

OCCUPIED

BEHIND BARBED WIRE

9

MARKING THE PASSAGE OF TIME

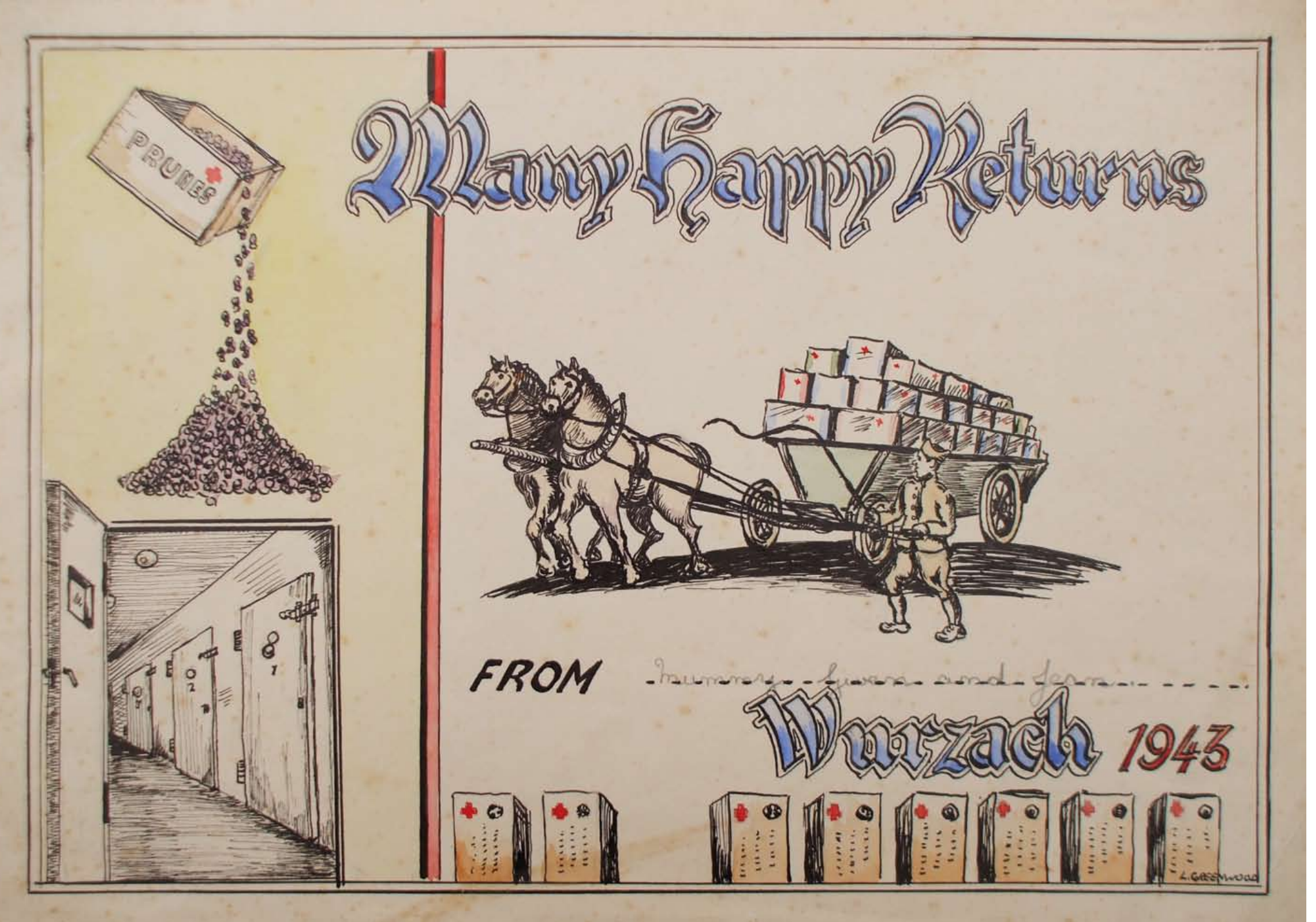
For the most part a common coping mechanism within camp life was to try not to focus on the reality of passing time – that route lead to depression and madness. Instead by focusing on life within camp and, more importantly, by trying to make it more like home the reality of the situation could be softened and made more tolerable.

However, at times like Birthdays and Christmas, the acute reality of the Islanders’ situation was brought home with great force. Whilst it was extremely important to celebrate someone’s birthday, as it helped people retain their humanity, at the same time it also forced people to acknowledge that they had passed another year in captivity. The situation was a double-edged sword which was difficult to know how to wield.

In the event the internees’ craft skills came to the fore again and any Birthdays, public holidays or times of celebration like Christmas were marked with the giving of gifts and beautifully decorated cards.

A great deal of time and effort often went into the production of items made for celebrations such as this.

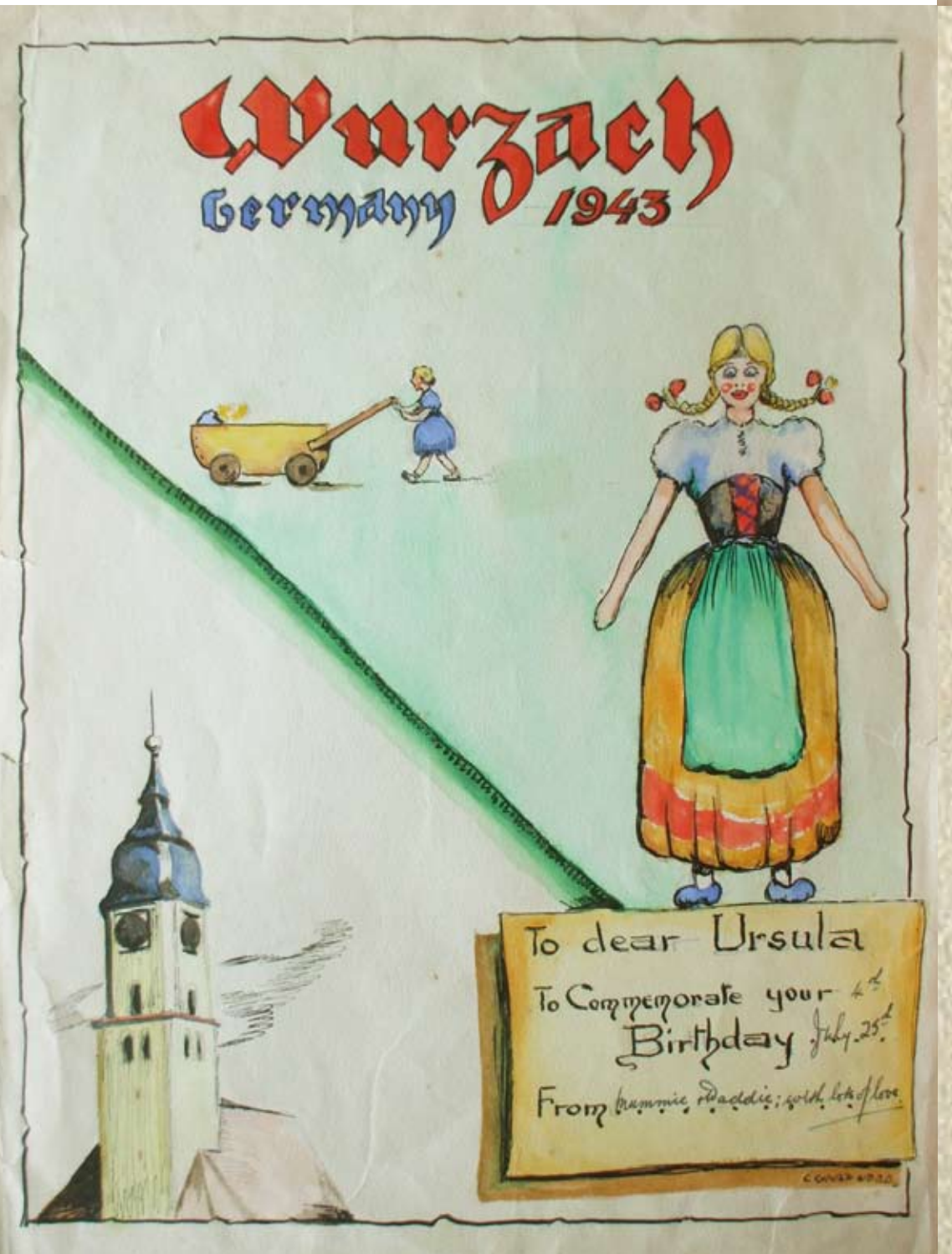
THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION COULD BE SOFTENED AND MADE MORE TOLERABLE



above
Christmas card made by a Channel Island internee, Christmas 1942. Biberach internment camp.

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