

# PRISONER SENSE



**RESTRICTED**

TRAINING DIVISION ★ BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS ★ U. S. NAVY



# PRISONER SENSE



ISSUED BY TRAINING DIVISION, BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS,  
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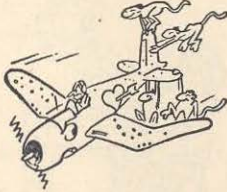
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## PRISONER SENSE

You're flying along and feeling all right and all of a sudden a flock of Mit-subishis comes up on your tail and you're in for it. You're hit, but you're not out



of control. You go down—on the wrong side of the island, and you're a prisoner. Which brings us to the subject of today's lesson—What are you going to tell your hosts?



The answer:

- (1) YOUR NAME
- (2) YOUR RANK
- (3) YOUR SERIAL NUMBER
- (4) . . . . . \*



SYLVESTER SESSIONS  
ENSIGN U S N  
S 77 - 37



\*(There isn't anything else. Nothing. Number 4, 5, 23, or 40. Once you've delivered yourself of your name, rank, and your serial number, pipe down. You can, according to Unofficial Military Law, Section 284B, grunt, whistle, wheeze, or cluck, but don't SAY anything else. In short, SHUT UP.)

Now, if everybody would just observe these simple rules of captive etiquette there wouldn't be any need for this sermon. Unfortunately, however, there is a

great deal of need for it, since the enemy has devised a bag of tricks that would probably extract information from a mummy.

For example, there was the following elementary case:

(Any resemblance of the characters in this drama to a soldier named Jones and a group of German inquisitors is by no means coincidental.)



*German lieutenant:* (After Jones is brought in for questioning): What is your name?

*Jones:* Jones.

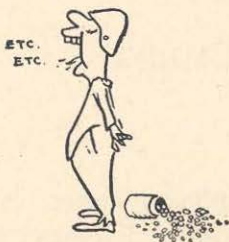
*German:* What is your rank or rate, and what is your number?

*Jones:* My rate is corporal and my number is 30256, so what?

*German:* Kindly confine yourself to the questions. What is your unit?

*Jones:* My number is 30256, Corporal Jones by name.

*German:* You needn't be so secretive, Jones. Your colleagues have already told us everything we wish to know. You will be a whole lot more comfortable in prison camp if you cooperate.



*Jones* (Believe it or not): Oh, I didn't realize that. I'm with the 312th Fusileers; we got over here Thursday; moved up to the front on Friday, and expect to be joined by the Fourth and Fifth Divisions sometime Saturday night. After that there will be a large-scale attack all along the road from Bizerte to Tunis. Anything else you want to know?



*German:* Not right now, thank you. [To the guard] Take him away.

This incident has, obviously, been exaggerated to the point of absurdity for the sake of emphasis, but the result was generally the same. Jones, who probably would have stood firm in the face of torture, fell victim to the simplest of all ruses. Some of the others are much more ingenious.

At this point we will assume, no doubt incorrectly, that you wouldn't think of going near a battle or an enemy line without first having emptied your pockets of all written material.

You hadn't thought about it?

Then pay attention, if you please, to another following, slightly-altered case, to be referred to hereinafter as Case 2, or Case B, the two being interchangeable for our purpose since there is small likelihood that it will be necessary to refer to it again.



A Marine private whom we shall call Psmith, which is somewhat similar to his name, had the misfortune to be taken prisoner during the late September fighting on Guadalcanal. This happened, as is customary with Marines, after he had disposed of several dozen Japanese in hand-to-hand combat and had been slugged unconscious. Although Psmith felt that he had left behind all documents of a dangerous character, it turned out that he had made a mistake. The Japanese, in searching him, came upon two items that were singularly revealing. One was a theater stub bearing the legend "Star and Garter Burlesque House, September 2," and the other was a page of a letter from a girl who wrote, in part, "... and I don't care what you say, there ought to be some place for me on *one* of those 13 boats!"



From these scraps the Japs gleaned the information that the Marines on Guadalcanal had been substantially reinforced, and they withdrew to previously prepared positions, as the saying goes. Thus, through Psmith's carelessness the Japs saved themselves considerable losses. Psmith, who later escaped, sheepishly admitted his error, and now goes into battle as bare as possible.

**MORAL:** Never get near the enemy with *any* written material on you or even with any markings on your clothes; not even a laundry mark. The Laundry Interpretation Division of Japanese Intelligence is reputed to be very strong, having studied for years in China. Also, don't add anything to the information placed officially on your information disk. Leave *everything* behind. If you're



taken prisoner, whatever is found on you will make very good reading for your captors.



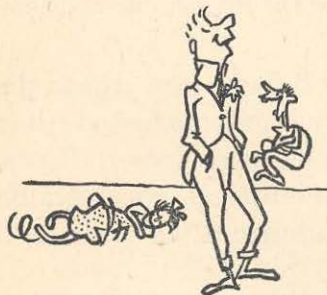
Another thing in this connection: If your plane crashes in outlying areas destroy it if possible. The enemy will want to examine it and copy its many superior features, and he'll love to study your codes, so don't leave him anything to look at but a pile of burned and twisted wreckage.

Now that you have been captured **WITHOUT** any documents on you, there are still several important points to consider.

In the first place, never believe *anything* that your captors tell you. Second, never underestimate his intelligence officers. That monkey-like expression on the Japanese faces doesn't mean a thing.



Neither does the beetling, stopped-up-sewer look of the Germans. Our Axis friends have a high degree of low cunning, and as sure as you get careless you will be outsmarted. Intelligence officers are thoroughly trained for a ticklish job, so don't exchange repartee with them, no matter how much of a wit you were considered back in Oshkosh. Don't try to invent false information either. Your interrogators have had great experience and will soon find you out.



A common failing of young officers, records show, is that, upon being captured, they are inclined to assume an amused, godlike air and give out with a lot of flippant

and dangerous talk.

A case in point was a young English flyer who became amused at the stupidity of his questioners and engaged in roughly the following conversation in a hospital:

*German officer:* I trust you are not badly hurt.

*Englishman:* Not badly, rather enjoyed it as a matter of fact.



*German:* So? What is your name, please?

*Englishman:* Captain Corn.

*German:* Of what unit?

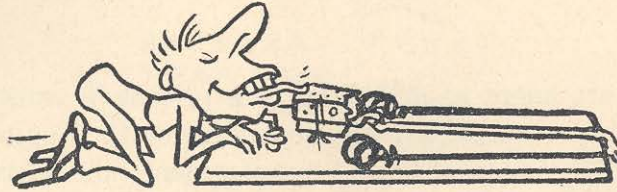
*Englishman:* His Majesty's Foot.

*German:* I don't believe I have heard . . .

*Englishman:* You wouldn't. It's a joke. Captain Corn of his Majesty's Foot.

*German:* Oh yes, that is quite funny. What is your name, please?

*Englishman:* Higgins. Name, Higgins; rank, lieutenant, number, 6013.



*German:* You English are very clever. I have always admired your bright, aimless cocktail party conversations. We Germans have none of this small speech.

*Englishman:* Don't worry about it. You have other things. Sausage, Mein Kampf, German measles. . . .

*German:* Yes, there are compensations. We have these things, and perhaps we shall have much more.

*Englishman:* And I suggest that perhaps you will have much less.

*German:* I hardly think so. We have solved the problem of your mass bombings.

*Englishman:* You have scarcely seen any mass bombing.

*German:* You wouldn't place last night's attack on Mannheim in that class?

*Englishman:* Mannheim? How long have I been here?

*German:* Several days, my friend.

*Englishman:* Then this is Tuesday. How did the attack go, would you mind telling me?

*German:* I'm afraid it won't go at all well. Today happens to be Sunday . . .

In this instance the Germans, having suspected that a big raid on Mannheim was being planned, were able to verify it by ingeniously capitalizing on a prisoner's injury, knowledge, and willingness to converse.

#### SILENCE ALONE IS SAFE.

Another quality that accounts for a good deal of secret-letting is conceit. It is difficult for an egoist to resist saying to the enemy, "My



job's pretty important, you know." and to go on ad infinitum, spilling the beans. Your job, after you have been taken prisoner, is to keep quiet, and it is all-important.



The Germans are adept at appealing to a prisoner's vanity. By outright or subtle flattery, depending on their opinion of the prisoner's mentality and temperament, the Germans often coax a man into expansiveness. The Japanese, again, are great hands at offering material inducements. "You talk and we see you get hot bath and plenty food," they told some prisoners not long ago. After the prisoners neglected to take advantage of the offer, they learned that the hot bath would have taken place in some cold water that had just



been used by 32 greasy Jap soldiers. The banquet would have revolved around a kind of stew compounded of alfalfa and miscellaneous grasses.

It would be interesting here to go into some of the tactics used by the Italians, but so far as is known they have had little need for such tactics. Except for a group of half-clad Ethiopians armed with blow guns and sticks, the Italians have been able to take practically no prisoners since shortly before the death of Julius Caesar. And, since the Ethiopians had little information of value to deliver, most of them suffering from the delusion that they were being engaged to accompany a safari, the Italians have not been stimulated to work on this particular phase of warfare. Any future developments along these lines will be included in revised editions of this booklet.



DON'T TRADE THE FLAG  
FOR CANDY!

Your comfort in a prison camp will NOT be increased if you give away information. No matter how insinuating and friendly the enemy interrogators may be *before* you talk, they invariably despise you afterwards. A prisoner who in the face





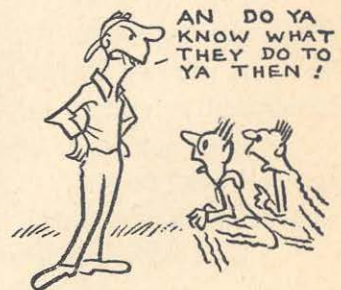
of threats, bribes, and cajolery refuses to open his mouth earns the respect of his captors and ALWAYS fares better than the weakling.



But we are not suggesting that you will *deliberately* talk. This document is designed primarily to help you avoid the tricks the enemy has been using on prisoners so far in the war.

## ABOUT THE THIRD DEGREE.

Although numerous news stories have dealt with German and Japanese proficiency at the so-called Third Degree, or bodily workout, these have concerned in almost every case civilian prisoners. Don't worry about threats of violence. The enemy, and particularly the Japs, may try to scare you into talking. The Japs have been known to tell prisoners they were condemned to death, and then make all sorts of elaborate gestures to break down their morale. These gestures have taken various forms, all pretty corny. Sometimes the Japs trotted out what was presumably a firing squad and marched it up and down in front of the prisoners. Again, they made a great fuss of sharpening up swords, meanwhile carrying on a lot of patter built around dark hints of torture. Some-





times they merely made threatening gestures with their fists, flailing the air like men fighting mosquitoes.



While this hocus-pocus is going on, you are advised to sit quite still and let your mind dwell on random topics, preferably of a non-war variety. Some suggestions are sirloin steak, movies, football, women, and clubbing Japanese over their heads with baseball bats.

Violence is NOT going to be used on you. Keep that firmly in mind, no matter how grim the preparations for it get. We have far too many German, Japanese, and Italian prisoners for our opponents to start anything of that sort. Reprisals would be swift and vigorous, and they know it.



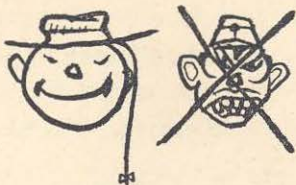
In case you still have any doubts about this, harken to the following paragraph from the Japanese Army's official instructions on treatment of prisoners. This was not printed for public consumption or for our benefit, but is part of a captured document intended only for their Army.

"War prisoners, especially prisoners of Far Eastern nationality, should be treated benevolently and humanely under the idea of a Greater Asia. Violence, insult, and bad treatment are not to be inflicted without good reason."

Don't worry about that phrase "without good reason." From reports of escaped prisoners, we have learned that sufficient provocation for bad treatment to the Japanese consists of something like socking a Jap officer in the jaw, or causing trouble generally. If you just sit tight and make no fuss you will not be mistreated. Also, don't worry about the phrase "Greater Asia." There IS going to be a Greater

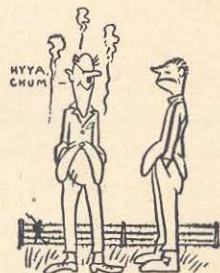


Asia, and its development will likely start when the last Japanese has been relieved of his gun.



AFTER the enemy has convinced himself that you are immune to threats, flattery, sympathy, kindly overtures, bribes, and pleading, and are not inclined to be sociable, he will start to work with several other devices, none of which is particularly troublesome IF you have been forewarned.

A favorite trick of our little yellow brethern, as reported from Shanghai, is to plant some English-speaking Axis sympathizer in a prison camp. This man will try to extract information from the internees by being friendly and sympathetic. If an amiable-looking ragamuffin comes slouching up to you a day or two after you have landed behind the barbed wire and says "Hello, sailor, how'd you get here?" don't start a conversation like the following one that took place recently:



*American flyer:* I got shot down at Tulagi, how about you?

*Sympathizer:* I was with a bunch of Australians. We got cut off. What's your outfit?

*American:* (Tells him.)

*Sympathizer:* Well, look. Let's get the hell out of here. How about getting back to your gang. Do you still know where they are?



*American:* Yeah. We've got three cruisers and a carrier on the east side of Florida Island, near Ngola Channel. We can get there if we can find a boat of some kind.

*Sympathizer:* Listen, friend, you leave it to me. I'll get the boat.

In this particular case it turned out that the American missed the boat, in more ways than one. His "Australian" friend apparently was discharged or ex-



changed from the camp, for in a few days, after several more delightful conversations, he disappeared. The three cruisers and the carrier heard from him indirectly, however, in the form of 25 Japanese dive bombers and torpedo planes.

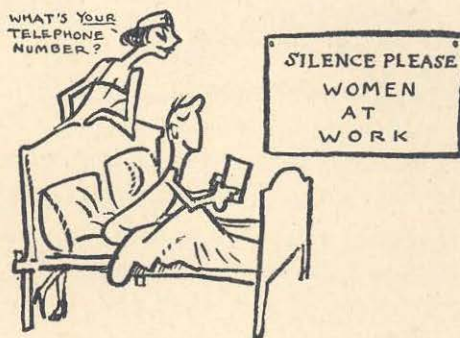
Don't EVER get chummy with prisoners you didn't know before you were captured. Leave the other prisoners alone until you are absolutely sure of them. And don't make up your mind too hastily. The Japs and Germans are likely to



have their guards beat, starve, and otherwise mistreat one of their own agents just to make him look authentic. The best policy is simply to dummy up unless you're talking to a known friend. If a stranger comes along and tries to get chummy, be pleasant but confine your small talk to something harmless. There are many excellent possibilities in the weather. In regard to rain alone, for instance, you can say (1) "It looks like rain;" (2) "It doesn't look like rain;" (3) I wish it looked like rain;" or (4) "I don't wish it looked like rain." This can be varied by saying (1) "It looked like rain yesterday;" (2) "It didn't look like rain yesterday;" etc.

You have the basis here for a lasting friendship and the beauty of it is that nobody will ever get hurt.

And now we come to a more difficult item—to wit: the beautiful but poisonous nurse. The bedpan Mata Hari. This creature has proved in times past to be





especially efficacious in removing military secrets along with used gauze and soiled linen.

Don't let those big blue eyes and honeyed tones deceive you. The chances are, your nurse's sympathy is not sympathy for its own sake but is merely another trap. If you are feeling lonely in an enemy hospital, the best way to get company quick is to discuss military matters with a woman. The place will be filled with your comrades before sundown.

Don't converse carelessly with your nurse, no matter how pretty she is. If you get a chance, yes, go ahead and pinch her, but don't talk.

#### GENERAL PRECAUTION:

If you want to talk shop (with friends, of course) do it in the open. NEVER discuss confidential subjects indoors. The enemy has a mean trick of hanging microphones or dictaphones or other devices for picking up the human voice in every possible nook and corner. They have been found

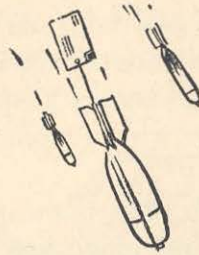


in bedsprings, behind pictures, under mats, in wastebaskets, in drawers (desk drawers), on rafters, under chairs, and in stoves. One was even found in a toilet. By good fortune it was discovered before it had picked up anything of great value.

If you are given a chance to write letters be very careful about addressing them in such a way as to betray the whereabouts of your ship or station. Don't absent-mindedly sit down and write something like "Lt. Jordan Shumway, U. S. S. *Pensacola*, Buka Island, Solomons." If you do, your captors will not bother about the conventional forms of wartime mail delivery; they will deliver the letter personally, along with several tons of TNT. In cases of this kind, the postman always bombs twice and occasionally three or four times. Letters to shipmates should be



addressed to the Navy Department, and ones to other friends or your family to their homes.



Of course, we will assume that you won't put anything revealing in the body of the letter. Confine yourself to innocuous subjects such as the state of your health, reminiscences about your childhood, or, possibly, your plans for the future. Probably it is not a good idea to try to slip out information that is damaging to your captors, unless you have hit upon something especially brilliant. If you try and fail, such privileges as you have no doubt will be curtailed.

Also, the enemy may ask you if you want to broadcast a message home.



REFUSE. There is ALWAYS an underhanded purpose in these broadcasts. The enemy only wants to use you in some way. A common trick is to conduct the broadcast as an interview, which emerges on the air in much different form than the prisoner hears it. For example, one went something as follows:

*Announcer:* And now, another prisoner of war, Ensign Willis Forshaw, of Jonesboro, Ark. (With the mike cut off)

Forshaw, are you comfortable and resigned to your internment?

Another announcer in the next room into a live mike: Forshaw, is it not true that you are convinced of the futility of opposing the onward march of Greater Japan?

*Forshaw:* Yes, quite. I'm quite resigned to it.

*First announcer* (in dead mike): But you will no doubt be happier when the war is over.

*Second announcer* (in live mike): And would you be content to see an end of the United Nations' senseless struggle?

*Forshaw:* As far as I'm concerned, it could end tomorrow. I'll be the happiest guy in the world when it's over.

This went on and on, and before it was over poor Forshaw had begun to shape up as one of the world's outstanding Axis sympathizers, ranking just behind Hitler



and Hirohito. Undoubtedly he will be able to clear this all up after the war, but he caused his family, his friends and the Navy great embarrassment.

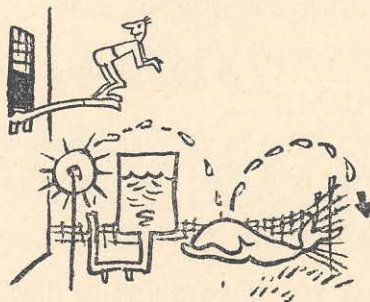
## OVER THE WALL

And now a word on escape. It is by no means enough to pipe down and become reconciled to your internment. Keep escape uppermost in mind, and when the first opportunity presents itself, go over the wall, or, as the boys say on the



Georgia chain gangs, hang it on the limb. You *can* escape, and one of the best ways to maintain strong morale is to keep thinking that you can. Before you go, of course, pick up all the useful information you can get your eyes and ears on and take it with you. A good idea in this connection is to be an improved version of the three little monkeys. You can see and hear plenty of evil, but don't speak any.

There are many workable methods of getting out of a prison camp, most of which have been covered by the movies. One of the simplest ways is to arise early some morning with a group of congenial companions, stroll outside, slug the guards, and walk off. Frequently there are complications to this system, in which case something a little more complex should be devised. A good thing to re-

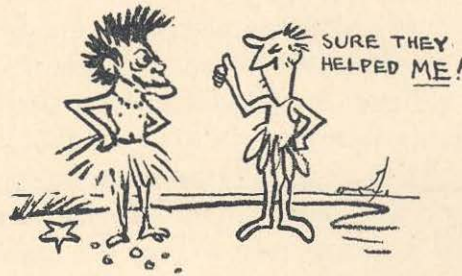




member is that our Axis friends, being grasping souls, are often subject to bribery, so perhaps if you have any money left you can grease your way out.

The big thing is, keep at it.

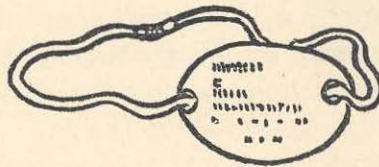
You are worth a great deal more to the Navy as an escaped prisoner than as an interned prisoner. However, if you do get out and make your way to friendly territory, don't discuss your experience with ANYBODY before you reach the proper authorities. And NEVER, under any circumstances, divulge the name of any person who may have helped you to escape.



## NOW TO SUMMARIZE

### A FEW DON'TS

- (1) Don't carry papers or any other written material near the enemy.
- (2) Don't have markings on your clothing or add to the information officially placed on your identification disk.
- (3) If you are shot down, try to destroy your plane and all its equipment.



- (4) DON'T GIVE ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAN YOUR NAME, RANK, AND NUMBER.
- (5) Don't enter into any kind of conversation with your interrogators.
- (6) Don't try to be clever and give false information.
- (7) Don't worry about threats.
- (8) Curb your conceit.
- (9) Don't talk shop. If you have plans to discuss, do it in the open air.



- (10) Don't get chummy with strangers in prison camp.
- (11) Don't get chummy with women in hospitals; in fact, don't get chummy with women anywhere.
- (12) Don't believe anything the enemy tells you. Particularly don't believe that they already have the information they are trying so hard to get from you.
- (13) Don't do any talking with your friends where there might possibly be a microphone.
- (14) Don't broadcast.
- (15) Don't address or write letters in such a way as to divulge any information.
- (16) Don't be downhearted if you are captured. Keep your eyes and ears open and pick up all useful information.
- (17) Don't ever give up the idea of escape. Watch your chances. Bust out.

IF you will just follow these few rules you will be a model prisoner—from our viewpoint. If you don't, you will wind up as one of the highest scoring members of the enemy team.



Your captors have one interest in you—to get information that will help them destroy your comrades and your home and family. It isn't hard to keep quiet and it isn't hard to escape. Actually, being captured is an excellent chance for you to pull off something pretty special. If you're smart and keep your head you can come back loaded with invaluable secrets.

Perhaps the only Japanese custom wholeheartedly applauded by the civilized world is hara-kiri. The Japs have practiced it individually for years. The Japanese nation began the act of falling on its sword the morning of December 7, 1941. As a prisoner you can speed up this process quite a bit.



## CONCLUSION

- Q. After you are captured, what are you going to keep thinking about?  
A. Escape.  
Q. And what are you going to tell your captors?  
A. (Loudly) My NAME, my RANK, and my NUMBER.  
Q. Anything else?  
A. No, sir.  
Q. Right. That's all.

(Class dismissed)

