

Stalag XI B

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Stalag XI B was a prisoner of war camp used by the Germans during the war. It was not like the prison camps such as Buchenwald, which held political prisoners, but was one like the many others located throughout Germany. These camps contained prisoners from other armies, such as Indians, Czechs, Poles, British, French, Russian, and American. The troops captured all over the different fronts were brought to the interior to be held there for the duration.

This particular camp was located approximately twenty miles north of Hanover, along the edge of a small village called Fallingbostel. Across the road was a camp used for the training of German soldiers. There were gentle rolling hills through this territory, and scattered over the hills were large groups of the ever-present pine trees. The weather in this sector was about the same as in the state of Indiana.

The entire camp was enclosed by barbed wire, with towers, containing search lights, spaced every few hundred yards. Guards covered the distance between towers at all hours and guarded about two hundred yards of fence. On the inside were the barracks which housed the prisoners. The different nationalities were segregated into groups, and housed

in two or three barracks. The barracks were also enclosed by barbed wire, and armed guards covered all gates. At the side of a group of barracks was a field, supposedly used for exercise, but since the prisoners were in such a weakened condition the only exercising done in the field was walking around the enclosure to get limbered up.

The barracks were frame structures about the size of the Campus Club on the Butler campus. There were about one hundred and fifty men housed in each end of the building, and separated from each other by a small washroom in the middle of the structure. The beds were of double deck construction, and made entirely of wood. Mattresses were not furnished the prisoners; consequently, the men had a deep appreciation for the mattresses that were waiting for them at home.

This description gives a vague idea of a place I knew. I became acquainted with Stalag XI B the hard way; I dwelt in this prison camp for two months. I don't know what happened to Stalag XI B after I left, for we marched out of the stalag about one month before the war was completed. I do know that the camp does not stand today as it did during the hostilities, for the end of the war also brought the end of Stalag XI B.