



The Days

THE FIRST BRITISH TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS IS DRAWING TO ITS END AT LUNEBURG. NO CASE IN ALL OUR LEGAL ANNALS HAS BEEN WATCHED SO CLOSELY BY THE WORLD. REPORTERS FROM NEARLY EVERY NATION ARE RECORDING THE SCENE FROM HOUR TO HOUR IN EVERY LANGUAGE UNDER THE SUN.

HERE SGT. COURTMAN DAVIES, SOLDIER REPORTER, AND CPL. ERIC EARNSHAW, STAFF ARTIST, DESCRIBE FOR YOU THE SETTING AND SOME OF THE PERSONALITIES OF THIS GRIM AND HISTORIC EVENT.

BELSEN

ON 15 April word was received by 8 Corps that ahead of them lay a prison camp where there was an outbreak of typhus. The German authorities wished to surrender it under the white flag.

Among the first to enter were Brig. Glynn Hughes, Lt-Col. Michie, Col. Blackie and Capt. Williams. The conditions they found defy description. Ten thousand unburied dead lay where they had fallen. There was no sanitation whatsoever, and the only water leached in a black and stagnant pit. Dysentery, typhus and every conceivable disease of corruption and malnutrition were everywhere. Despite the efforts of Brig. Hughes and Col. Bluet, ADMS 11 Arm'd. Div., another 13,000 died in camp before they could be evacuated.

To prevent the victims escaping into the countryside and spreading plague, 800 Wehrmacht remained to guard the camp. They were returned to their own lines under the white flag agreement. They disclaimed all knowledge of the conditions, "but", said one witness, "the stench of the camp alone — it could be smelt a mile off — should have been sufficient to give them an idea".

Josef Kramer and the remaining officials were arrested by Lt-Col. Taylor of 63 A/T Regt., who became the first British Camp Commandant.

At Belsen the expectation of life was 3 months. "You could tell almost to a day", said Col. Blackie, "how long the poor wretches had been there. Those nearing the end were living skeletons. The scene was more terrible than civilised imagination can grasp".



Of Judgment

THE red brick Court House at Luneburg in which the first of the War Crime Trials is being held looks, inside, exactly like a film set. It was originally a gymnasium. The batteries of lights, the screen at the back of the court on which the Army Film Unit's record of Belsen was projected during the opening days of the trial; the cluster of writing and loud-speakers; the rows of Press benches, where the journalists of England and America are mingled with the journalists of Russia, Yugoslavia and almost every other nation — all these give an impression of a Hollywood set.

The newly-built, drab-grey sections for prosecution and defence, above all the great dock itself with its neat, numbered spaces for the prisoners and their C.M.P. guards, contrive to make this trial the most amazing court martial the army has seen. For it is finally a court martial, with Major-General H.P.M. Berney-Ficklin as President of the Court. The uniforms of the army is everywhere. Counsel for prosecution, for defence; interpreters, guards; everywhere is khaki. And always, in the well of the court, is a witness, quietly, steadily setting out the evidence against all those who are now little more than numbered tunics in which a quiet body sits, waiting.

C.M.P.'s Scrutiny
Each morning by 08.25 hours, everyone in court is seated. Two C.M.P.'s enter the dock and make the quick but efficient search demanded; almost immediately the prisoners file in and take their seats.

Between them, at regular intervals, sit the Redcoats, A.P.S. Provost guarding the women. They are responsible for them from the moment they have collected them from Luneburg each morning until they have handed them back to the German civil authorities each evening. At half past nine, on a command from the loudspeaker, the court rises as the President enters together with the Deputy Judge Advocate General, Mr. C. L. Stirling, the latter wearing the wig and robes of his profession.

The President commands the court to sit, and the new witness is sworn in. Behind the President the official observers of Allied Nations lean forward intently.

On the first day of the trial, the accused were tense and serious. Now they are gaining confidence. It is as if they were engaged in a ballot with death. Some of them have not yet been picked out by any witness, or named. Those who are named go tense as their accuser gives evidence. They listen carefully, and then when the evidence is finished they sigh with relief, as

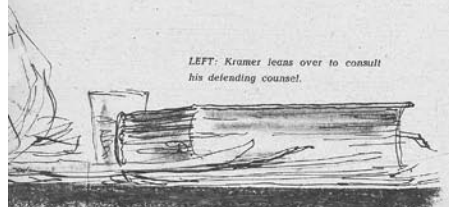
though they had expected much worse. Odd statements are flung in by the witnesses, statements which in themselves point to crime after crime. For instance... There was another occasion when the selection was being made for the gas chamber. Two girls chosen to die flung themselves out of the window and fell in the courtyard. I saw Irma Grese walk across to them and shoot each of them twice as they lay there... Two more alleged murders to be marked against blonde-haired, pretty Irma Grese. But they are not counted. There are too many murders, too many beatings, for a few more to count.

Kramer Smiles
And all the time, Number One, Josef Kramer, one-time Commandant of Belsen, sits in the corner of the dock. He smiles to himself, he listens carefully to the evidence; he scrapes his chin and his nose with the side of his thumb, pensively.

The evidence itself comes slowly, since it must be translated into both English and German. Occasionally there is a surprise witness, as the other day when Doctor Sigismund Charles Bamber arrived from Paris and proffered his story. He gave terrible details of the gas chambers and the incinerators, and drew a ghastly picture of an inferno where sub-human creatures dragged corpses to the blazing holes which could burn to ash a thousand bodies every hour. And for every hour of the day and night that went on, Harold Le Drullennac, the only British subject found among the survivors at Belsen, has spoken of his nine days there. His normal weight of 13 stone was reduced to seven.

There is little emotion left, now, in the voices of the witnesses. They have repeated so often these statements about death, these stories of artificial illumination, of obscene operations, of patients in hospital who instead of receiving glucose injections were injected instead with lysol and petrol and died in agony within a few minutes.

To Their Cells
It is five o'clock, and soon the court will rise until to-morrow. Outside the Germans are gathering, until almost a thousand of them line the street and the square before the Court House. When the armoured truck and the T.C.V.'s, which transport the prisoners back to their cells, roll past, there is not a sound. There is no cheering, no booing. When the convoy has gone away, the crowd breaks up, as quietly as ever. But about that crowd, possessed as they are with a deep curiosity and a silent contempt for the accused, there is an atmosphere almost as powerful as that in the Court House itself when yet another quiet voice takes up the tale, and a once pretty girl now turned into a mature and broken woman says, in a voice dry and void of emotion... "At that time I had the feeling that I should have to march along in columns of five until the end of my life."



LEFT: Kramer leans over to consult his defending counsel.



Prosecution examines his witnesses

In the M.I. Room - Mr. H. O. Le Drullennac, British survivor of Belsen, talks with nurse.

A few prisoners

Dr. S. C. Bamber of Paris surprise witness for the prosecution

... the by-ways of Luneburg.