

## Captives of War

This is a pioneering history of the experience of captivity of British prisoners of war in Europe during the Second World War, focussing on how they coped and came to terms with wartime imprisonment. Clare Makepeace reveals the ways in which POWs psychologically responded to surrender, the camaraderie and individualism that dominated life in the camps and how, in their imagination, they constantly breached the barbed wire perimeter to be with their loved ones at home. Through the diaries, letters and logbooks written by seventy-five POWs alongside psychiatric research and reports, she explores the mental strains that tore through POWs' minds and the challenges they faced upon homecoming. This book tells the story of wartime imprisonment through the love, fears, fantasies, loneliness, frustration and guilt these men felt, shedding new light on what the experience of captivity meant for these men both during the war and after their liberation.

Clare Makepeace is an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London.

# Captives of War

*British Prisoners of War in Europe in the  
Second World War*

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Clare Makepeace

*Birkbeck, University of London*



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For my parents, Alan and Penelope Makepeace and  
my other half, Richard Stokoe

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## Abbreviations

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### In text

Campo PG	Campo concentramento di prigionieri di guerra, meaning ‘prisoner of war camp’
CRU	Civil Resettlement Units
Dulag	Short for <i>Durchgangslager</i> , meaning transit camp
Dulag Luft	Short for <i>Durchgangslager der Luftwaffe</i> , meaning transit camp for captured air crew
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
Kriegie	Short for <i>Kriegsgefangener</i> , meaning prisoner of war
Marlag	Short for <i>Marine-Lager</i> , meaning a camp for naval seamen
Milag	Short for <i>Marine-Internierten-Lager</i> , meaning a camp for merchant seamen
MI9	Military Intelligence Section 9
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
Oflag	Short for <i>Offizierslager</i> , meaning a camp for officers
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, meaning ‘German High Command’
POW/PW	Prisoner of war
RACHD	Royal Army Chaplain’s Department
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
SBO	Senior British Officer
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> , meaning protection squadrons
Stalag	Short for <i>Stammlager</i> , meaning main camp or root camp (as opposed to branch camps or work camps that were attached to these main camps but located elsewhere)
Stalag Luft	Short for <i>Stammlager Luftwaffe</i> , meaning main camp for captured aircrew
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association

**In footnotes**

ACICR	Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross
ADM	Admiralty
AIR	Air Ministry
AMD	Army Medical Department
CUST	Boards of Customs
DAP	Directorate of Army Psychiatry
DPW	Directorate of Prisoners of War, War Office
FO	Foreign Office
HC	House of Commons
HMSO	His/Her Majesty's Stationary Office
IWM	Imperial War Museum
IWM Art	Imperial War Museum Art Department
IWM Pst	Imperial War Museum Poster
LAB	Ministry of Labour
LHC	Liddle Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
Liddle	Liddle archive, Leeds University Library
Marlag	Short for <i>Marine-Lager</i> , meaning a camp for naval seamen
Milag	Short for <i>Marine-Internierten-Lager</i> , meaning a camp for merchant seamen
M. D.	Doctor of Medicine
NAM	National Army Museum
Oflag	Short for <i>Offizierslager</i> , meaning a camp for officers
PIN	Ministry of Pensions
P.W.2	Section two of the Directorate of Prisoners of War, War Office
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
SBO	Senior British Officer
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SOFO	Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum
Stalag	Short for <i>Stammlager</i> , meaning main camp or root camp (as opposed to branch camps or work camps that were attached to these main camps but located elsewhere)
Stalag Luft	Short for <i>Stammlager Luftwaffe</i> , meaning main camp for captured aircrew
SWWEC	Second World War Experience Centre, West Yorkshire
T	Treasury
TNA	The National Archives, London
WO	War Office