

OCCUPIED BEHIND BARBED WIRE

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF DAILY LIFE

Home inside the wooden barrack huts consisted of either single low cots or simple wooden bunk-beds. All were very close together. Personal space was an almost non-existent luxury. Rudimentary tables and chairs were provided and sometimes a wood-burning stove for heat.

Hygiene was also a problem. One internee recalls...

“...One morning I woke to see my hands streaming with blood from the bed bugs. I had to take my bed to pieces to get the eggs out. They smelled horrible and were as big as ladybirds. We used to put the legs of the bunks in Klim tins filled with disinfectant from the hospital and that stopped them”.

In the early months of internment hunger and malnutrition were common place, with people falling ill regularly. One survivor recalled ...

...“The rations were terrible when we first got there ...We had very little food ... it was horrible. I remember my dad used to give us his bread and he used to eat the soup. And there were maggots floating in it.”

The Islanders were forced to forage for food when they were taken on their guarded walks in the countryside. They would also collect wood and pinecones to burn in the barrack hut stoves to keep warm.

It wasn't until December 1942 that Red Cross food parcels began to arrive in the camps. These became a life-line for the internees.

Two things became starkly apparent as time progressed. The shortness of food and the boredom associated with imprisonment.



above
Photograph taken in an Internment Camp in Germany during WWII where some of the Channel Islanders were imprisoned.

GNAG 2005.286.28

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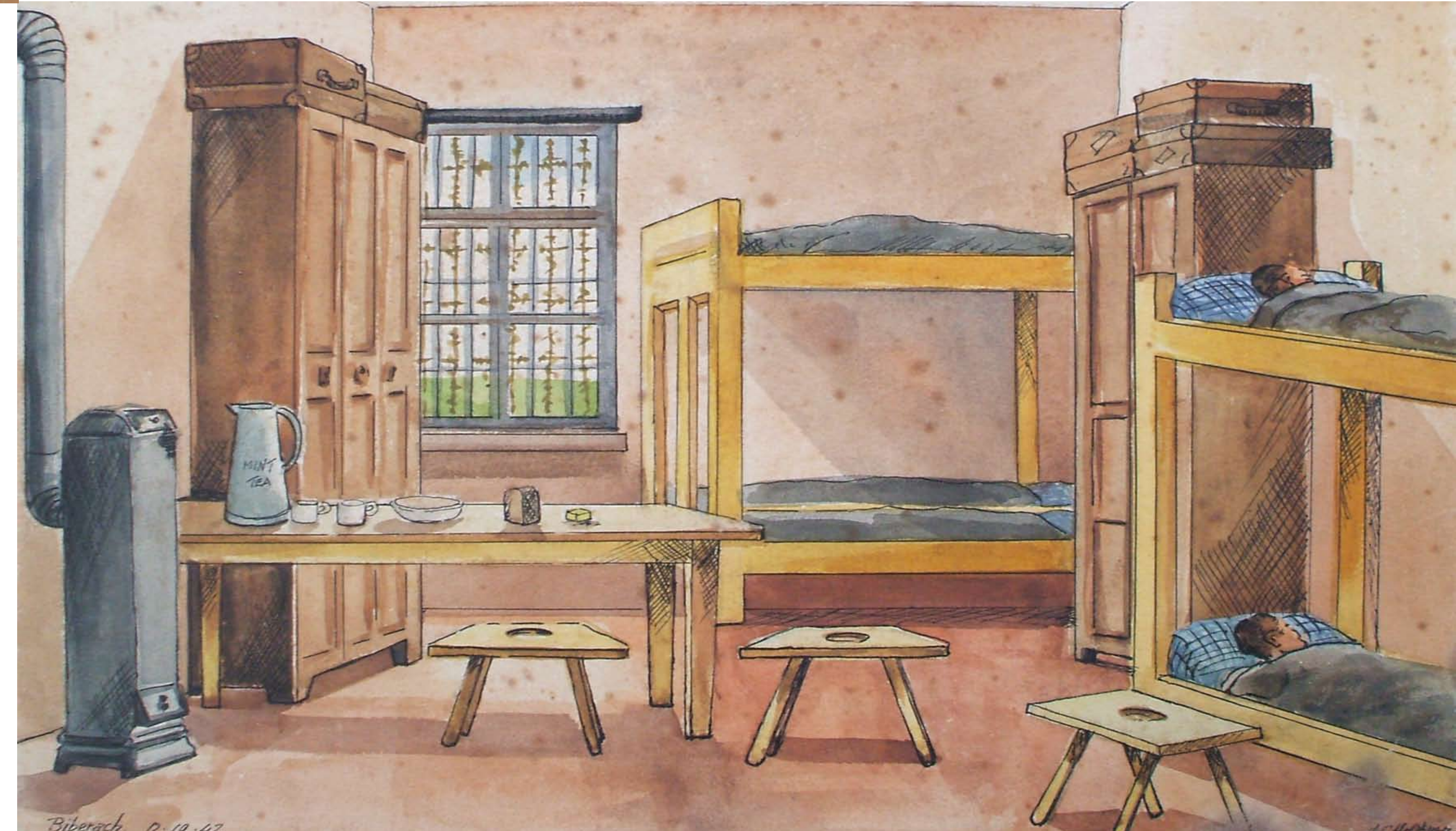
above
Entrance to the German Army Camp in Dorsten, Germany. Vacated by the Geman Army and then used as a Transit Camp for Internees and Concentration Camp Prisoners being transported to other destinations. Channel Islanders came through Dorsten on their way to Internment Camps.

GNAG 2005.286.59



left
Two men alongside a fruit or vegetable garden in an Internment Camp in Germany during WWII.

GNAG 2005.286.30



right
Interior of a room in the Biberach internment camp. October, 1942
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below
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ONE MORNING I WOKE TO SEE MY HANDS STREAMING WITH BLOOD FROM THE BED BUGS

internee