard. Some of those who died during the voyage from Denmark to the UK were buried at sea.

camps by rail.⁷⁹ Men usually spent between two and six days in the camps, and were evacuated for home in turn, having had the opportunity to become clean, have medical attention, be re-clothed and fed regular and substantial meals. Hazard became responsible for the distribution of the POWs to the Danish rest camps and then to the ships that would carry them back to the UK. He was assisted by Captain Davidsen who was employed as railway transport officer, and a growing number of volunteers.⁸⁰ One cannot be other than very impressed at what was achieved by this adhoc collection of men and women, given the complex choreography that was required.

The peak British occupancy of the Danish rest camps occurred between 19 and 22 December. On 17 December Wade told the DMI they must have more ships to get POWs out of Germany more quickly and suggested naval vessels be used if necessary.⁸¹ The Admiralty would not move from its previously stated position; that it had been tried before and was unsuccessful as there was insufficient accommodation on board warships for extra men.⁸² The Admiralty also refused to allow British POWs to be repatriated on German ships, as some of the French were. The MoS responded to the appeals for more ships by switching several large transports from the Rotterdam Hull route to that of Copenhagen

⁷⁹ The camps lay up to 4.5 miles from the nearest railway station, a formidable distance for a march in wintry weather for those who were inadequately clothed and under nourished. Those arriving at Frihavn late in the day would often be housed in sheds on the quay overnight.

⁸⁰ Captain Davidsen was a Danish army officer who was employed by the British. The WO objected to this and the situation was resolved by him temporarily leaving the Danish army for the duration of this work.

⁸¹ TNA FO 383/475 Alarmed at Kilmarnock's warnings of the increasingly urgent situation, Cave wrote to the Admiralty insisting that naval vessels be used to embark POWs from the Baltic ports. The Admiralty's reply was adamant, warships would not be so used as they were exceedingly unsuitable for carrying passengers.

⁸² There is evidence that this ruling was broken twice. *HMS Coventry* took 500 POWs from Stettin on 20 December (IWM 83/5/1 Lieutenant Colonel E.C. De Renzy Martin), and *HMS Concord* and *HMS Wessex* took over 500 POWs from Danzig on Christmas day when there were no Danish ships expected and food supplies on land were inadequate (IWM 83/50/1 Corporal C.E. Green).

Leith.⁸³ Supplies from the UK never kept up with demand and throughout the period Wade had to repeatedly ask the WO for more.

Critical Period

The condition of some of the POWs coming out of the North Eastern German camps was causing concern. Unrest amongst POWs across Germany was increasing and the ability to supply the camps with food was becoming more difficult. All the allies wanted their POWs out of Germany as soon as possible, many of whom were in a worse plight than the British and were pushing to use the scheme's organisation and ships. British requirements had continued to escalate and requests were made of the Danish government with increasing force and urgency. More shipping, food, quarters and railway rolling stock were required. Wade wrote a strongly worded letter in which he criticized the Danish officials for their obstruction. He said he realised that the Danish government could not agree without inconvenience to themselves but felt they should share the sacrifices that the rest of the world had been making for the last four years. Kilmarnock forwarded Wade's despatch to Balfour on 16 December, adding his own views. He agreed that the Danish government could do more, and that the British government would have to apply pressure in some way. He suggests this may be done either by relaxing some of the blockade restrictions or offering a prompt supply of coal. They both believed the problem was with the bureaucrats and that goodwill towards the British was still felt by the Danish people.⁸⁴

⁸³ Four large transports, *Willochra*, *Porto*, *Ajax* and *Plassy* which each could carry between four and six times the numbers the smallest Danish steamers soon eased the problem. The *Huntsend* joined them later. Increasingly the vacated spaces in the Danish camps were taken by French, Italian, Belgian, Serb, Rumanian and Portuguese POWs.

⁸⁴ TNA FO 383/385 despatch from Wade dated 13 December and covering letter from Kilmarnock dated 16 December addressed to Balfour. As a result of this the Danish minister in London H. de Grevenkop Castenskiold was consulted.

The Danish People

The movement of thousands of British POWs around Denmark did not go unnoticed by the Danish people. They watched the ships arrive and leave from Frihavn in Copenhagen and cheered. They collected at the railway stations closest to the rest camps and choirs sang a greeting. When some of the less able POWs were unable to march the couple of miles to camp they found transport for them. They formed committees in the towns near the camps and invited groups of Tommies to parties which often included a film show, a talk, some singing, some dancing and food. They invited donations of literature and cigarettes for the men. Others organised guided tours around historic Roskilde. Soldiers clubs were set up in Copenhagen where Tommies could drink tea, read newspapers, magazines and books, or write letters and postcards home. The local Salvation Army band provided entertainment. They were invited into the Parliament building to look around and take tea. The BMRO asked permission of the Danish Committee to send a group of thirty NCOs to Copenhagen to act as military policemen. There were no recorded problems. One POW has left a record of a visit he and a fellow guardsmen were asked to make, to the home of a field marshal's widow and children.⁸⁵ The cult of the Tommy was established, sketches by the popular cartoonist Storm P. reflect this. A period of quarantine before the POWs were allowed to mingle with the populace does not always seem to have been strictly applied. It was soon realised that the medical staff on the ships were effective in identifying the sick and sending them to hospital accommodation. Also the men were bathed and given a complete set of clean clothes, as soon after landing in Denmark as possible.⁸⁶ The POWs who were sent to Hald probably saw the least of

⁸⁵ IWM 83/50/1 Corporal C.E. Green was a regular soldier, 1 Scots Guards, who had been captured in October 1914. The archive contains both a manuscript and typed version of his diary. He states that a British Officer in Sandholm camp sent 5 of them (3 were guardsmen) out in two groups 'to entertain civilians on the war.' They travelled by train to the nearby town and had a 'splendid time'. The visit proved so successful they were invited back the following day to meet another group of Danes, and stayed overnight at their home.

⁸⁶ Rigsarkivet 1253 Statens Krigfangelejr Kt. for Hjemsendelse af fremmede tropper 1918-1920 Korrespondence Boxes 32 and 33 A sanitation report was produced by a RAMC officer and Hazard commented 'I agree with the report in theory, but

Denmark and the Danes. The closest town, Viborg, was out of bounds due to the severity of the influenza epidemic in the town. Dix records the British POWs response to their stay in Denmark: ‘So happy and comfortable did the Danes make them feel that it was with difficulty that we persuaded some of the younger officers into ships when homeward bound, and the other ranks also were loud in their praise of Danish kindness and hospitality.’⁸⁷

The winding up of the Danish Scheme

By 13 January all British POWs had been cleared from the Danish rest camps and hospitals and it remained for the staff of volunteers to leave. Naturally the legation staff wanted to thank the Danes for their efforts and the assistant military attaché requested funds to provide a dinner for a hundred Danes who had been most closely involved. The Army Council refused the request and Lord Newton suggested letters of thanks might suffice. In the event King George V sent a message of thanks to King Christian X.⁸⁸ The party at the legation went ahead anyway and it was reported to be a glittering event.⁸⁹ The repatriation of French and other Allied POWs was ongoing and the Danish camps were taken over by them.⁹⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Wade was sent on a mission to Poland towards the end of December. Captain Dix was awarded the CMG in February 1919 and resigned from the Navy later in the year, taking a job in Denmark with a Danish firm. The volunteer staff returned to Britain and underwent the final phase of the repatriation experience. Lord Kilmarnock was awarded the CMG in

am of the opinion that if the delousing of any man is going to delay their transfer home, it is better for them to go lousy. It is a question of Lives vs. Lice.’ A building was erected on Frihaven to provide disinfection facilities.

TNA FO383/489 Captain Crawford calls the baths a ‘de-lousing’ station which could deal with 300 men per hour. It was completed four days before the last British transport sailed.

⁸⁷ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p404

⁸⁸ TNA FO 383/527 contains copies of these communications

⁸⁹ Politiken 18 January p5. There is a report of the dinner and reception which included members of the Danish royal family and diplomats from many nations. The report ends with the thought that to see some of the old pre war traditions reappearing made the end of the war seem more real.

⁹⁰ 2,500 complete sets of clothing and 50-10,000 rations were passed over to the French repatriation office in Copenhagen

June 1919 and appointed charge d'affaires in Berlin on the UK's resumption of diplomatic relations with Germany in 1920.

CHAPTER THREE

GERMANY

The POW Situation At The Armistice

In November 1918 the Germans held approximately two and a half million POWs, just over seven percent of which were British. They were accommodated in one hundred and sixty five camps. Many of the eighty nine men's camps were stammlagers, that is, parent camps. Most of the POWs registered at these stammlagers 'were actually employed at tens of thousands of different locations throughout the nation.'⁹¹ Only those POWs who were registered at an official camp and gone through the process of making themselves known to the BRC would have been in receipt of regular Red Cross food parcels. It is now thought that as the food situation became more difficult for the German population there was a greater tendency for a proportion of parcels not to reach their intended destination.⁹² Almost all camps containing British POWs had a Help Committee, who were in communication with the BRC. This made it easier to provide each camp with a number of emergency parcels which provided a buffer when supplies of privately addressed parcels failed. After the Armistice the TSICPOW recognised that keeping POWs supplied with food was of the utmost importance and started sending supplies to Rotterdam, Copenhagen and Berne. This was to be used for POWs returning via those countries and for BRC officials to transport into Germany when possible.

⁹¹ R.B. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (London: Greenwood Press, 1990) pp 75-76 At least 630,000 prisoners were employed in agriculture, and 340,000 in industry and trade.

⁹² Heather Jones 'The Enemy Disarmed. Western Front Prisoners of War and the Violence of Wartime, Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920' (Trinity College, Dublin, PhD thesis, 2006)

The Political/Military Situation

The progressive coalition government of Prince Max of Baden which had sought peace in October 1918 was replaced during the Armistice negotiations by a social democrat government headed by Friedrich Ebert in which the Workers', Sailors' and Soldiers' Councils played an increasingly powerful role.⁹³ These revolutionary councils were powerful at a local level also, taking over a policing role in some places, controlling transport and access to the POWs camps. At this stage few disinterested reports reached the British FO of what was happening in Germany and a distorted picture was received by those in Britain and Spa. Amongst the politicians, civil servants and the military based in the UK the fear of Bolshevism was a recurring theme. Expectation of trouble in the Baltic ports led to naval warships being sent to observe and intervene if necessary.

The German POW Camps

In some camps POWs were able to follow the news and eagerly anticipate the end of the war, in others they did not hear of it until well after the Armistice. The revolution and appearance of men from the Soldiers' and Workmen's councils often led the camp guards to usurp the authority of the camp commandant. In some of the camps to the west of the Rhine prisoners were allowed to leave and many made their way to the Dutch border. On 13 November the BRC in Copenhagen asked the DRC in Berlin to place a message in German newspapers for the attention of British POWs. It was that the German WO had been instructed to hasten all food consignments to camps and that necessary steps for

⁹³ D Newton, *British Policy and the Weimar Republic, 1918-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) The term 'October Constitution' relates to the constitutional changes introduced at the end of October.

early repatriation were being taken; unauthorised straggling would lead to hardship and delay.⁹⁴ Most POWs working in mines were asked to continue working after the Armistice. In some camps violence was threatened to enforce this, in others a refusal was unwillingly accepted.⁹⁵ As the weeks passed with no sign of imminent release many prisoners escaped or rebelled against the work they were forced to continue. In a few camps violence broke out and prisoners were killed and injured by guards. In the basic hospitals attached to some camps men were dying in large numbers from influenza. Conditions were deteriorating rapidly. One of the DRC officers who was allocated the Magdeburg district found very variable conditions within the camps, both with regard to food supplies and the mood of the POWs themselves.⁹⁶

The Setting Up of the Repatriation Commission in Berlin

The BRC team from Copenhagen arrived in Berlin early on 19 November.⁹⁷ A period of intense activity began immediately. Abrahamson and Mayne first visited the Dutch ambassador Baron von Gevers. Abrahamson records that he had no objection to their proposed activities or to their dealing directly with the German authorities but asked them to call on M. von Rappard. The next visit was to Rappard who asked them to call on him for assistance whenever necessary. Abrahamson visited Geheimrath Eckhardt, undersecretary of state in the POW department of the WO, and a series of

⁹⁴ TNA FO 383/ tel from Kilmarnock

⁹⁵ IWM 83/50/1 Corporal C.E. Green was in a coal mine, Myslowitz Grube near Kattowitz; IWM 88/57/1 Rifleman C.R. Cockcroft was in a mine Borna Bei Leipzig attached to Chemnitz camp.

⁹⁶ Rigsarkivet Militære Personarkiver 1700 – 1997 Pakke 71 - Captain T.C. Zeilau's diary. In Quedlinburg he found the situation very bad with no food, no clothes, no canteen boxes. Often two men were sleeping in a bunk, others on the floor, no blankets with the situation likely to deteriorate as more POWs were expected to arrive. Many who had recently arrived from behind the lines had died from starvation, remainder ill in the hospital. In Gardelegen which he describes as a show camp conditions were very good, plentiful food and POWs in a good mood. His sympathies here are with camp commandant whose food is much worse than that of the British POWs.

⁹⁷ Abrahamson's private family archive - Abrahamson and Mayne were probably the first Britons to enter Germany after the war.

meetings with German administrators and politicians followed, not sought by Abrahamson but at the request of the Germans themselves.⁹⁸ Abrahamson was hopeful of getting information about the transport situation which was to be crucial to the repatriation effort. It seems however that the Germans were intent on using the visit of a British representative for their own ends. On 21 November, with the consent of Rappard, the Repatriation Commission, as they began to refer to themselves, opened its office in the British legation. They employed Captain Langfeldt, an officer who had worked in the POW department of the German WO for over three years. He proved useful in communications with camp commandants. He helped also in getting a German War Office telephone extension put into their office. Having evaluated the situation, set up the office and made arrangements for assistance from the DRC Abrahamson returned to Copenhagen to report to Dix, leaving Mayne in charge.

Danish Red Cross (DRC) in Germany

Captains Ramm and Lehrbach, Danish army officers, had been working for the DRC in Berlin since 1917. Ramm and Hr Pedersen, the secretary of the DRC, were present at the first meeting Abrahamson and Mayne had with officials of the German WO on 20 November. Abrahamson wrote to Ramm later that day asking if he could get hold of four Danish officers who would serve as representatives in the ports from which the British POWs would embark. Their duties would be to oversee the POWs as they arrived, supply them with the necessary clothing, food etc and make lists as they went onboard. Abrahamson emphasised the urgency and vouched on behalf of the English government to meet their expenses.⁹⁹ Ramm responded immediately, sending off telegrams to Captain Tuxen at the Danish WO

⁹⁸ The German ambassador to Denmark had given Abrahamson letters of introduction and had written a letter of explanation to Geheimrat Eckhardt. Dr Schairer accompanied Abrahamson and Mayne and took shorthand notes during the visits to German officials. Later this allowed Abrahamson to report full details of these meetings to Dix and Kilmarnock.

⁹⁹ Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Indkomne sager

and to Benny Dessau at the DRC central bureau. These were followed up by letters. He asked Tuxen for four English speaking officers to be sent to Berlin to participate in the work of transporting the English POWs home.¹⁰⁰ The transports were to begin in five days time, on 25 November. He reported that the English Commission was willing to pay travel expenses and insurance against death and accident. Ramm saw in Abrahamson's request a rare opportunity to assist the British, which might bring advantages to Denmark.¹⁰¹ He also saw it as very good opportunity for young Danish officers to take part in a challenging task which would require them to show authority and develop negotiating skills.¹⁰² The initial group of Danish officers arrived within days of the request being made. A request for a further three officers was passed on by Ramm on 30 November and another for three more on 06 December. They were needed because conditions were proving to be more difficult than expected and travel between camps by railway almost impossible.¹⁰³ In all, fourteen Danish army officers worked for the DRC in Germany helping the British repatriation effort. On arrival in Berlin the officers were briefed by Mayne and allocated a district containing a number of camps for which they were to be responsible. If the district contained one of the evacuation ports then they became embarkation officers,

¹⁰⁰ It is not completely clear whether these officers stayed on the Danish Army's active list during this period, and in receipt of their army pay. It appears from Captain T.C. Zeilau's diary that he was ordered to Berlin, he did not volunteer.

¹⁰¹ B. Zalewski, "Den nærsynede barmhjertighed": Dansk Røde Kors' rolle i dansk udenrigspolitik 1876-1945, set i forhold til Røde Kors' principper om neutralitet, upartiskhed og uafhængighed. (Ph.D, Afhandling, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Historie, 1997). Dr Zalewski examined the relationship between Denmark and the Danish Red Cross and whilst not finding the situation unique to Denmark remarks that the DRC has never tried to carry out an action that was not in accordance with state interestsone of the main motivations for acting during the period 1876-1945 has been the honour of the nation.

¹⁰² Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Kopier af udgåede brever 51 - A letter to Tuxen on 23 November confirms that the request has been accepted. Ramm sent Captain Hjorth a Danish officer in Berlin working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to Sassnitz to help with the first shipment.

¹⁰³ Ramm emphasised that he would rather have fewer officers sent to him if there were insufficient suitable candidates rather than take inferior candidates. He wanted officers who could speak both English and German. In fact all the officers used were captains, often quite senior ones. The rank of captain in the Danish army was slightly more senior than its equivalent in the British army as at the time the Danish Army had no rank of Major.

as well as being responsible for monitoring conditions and facilitating the supply of food and clothing to British POWs.¹⁰⁴ See Appendix 4 – Organisations.

Danish Scheme in Action in Germany

Dix decided to clear Ruhleben camp first.¹⁰⁵ Most of the civilian POWs would have been interned for over four years and its closeness to Berlin made it more accessible than most.¹⁰⁶ Mayne became the manager of the repatriation office in Berlin as Abrahamson found he needed to travel between Copenhagen and Berlin on a number of occasions. On 02 December Ramm reports much activity in the English commission, there being five ladies in action as well as Langfeldt and one English officer.¹⁰⁷ By the time Ewart arrived in the middle of December there were at least six released POW officers working in the office.¹⁰⁸ The BRC repatriation office worked with the German WO to produce a plan of evacuation. A notice was sent to the camps involved which showed which army corps areas were to be evacuated from which ports.¹⁰⁹ It was found that visits to the camps were necessary to monitor food stocks and morale, as the telephone link only put them in contact with the German staff. The conditions

¹⁰⁴ Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Ramm/Dessau communications;

Rigsarkivet Militære Personarkiver 1700 – 1997 Pakke 71 - Captain T.C. Zeilau's diary. T.C. Zeilau was one of second batch of Danish army officers sent to Berlin. He was informed on 01 December, was in Berlin on 05 December. He does not appear to have realised he was to work for the BRC until he was briefed by Mayne on 06 December.

¹⁰⁵ IWM PP/MCR/427 Commander C.C. Dix RN unpublished autobiography p 403 Ruhleben camp was unique in holding only British civilians.

¹⁰⁶ J. Powell, & F.H. Gribble, *The History of Ruhleben: A Record of British Organisation in a Prison Camp in Germany* (London: Collins, 1919) is an account written jointly by the camp captain and another internee. It states that 'knowing the ropes and knowing the people with whom we had to deal, and being helped, with consistent efficiency, by the British section of the Dutch legation, we had no need to lean upon the representatives of the British Red Cross of Copenhagen, who came to Berlin to co-operate with us.' Little did they realise that the ships that took them from the port of Sassnitz were organised and operated by the Danish Scheme of which those BRC representatives were part.

¹⁰⁷ Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Ramm's letter to Pedersen. The officer, we learn from Captain Zeilau was a volunteer, Captain Young, a released POW.

¹⁰⁸ IWM 73/88/1 Major General R. H. Ewart's papers. Newton's description of the set up in Germany is wrong when he attributes the set up and staffing of the office to Ewart.

¹⁰⁹ Rigsarkivet 10001b Dansk Røde Kors Berlin – Kondoret 1917 – 1919 Indkomme Sage 58. The notice must have been drawn up in the first days of December after sailings had started from Danzig and Stettin and before they started from Warnemunde and elsewhere. The disagreement with Rappard may have arisen over those areas included in this document which do not fall into the category East of the Elbe, i.e. some of army corps IV, X, XI and VII.

the DRC representatives found varied widely, even within one district, for a number of reasons. When necessary they could order Red Cross food supplies be sent to a camp, and they reported problems to Mayne. Travelling by train in Germany had become almost impossible; one of the Danish officers commented that he expected only to be able to visit three of his allocated thirteen camps in ten days.¹¹⁰ There was a constant danger of violence and revolt within the camps. A disturbance in Langensalza led to guards firing on POWs, killing and injuring a number.¹¹¹ On one occasion the German WO asked Mayne to help prevent a mutiny at Cottbus camp, which was discovered to be due to problems with food supplies. Mayne invited camp Help Committee members to Berlin to explain the actions being taken on their behalf and he requested British officer POW volunteers to go to the men's camps to instil a degree of order. Other British officers who volunteered were sent to Copenhagen to help both in the rest camps and in the BMRO.¹¹²

British POWs were usually evacuated from the camps in groups of several hundred. The SBO or Help committee would be told when a number should be ready to leave. It was usual for the POWs who had been imprisoned the longest to be chosen first, but this did not always happen. Often the designated time would come and go without anything happening and another date and time would be given. This could happen a number of times and added to the POWs discomfort and frustration. The journey itself was often a great trial. Evacuation from the mining areas around Chemnitz, in Saxony and to the south

¹¹⁰ Rigsarkivet Militære Personarkiver 1700 – 1997 Pakke 71 - Captain T.C. Zeilau's diary.

¹¹¹ Rigsarkivet 10001b Dansk Røde Kors Centralbureauet 1917 – 1924 Ramm in a letter to Pedersen dated 30 November stated that there had been a large row yesterday at Lagensalza in which nine prisoners had been shot, three of them English and one American.

¹¹² Rigsarkivet 10001b Dansk Røde Kors Centralbureauet 1917 -1924 - On 30 November Mayne asked the Danes to provide passports for nine officers and their orderlies who were to travel to Denmark where they were required to assist in managing the camps. This was expedited on this occasion, but the British were told that if more were required the correct procedure would have to be followed. It is believed that these nine named officers were all from Holzminden camp. This was not a camp to the East of the Elbe.

of Lamsdorf in Silesia involved a lengthy and difficult journey which sometimes involved day long marches and stays of several days in improvised collection camps. At many of the staging areas a few British Officers and NCOs could be found who had volunteered to stay behind to help others on their way.¹¹³ Several POWs have recorded long and uncomfortable journeys in trains with no windows which were so cold that all they could do was to lie down under their blankets.¹¹⁴

At the Baltic Ports

Normal activities in the German ports had ceased, officials had disappeared, replaced by members of the Soldiers' and Workmen's councils.¹¹⁵ Chaos and lawlessness were often experienced in nearby towns.¹¹⁶ Doctors from the Danish steamers, the hospital ships and the naval vessels were asked by the embarkation officers to visit nearby camp hospitals to examine conditions or evaluate sick POWs for fitness to travel.¹¹⁷ Getting the allocated drafts of men to the ports via the disintegrating rail system

¹¹³ IWM 83/5/1 Lieutenant Colonel E.C. De Renzy Martin - he and two others volunteered to look after Altdamm camp which became the staging camp for Stettin;

IWM 83/50/1 Corporal C.E. Green relates how Lieutenant Commander Turrill, RND was running Lamsdorf as a staging camp.

¹¹⁴ IWM 83/50/1 Corporal C.E. Green records leaving the mine near Kattowitz on 18 December by train, in cattle wagons, which then spent over nine hours going around mines in the district picking up other POWs. They then went to Lamsdorf camp. He left there on 22 December and spent 42 hours on a freezing train arriving in Danzig on 24 December. Met by naval officer who told him they were not expected and no Danish ship was due in. After a night spent in a schoolhouse these 500+ men were taken by *HMS Concord* and *HMS Wessex* to Copenhagen – some of the very few who were transported by naval vessels;

IWM 88/57/1 Rifleman C.R. Cockcroft records that he left the mine near Leipzig on 29 November, marched a full day, stayed in a collection camp for many days, leaving by train on 09 December and arriving in Stettin after a 24 hour journey, where he waited in Altdamm Camp. He sailed from Stettin on 13 December.

¹¹⁵ Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 - The confusion in Danzig is mentioned in Pedersen's letter to Ramm 24 November 1918;

C. Lütken, *Livserindringer og Rejseoplevelser* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busch, 1944) Cecilie describes the situation in Sassnitz. In the absence of dockworkers, customs officers and other officials the ship's crew had moor the ship and secure the gangway.

¹¹⁶ IWM 83/5/1 Lieutenant Colonel E.C. De Renzy Martin who worked in Altdamm from 14 December reports on 23 December that Stettin and Altdamm were getting more hostile. He suggested a warship be sent to Stettin to keep order.

¹¹⁷ TNA FO 383/491 contains the report dated 03 January 1919 written by the Surgeon Commander on the *Garth Castle* with reference to visits to sick POWs in the vicinity of Stettin. There is also a report on the camp at Altdamm written by a temporary surgeon from the same hospital ship.

became increasingly difficult. This meant the ships could be kept waiting at the ports for several days. This was worse at Danzig where there was no nearby camp that could be used as a collection centre. Altdamm camp was used as a collection camp for Stettin.¹¹⁸ Embarkation was usually an orderly affair, being accompanied by music from the bands on board the Danish ships.¹¹⁹ Later the presence of British naval vessels in the Baltic proved a huge psychological boost for POWs arriving at the ports.¹²⁰ The sailors on board gave the POWs a rousing welcome and often helped with the embarkation. Trouble was caused on a couple of occasions by officers and men from the British warships.¹²¹ Pedersen became concerned about the worsening condition of the men who were arriving at Danzig and went to Berlin on 16 December to report the matter. Arrangements were made for a number of Danish doctors and nurses of the BRC Ambulance section to be sent to the area to help the sick and wounded POWs in the camps and hospitals.

¹¹⁸ IWM 83/5/1 Lieutenant Colonel E.C. De Renzy Martin had been a POW at Stralsund but had volunteered with two junior officers to assist by taking charge of Altdamm camp. His diary covering this time contains interesting details.

¹¹⁹ Private Archive Letters & diaries of Dr Abrahamsen

¹²⁰ The effect was heightened for night time arrivals by the use of strong searchlights which were often used to light up each craft.

¹²¹ TNA FO 383/488 Guards from Crossen camp accompanied a group of 1200 POWs who travelled to Danzig on 09 December. The commander of the guards and an interpreter both wrote reports detailing the rough treatment they met at the hands of young naval officers and seamen from the three British naval vessels docked there. The complaint was sent to the German WO and forwarded to the English Commission;

IWM 86/47/1 General L. Hollis – records that on one occasion, whilst a Lieutenant of marines on board *HMS Coventry*, the sailors reacted angrily to the state of the POWs who had just arrived at the quay by rail. They found the men in a pitiful condition, with many dead and dying and took out their anger on local Germans, killing six. These memoirs were written decades after the event described here and I have found no corroborating information.

Ewart and the other Repatriation Commissioners in Berlin

A French Commission under General Dupont arrived in Berlin on 07 December.¹²² On the same day Dupont agreed with Ramm that the DRC delegates would look after the interests of the French and Belgian and well as the English and American POWs.¹²³ Major General R. Ewart arrived in Berlin on 13 December, called on the Dutch ambassador, and then visited Rappard.¹²⁴ Military representatives from the USA and Italy were already in Berlin. Ewart although in uniform was a representative of the BRC. General Dupont made him feel his role was anomalous, stating his belief that the military should organise the repatriation and the Red Cross feed the POWs.¹²⁵ Ewart was put back on the Army's active list on 09 January but the nature of his work did not change. It did, however, change his relationship with Rappard as he started reporting to the WO instead of through Agnew or Rappard to the FO/POWD.

Ewart told Agnew he thought Abrahamson and Mayne had done very good work in the matter of actual repatriation.¹²⁶ He associates himself with their efforts stating 'We were first in the field and it was a great score getting hold of Captain Langfeldt.'¹²⁷ Ewart did not interfere in any way with the work of

¹²² Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Ramm's letter to Tuxen dated 06 December

¹²³ Rigsarkivet 10001a Dansk Røde Kors Berlin-kontoret 1917 – 1919 Ramm's letter to Hjorth dated 07 December.

¹²⁴ Although Ewart had accepted the post of BRC commissioner in Berlin on 01 December he did not arrive until 13 December

¹²⁵ TNA FO 383/488 a letter dated 15 December to Agnew relates this episode. On 26 December Agnew took up the question of combatant rank on his behalf. However it was well into January before he was put back on the active list. The only difference it made was that instead of reporting direct to Agnew his reports were sent to the WO.

¹²⁶ TNA FO 383/488 Ewart's letter to Agnew is dated 15 December.

¹²⁷ IWM 73/88/1 Major General Sir Richard Ewart's Diary – an early entry throws some light on the friction between Rappard and the BRC representatives saying 'Mayne works hard but he has not the manner or tact ever to be in a position where he can be in direct communication with higher authority and particularly with foreigners. Of all people here Rappard is the one to keep in with but he must needs ignore him, and of course lost chances of valuable assistance. I do not think it was intentional – its simply that he does not understand the proper way to do these things. However he will do all right under me and I'll keep him away from Officials! and reporting Rappard's view that it was due to Abrahamson and Mayne having arrived without warning and then devoted themselves solely to Baltic ports repatriation scheme whereas he was interested in clearing all camps! Also he felt he had not been consulted enough.

the Danish Scheme. He used some of their practices in working with the camps not being evacuated by the Danish Scheme. Ewart was instrumental in setting up an effective Inter Allied Commission in Berlin with Dupont as president and Abrahamson as secretary.¹²⁸ Eventually he was able also to improve the communication between his office and the British delegates at Spa. Almost all of the British POWs had left Germany by mid January 1919. The British public's concern then turned to those designated as missing. Many were convinced that men, able bodied as well as sick, were being hidden in Germany. Ewart and his staff helped organise the search to find and remove the sick and stragglers. The Inter Allied Commission in Berlin went on to deal with the massive number of Russian POWs still in Germany and provide relief for them. Mayne, still a BRC commissioner, stayed in Berlin to work with Ewart, leaving in June 1919. Abrahamson finished his work for the Danish Scheme in Germany on 14 January. He continued his work on behalf of British POWs into the 1920s, being concerned with those held in Russia. He was awarded a KBE in March 1920.

¹²⁸ IWM 73/88/1 Major General Sir Richard Ewart's Diary - Unfortunately, at the first couple of meetings at least, the French and Italians seemed to want to discuss frivolous matters such as whether French officers should be made to salute German camp commandants.

CONCLUSION

The Danish Scheme was the idea of Captain Dix. He continued developing it despite failing to get it accepted by the POWD, the WO and the FO. When he approached 'Blinker' Hall it was accepted immediately and given the Admiralty's support. Despite the public's desire to see an early return of British POWs there was no plan for their repatriation from Germany and there was no adequate mechanism for forging a multi agency team to bring it about. The POWD and its committees were meant to supervise and coordinate action relating to British POWs, but before the Armistice they only had relatively minor issues to deal with. Sir George Cave had been made chairman of the ICPOW to settle differences between the committee members, not to take initiatives or make policy. He didn't have the personal or political power to make the WO or Admiralty chiefs do anything they weren't inclined to do and no directive came down from the War Cabinet or the Prime Minister. Once sponsored by the Admiralty the scheme started to get the support it needed from the other members of the ICPOW committee. The WO and Army were following the French line, which was to talk about the repatriation issue at Spa. Their expectation was that under direction of the Spa delegates the German authorities would remove allied prisoners from their jurisdiction and the Army would pick them up at the border and deal with them from there. Given the state of Germany at the time, the revolutionary activity, the lack of food and the disintegration of the railway system which was leading to an increase in POW deaths from starvation, lack of medical care and violence in the camps this attitude was culpable. When the scheme's effectiveness became apparent, and the French acknowledged this by their desire, despite Spa, to use the scheme's organisation and share the ships, then we have general acceptance of it as a British initiative.

In contrast to the WO position, the Danish Scheme was based on getting the POWs out of Germany as

quickly as possible. Crucially it also involved agents going into to Germany finding where the problems were and trying to address them. What Dix had realized was that one department or agency couldn't do it all. His inner team was certainly multi agency; Dix, the naval officer, Wade the Army officer, Kilmarnock the diplomat, and Abrahamson and Mayne from the BRC. They were able to call on the help and goodwill of many other people in both Denmark and Germany. Many of those who provided assistance were paid for their time and their efforts and the Danish government received recompense for the services it provided. This shouldn't detract from the assistance they gave. The acknowledgement made by the British government for the help given by the Danish government and people seems inadequate.¹²⁹ Several Danes were given recognition in the British honours system in the early 1920's.

Why The Operation Has Been Virtually Lost To History

There are two main reasons for the Danish Scheme to have been lost from history. The first being the unorthodox grouping of agents involved in the scheme. Had it been an exclusively BRC or naval, or army effort then it would have been claimed by them and recorded as such. Two of the primary agents did record something of their efforts but only much later in life. Dix's autobiography was written in the 1940s and never found a publisher and Abrahamson's attempts at an autobiography were made for private family consumption. The second main reason is the BRC's report 'Work in Berlin' which forms part of the BRC reports published in 1921. It is a strange report seemingly cobbled together from disparate snippets of information which give a very skewed picture of the work undertaken by BRC representatives in Berlin. Some of the information is plainly inaccurate. It states that Abrahamson and

¹²⁹ The Swedish government seemed to get the same level of thanks as the Danish government from the British government. It does not seem to bear any relation to the effort made on behalf of the British. The Swedish government only loaned one army camp for a few weeks.

Mayne 'were working in the bureau of the Danish Red Cross'.

The return of POWs to Britain was reported in newspapers in the UK but from the start of December the use of Denmark and the Baltic ports was reported in Press Releases as if it were just one more route, handled as the others were by the ICPOW and delegates at Spa with no information given as to the genesis of the scheme. And this must be how most of the POWs themselves saw it. British POWs whilst recording the fact of sailing in Danish ships, spending time in Copenhagen, of staying in camps in Denmark, of their reception at Leith, do not try to analyze why they were in Denmark or on Danish ships.

The BRC's jurisdiction did not extend to Scotland which had its own Red Cross charities, so there are no details in the BRC histories of the efforts that were made by the people of Leith for the reception of forty one shiploads of POWs who arrived there between 28 November 1918 and 21 January 1919. The Scotsman newspaper recorded almost every arrival and it ran pieces acknowledging the help received from the Danes, but none looked into it further.

Because Denmark was not involved in the war as a belligerent they don't have a mass of material about battles and war experiences. Memoirs of people involved in international actions during this period will necessarily be those which record experiences with the Red Cross or the returning POWs. Modern histories occasionally refer to these experiences, usually in relation to the help given to POWs of nationalities other than British. However, it has been possible to recreate many of the details of this story from archival material in Denmark. I have been able to use this resource only because my sister, who is a naturalised Dane, has been willing to translate dozens of items into English.

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74/76/1	Captain Harper
06/51/1	Lieutenant A. Hollis
83/5/1	Lieutenant Colonel E.C. De Renzy Martin
78/23/1	Lieutenant Colonel G.D.J. McMurtrie
95/85/1	Lieutenant G.D. Roberts
05/8/1	2 nd Lieutenant Rutherford
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05/80/1	C.B. Short
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APPENDIX 1

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE REPATRIATION OF POWS THROUGH DENMARK

Abrahamsen, Harald Erik Retlev, Dr. - b 1885. had worked as Medical Officer in Hald lazaret camp. Senior surgeon on *Russ*

Abrahamson, Martin Arnold - b 1870 London, family moved to Copenhagen 1884.
Engineer/businessman. trained Ludvig Lund in Denmark and Schuckert & Co in Nurnberg. Diploma – electro technical engineer from The Central Technical Institute London 1894. Started up Tvermoes and Abrahamson in 1894. Managing Director of The Industrial Trading Co Ltd in 1917 and of Tvermoes and Abrahamson Co. Ltd. in 1918.
Founder member of BRC in Copenhagen, vice president and in 1917 director. Continued work with BRC in Copenhagen in 1920s – concern for British POWs in Russia.

Adye, Sir John, Major-General – representative of the WO on the TSICPOW. Delegate at Spa conference with special responsibilities for POWs.

Agnew, P D – Vice chairman and managing director of the CPOWC of BRC.
KBE - March 1920

Anderson, H N - Director of the East Asiatic Company (ØK) Personal councillor to King Christian X. During WW1 made 24 journeys to England, France, Russia & Germany on behalf of King, the foreign minister, trade & his own company.

Balfour, Arthur James - b1848 d1930 Conservative politician, Foreign secretary 1916-19.

Belfield, Sir Herbert E., Lieutenant General - head of DPOW in the War Office

Brockdorff Rantzau, Ulrich, Count – German Minister in Copenhagen, later German foreign secretary

Cave, George Sir – 1st Viscount Cave (1856-1928) Lawyer and Conservative politician.
Solicitor-General 1915, Home Secretary 1916-19. created viscount 1918.
Chairman of the ICPOW & TSICPOW from 25 Sep 1918.

Cold, C.M.T. - b 1863, naval career to Captain, governor in W Indies 1905-08. Managing director of the United Shipping Company (DFDS) 1908-21. President of DRC 1921. Danish foreign minister 1922-24.

Crawford, C W G, Captain RN – Divisional Naval Transport Officer (DNTO) sent out to Copenhagen November 1918

Davidson, Magnus Julius Henry, Captain – b 1877 studied religious philosophy and oriental languages 1895-1900. Danish army - artillery 1902-11. travelling in orient 1911-15, rejoined Army as Captain of the reserve in 1915.
Head of internment 'camp' Bramsnæsvisg (E13 internees) Nov 1915-Feb1916
Danish legation delegate in Russia Aug 1917 – Feb 1918. Camp captain Horsørød 1918.
Nov 1918 – Jan 1919 acting as Transport Railway Officer employed by British after he took leave from Danish army. Left army 1919.

Davidson, Captain, RAMC – produced sanitary report on the handling of troops passing through Denmark, Dec 1918.

Dessau, Benny – b 1868 d 1937 Managing director United Breweries from 1899. Trained in Hamburg & London – Beckett & Meyer. Abrahamson's father was half brother of Louis Meyer & became part owner of company. Chief of Packing and Parcels department of DRC.

Dix, Charles Cabry, Captain – b 1881 Cadet RN 1896. Mentioned in dispatches for action during Boxer Rebellion 1901, published book on subject 1905. Lt Commander at start of WW1. Assistant beachmaster Galipolli, awarded DSO, wounded twice, hospital Alexandria. Operations department of Admiralty in 1916.
Acting Captain when appointed naval attaché in Copenhagen summer 1917.
Devised Danish Scheme before Armistice and controlled shipping in Baltic.
CMG - February 1919. Left Navy 1919, worked in Denmark until 1920s. Worked in various posts related to harbours in various parts of the world. Evacuated from Singapore to Australia during WW2. Wrote autobiography – unpublished.

Dupont, General – French delegate sent to Berlin after Armistice.

Eckardt, G – German politician – in late 1918 post in POW dept of German WO

Ewart, Sir Richard, Major-General – replaced Arthur Mayne as BRC representative in Berne in 1918. Sent to Berlin December 1918 as Senior BRC representative to work on repatriation with Rappard
23/04/19 recalled from post of President Inter-Allied Commission for repatriation of Russian POW at Berlin

Fransecky, von Colonel – in charge of the German Prisoner of War department

Gevers, von Baron - Netherlands ambassador to Germany in Berlin

Gotschalk, Frantz, Commander – b 1864. Danish army. Captain 1902 adjutant to King 1905-12. Commander 1913 Left army 1917. Joint commandant of the ‘Justice Ministry’s committee for the sending home of freed prisoners’

Grevenkop-Castenskiold, H. de – Danish minister in London

Gulstad, Agnes E., Miss - Mr Abrahamson’s secretary, travelled with him and Mayne from Copenhagen to Berlin November 1918, returned January 1919.

Hall, Sir W. Reginald, Rear Admiral. known as ‘Blinker’ Hall. In December 1918 he was Director of Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty

Haking, Sir Richard, Lieutenant General – chief of British delegation at Spa Conference, sent by Haig. had commanded XI Corps, staff college with Haig & spoke French well

Hardinge – 1st Baron Hardinge of Penhurst (1858-1944) Diplomat. Permanent Under secretary of state for Foreign Affairs 1906-10 and 1916-20. Viceroy of India 1910-16.

Harries, General – American Army. In Berlin offers Ewart his help

Hazard, Cecil James, Major/Lieutenant Colonel – returning POW (missing 29/3/1918 repatriated January 1919) volunteered to stay in Copenhagen to assist in repatriation when on board a homeward bound ship. Officer commanding troops in Denmark.

Holten-Nielsen, Einar, Lieutenant Colonel – b 1864 left Danish Army 1914. During war military correspondent for newspaper. employed by Abrahamson in BRC office in Copenhagen.

Hope, Mr – MP and a Lord of the Treasury. member of TSICPOW. answered questions in the House of Commons for the POWD

Jarl, Carl Frederick, Herr - b 1872 d 1951. engineer, factory owner Member of BRC Copenhagen committee. part of his factory Oresunds Chemiske Fabriken Standboulevard 84 – ‘provided premises and heating and lighting free of cost for Copenhagen Bread Bureau and generally helped in all administrative questions with the Danish government.’

Kilmarnock, Lord (Victor Alexander Sereld May) b 1876 d 1928 son of 20th Earl of Erroll 1st Secretary at British legation Copenhagen and then chargé d’affaires when Sir Ralph Paget left in 1918. He was senior British diplomat involved in repatriation through Denmark. Sent as chargé d’affaires to Berlin in 1920 and spent rest of diplomatic career in Germany. Succeeded to Earldom 1927

Langfeldt, Captain - German had worked in GWO in POW dept. for 3 years, formerly General Freidrich's (died 1918) assistant. Employed by BRC in Berlin paid 100 marks/day incl Sundays.

Lehrbach, Carlo J B, Captain – head of DRC book office concerned with supply of recreational & sporting equipment to Br pow 1917/8 then DRC repatriation office in Berlin. office at Unter den Linden.

Lunn, Christian Ditlev Ove, Captain – b 1880 delegate for DRC in Guben

Lütken, M Cecilie – Senior Danish army nurse, volunteered to work for BRC during repatriation of British POWs. Served as matron on *Frederik VIII*. Diary.

Madsen, Thorvald, Dr – b 1870/1 son of Major General VHO Madsen minister of war 1901-5. Director of Serum Institute in Copenhagen and officer of health for the city. DRC delegate to pow camps in Caucuses and Turkestan in 1916. Attended Red Cross conferences in Stockholm 1916 and Geneva in 1920. Joint commandant of the 'Justice Ministry's committee for the sending home of freed prisoners'.

Martin, Edward Cuthbert De Renzy, Lieutenant Colonel – b1883 regular officer KOYLI. Instructor 4th Army infantry school, Flixicort 1915/16. commanding 2/Lancashire Fusiliers when captured spring 1918. POW in Stralsund at Armistice. volunteered to help in repatriation task. sent to Altdamm camp worked there 17 December to 07 January. Diary.

Mayne, Arthur Mr - mathematical scholar at Cambridge, 1888 passed exam for Indian Civil Service. Several roles as assistant and deputy commissioner in various parts of India. Described as being a retired Indian judge when acting as BRC commissioner in 1918. French and German speaker. Sent out to Berne by BRC during WW1. Vice-President of the Berne Bread Bureau in 1917. Replaced by Major General R. Ewart in Berne in Sept 1918. Manager of BRC Copenhagen bureau. Accompanied Abrahamson to Berlin and acted as his deputy when he returned to Copenhagen. Fabian socialist –wrongly reported to have given a political speech to Br POWs in Berlin. Worked on with Ewart for BRC in Berlin after Danish Scheme ended. Left Germany June 1919.

Mygind, Holger, Professor – b 1855, Dr. ENT specialist. British wife, Annie. committee member of DRC and member of BRC in Copenhagen. Acted as Dix's medical advisor on Danish Scheme and set up BRC ambulance section. Provided the doctors and nurses for the chartered ships. Undertook to equip a stationary hospital ship.

Mygind, Annie, Mrs – secretary for BRC in Denmark. Wife of Prof Mygind. Head of the prisoners correspondence dept. from Feb 1917. Helped on POW ships.

Newton, Lord – 2nd Baron Newton (1857 - 1942) Diplomat and Conservative politician.
Paymaster-General 1915-16. Controller of POWD 1916-19, member of ICPOW & TSICPOW.

Nudant, General – French army, President of Inter Allied Permanent Armistice Commission, Spa

Olsen, Jens, Mr - in business with NP Pedersen. founder committee member of BRC
Copenhagen provided the bread bureau with premises and gave the assistance of his staff till the extension of the work made necessary the move to Mr Jarl's premises. He helped at the bureau daily, gave assistance from his own staff when required and did many other acts of kindness for the bureau.

Pabst/Papst, von, Major - member of German delegation at Spa Commission, responsible for POW matters.

Paget, Sir Ralph - British Minister in legation, Copenhagen, 1916 - 1918,

Paton, WW, Captain RN - HMS Concord
sent to Baltic to help in repatriation, task completed by 16/01/19

Pedersen, N P, Herr – b 1886 d 1864 Argentina. Merchant in wool, director of companies. vice consul to Uruguay some time before 1922. DRC delegate visited POW camps in England in 1918 then visited POW camps in Germany. Honorary secretary to DRC. Danish RC delegate acted as chief embarkation officer at Danzig.

Ramm, Axel, Captain – b 1870 d 1944. Danish army. adjutant to King 1912-16.
DRC delegate to German and Austrian POW camps in Russia in 1916.
Head of DRC office in Berlin Feb 1917-19, office in Victoriastrasse.
Worked closely with Abrahamson & Mayne in Berlin.
Danish representative at commission to decide Danish/German border in 1920.

Rappard von, C., Monsieur –responsible for English section of Dutch legation in Berlin. Offices in British legation building.

Schairer, Dr – manager of German Red Cross Copenhagen Bureau. accompanied Abrahamson & Mayne to Germany.

Schlesinger – German delegate of Soldiers' and Workmen's Council for all prisoner of war matters in the War Office (ex NCO in German army – guard in POW camp)

Smithers, Lieutenant – assistant military attaché in Copenhagen
Requested £400 for the celebratory dinner at close of Danish Scheme

Snouk, Mr - von Rappard's assistant in Br legation Berlin

Thompson –secretary to general Ewart – accompanied him to Berlin from Switzerland. acted as translator

Townley, W Sir – British minister at the Hague

Tuxen, Axel, Captain - Danish army. at Danish WO from 1912, corresponds with Ramm. Obtains' suitable English/German speaking Danish officers for DRC work on POW repatriation.

Vansittart, Robert, Mr – secretary of the POWD

Voules, F M, Mr - BRC commissioner in at Rotterdam Holland appt Nov 1917.

Wade, H.A.L.H., Lieutenant Colonel – military attaché to British legation in Copenhagen. An artillery officer in the regular army. Between 1903 and 1911 he qualified as a first class interpreter in French and German, graduated from the staff college and completed a course at the London School of Economics. 1908-1911 worked in WO, then retired. Early in 1915 he was back in the War Office. Appointed military attaché in Copenhagen 1916 sent on mission to Poland by 27 December 1918

Warner, G R, Mr – clerk in the POWD. secretary to ICPOW & TSICPOW.

Winterfeldt, von, Major-General - main German military representative at the Spa Commission

APPENDIX 2

GLOSSARY

BMRO	British Military Repatriation Office – in Copenhagen
BRC	Joint War Committee of British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CPOWC	BRC's Central Prisoners of War Committee
DDOD	Deputy Director of Operations Department, Admiralty
DFDS	Det Forenede Dampskibs-Selskab - United Shipping Company
DGM	Director General of Mobilisation
DGMR	Director General of Movements and Railways
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty
DNTO	Divisional Naval Transport Officer
DPOW	Directorate of Prisoners of War – department of the War Office dealing with prisoners of the British
D.P.W.	Directorate of Prisoners of War – department of the War Office dealing with prisoners of the British
DRC	Danish Red Cross
FO	Foreign Office or its equivalent in Denmark
GHQ	General Head Quarters
GRC	German Red Cross
HMG	His Majesty's Government – of Great Britain
HQ	Head Quarters
IACB	Inter-Allied Commission in Berlin
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICPOW	Interdepartmental Committee on Prisoners of War
KFUM (YMCA)	The Danish Committee for War Prisoners' Aid – through the Young Mens' Christian Association in Denmark
NA	National Archives, Kew
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OR	other ranks – non commissioned army personnel.
POW	prisoner of war
POWRC	Prisoner of War Reception Committee of the British Red Cross
POWS	prisoners of war
POWD	Prisoner of War Department – independent department that worked with the Foreign Office – dealt with British pows
SBO	Senior British Officer
TSICPOW	Transport Sub-Committee of the Interdepartmental Committee on Prisoners of War
WO	War Office and the equivalent in Denmark and Ministry of War in Germany
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ØK	East Asiatic Shipping Company

APPENDIX 3

SHIPS USED IN THE REPATRIATION OF POWS THROUGH DENMARK¹³⁹

figures enclosed in () show the passenger carrying capacity of the ships

United Steamship Company Passenger Steamers 12,442 persons brought back to UK ports

Frederick VIII	(1500)	4 voyages to Hull	5,638 persons
Primula	(330)	Baltic feeder & 5 voyages to Leith	1,613 persons
Ficaria	(320)	Baltic feeder & 5 voyages to Leith	1,617 persons
AP Bernsdorff	(600)	Baltic feeder & 4 voyages to Leith	2,175 persons
J C LaCour	(400)	Baltic feeder & 4 voyages to Leith	1,399 persons
Dronning Maud	(750)	Baltic feeder	
King Haakon	(750)	Baltic feeder	
C P A Koch	(500)	Baltic feeder	
Cimbria	(400)	Baltic feeder	
Niels Ebbesen	(300)	Baltic feeder	
Reval		Danish stationary hospital ship	

East Asiatic Company Passenger Steamers 11,076 persons brought back to UK ports

these two ships usually went direct from Danzig to Leith

Mitau	(1000)	4 voyages to Leith	4,289 persons
Russ	(1600)	3 voyages to Leith	6,787 persons
		1 voyage to Copenhagen	

Oresund Company Passenger Steamers

Malmö	(550)	Baltic feeder	
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British Transports

20,302 persons brought back to UK ports

Ajax		4 voyages to Leith	4,680 persons
Huntsend		1 voyage to Leith	2,202 persons
Plassy		2 voyages to Leith	2,823 persons
Porto		3 voyages to Leith	5,904 persons
South Western Millar		1 voyage to Leith	1,496 persons
Willochra		2 voyages to Leith	3,197 persons

¹³⁹ TNA FO 383/489 The figures are taken from the report of Captain Crawford, DNTO Copenhagen, dated 18 January. It shows the numbers carried on ships between 24 November 1918 and 16 January 1919. A copy of the report was sent by the MoS to Viscount Cave.

Hospital ships

1,622 persons brought back to UK ports

Berbice	hospital ship feeder		
Formosa	acting as hospital &	2 voyages to England	722 persons
Garth Castle		1 voyage	577 persons
Western Australia		1 voyage	323 persons

British Naval vessels which carried POWs

HMS Concord
HMS Coventry
HMS Wessex

APPENDIX 4

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE REPATRIATION OF POWS THROUGH DENMARK

BRITAIN

1. Foreign Office

Prisoner of War Department (POWD) Royal Court, House of Lords
developed out of a department of the FO and retained close association
controller/director - Lord Newton
supervision of all matters affecting British POWs, including co-ordination of the functions of several other depts., WO, Admiralty, Colonial Off etc.

2. War Office

Department of prisoners of war (DPW) headed by Lieutenant General Belfield
responsible for prisoners of British

POW Information Bureau

Dealt with prisoners of the British

Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War

Adeline, Duchess of Bedford – Honorary secretary
examiners - barristers volunteered to take statements from POWs

Mobilization Directorate

3. British Red Cross (BRCS and St John of Jerusalem Joint Committee)

Central Prisoners of War Committee (CPOWC) – P. Agnew vice-chairman and managing director

Prisoner of War Reception Committee of the CPOWC 4 Thurloe Place, London
Adeline, Duchess of Bedford - chairman

4. Inter-departmental Committee on Prisoners of War (ICPOW)

Transport Sub-committee of the ICPOW (TSICPOW) – chairman Sir George Cave
lead forum for decision making after Armistice

FRANCE/FLANDERS

1. **Inter Allied Armistice Commission at Spa** reported to Marshal Foch, headed by General Nudant. British delegates Lieutenant General Haking and Major General Adye who had special responsibility for POW issues

DENMARK

- 1. British Legation in Copenhagen, Denmark, Bredgade 26**
 - Sir Ralph Paget - minister
 - Lord Kilmarnock - 1st secretary acting as chargé d'affaires by Nov 1918
 - Lieutenant Colonel H.A.L.H. Wade British military attaché
 - Captain C.C. Dix British naval attaché

- 2. British Military Repatriation Office (BMRO) in Copenhagen, Amaliegade 22**
 - Lieutenant Colonel C.J. Hazard – Officer Commanding British Troops

- 3. British Red Cross (BRC) Copenhagen Bureau, Standboulevarden 84**
 - Lady Paget - president
 - M.A. Abrahamson - vice president, chairman and director
 - A. Mayne - manager of bread bureau
 - British Red Cross Ambulance section, Havnegade 31**
 - professor Mygind

- 4. Danish Justice Ministry (Justitsministeriet)**
 - Danish Committee** (Justitsministeriet Kontor for hjemsendelse af fremmede Tropper), Amalienborg -
 - Dr Thorvald Madsen
 - Commander Gotschalk

- 5. Danish Red Cross**
 - N.P.Pedersen - honorary secretary, acted as chief embarkation officer at Danzig
 - 1. long established section dealing with national matters. President Professor Harald Høffding
 - 2. section started during war to look after military & civilian prisoners. Hon. president – Prince Valdemar
 - 2a Book committee – President Professor Harald Høffding
 - 2b Packing and dispatch of parcels - Director B. Dessau
 - 2c Postal (letters) and tracing chief –Lieutenant Colonel V.O.J. Philipson
 - 2d Central Bureau – communications regarding foreigners interned in Denmark & from 1916 inspected prison hospitals in Germany and Austria . Helped belligerents to pick out sick POWs for Hald and Horserød. Doctors sent to POW camps in Rumania.
 - 2di DRC offices. Petrograd - E Saltoft, Vienna - Captain Fock, Berlin - Captain Ramm, Paris – Captain Hage.
 - 2dii Delegation office - recruits and pays out expenses for delegates
 - Consul - Erik S Henius

6. KFUM (YMCA) The Danish Committee for War Prisoners' Aid – through the Young_Mens' Christian Association president – Count J Moltke

soldiers' entertainment huts in soldier's camps around Copenhagen – took on English and French speaking staff.

KFUM facilities at:

Sandholm, Baggersmindelejren, Skovlejren, Ulleruplejren

GERMANY

1. Dutch Legation - protecting power

The Netherlands legation in Berlin:

Dutch minister Berlin – Baron von Gevers

British section – Monsieur von Rappard, Mr Snouk (British legation)

(communication via British minister at the Hague -Sir William Townley)

2. BRC Repatriation Commission Berlin, British Embassy Wilhelmstrasse70, Berlin

M.A. Abrahamson – manager,

A Mayne - deputy

assisted by DRC personnel in districts:

Berlin – Captain Lehrbach

Cassel – Captain O.V.F. Laub

Danzig – Hr Pedersen, Captain E.V.J. Jøhnke, Captain G. Crone

Dresden – Captain G.F.H. Harhoff

Guben – Captain C. Lunn

Hannover – Captain K.C. Zeilau

Lübeck – Captain H.L.M. Hauschild

Magdeburg – Captain T.C. Zeilau

Stettin - Captain C.J. von Stemann

Warnemünde – Captain I. Carstensen

3. Danish Red Cross in Germany see Denmark 2di above. Victoriastasse 10, Berlin

Captain A. Ramm - Central control.

APPENDIX 5

REPATRIATION STATISTICS

POWs arrived in UK 17th November 1918 – 22nd January 1919 140

into	Hull Officers	Hull O Ranks	Hull Civs etc	Leith Officers	Leith O Ranks	Leith Civs etc	Dover Officers	Dover O Ranks	Dover Civs etc	Totals Officers	Totals O Ranks	Totals Civs etc	Total all	% all
via														
Rotterdam	2011	51168	262	-	-	-	6	1030	-	2017	52198	262	54,477	36% (34%)
Copenhagen	282	4285	1693	2728	32358	2129	-	-	-	3010	36643	3822	43,475	29% (27%)
Hamburg	8	1886	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1886	-	1,894	1%
France	-	-	-	-	-	-	1759	47956	214	1759	47956	214	49,929	33% (31%)
Totals	2301	57339	1955	2728	32358	2129	1765	48986	214	6794	138683	4298	149,775	100% (92%)
Total all	-	-	61595	-	-	37215	-	-	50965	-	-	149,775		
%			41%			25%			34%					
medical care	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	382	12164	329	12,875	(8%)
										-	-	12875		
Totals	2301	57339	1955	2728	32358	2129	1765	48986	214	7176	150847	4627	162,650	
Total all	-	-	61595	-	-	37215	-	-	50965	-	-	162,650		
%			(38%)			(23%)			(31%)					

% in () are those when figures for those in 'medical care' are included in totals

Of the 6,794 Navy, Army and Air Force officers repatriated (not under medical care) 3,010 or 44% came via Denmark

Of the 138,683 other ranks repatriated (not under medical care) 36,643 or 26% came via Denmark

Of the 4,298 civilians repatriated (not under medical care) 3,822 or 89% came via Denmark