Smoke Jumping on Western Fire Line:
Conscription Objectors During WWII

- Mark Matthews, U OR WA $38
November 24, 2004

Dear Carol and Ivan:

Thanks very much for the piece from the Quaker magazine on the Camp #103 (smokejumpers) reunion. The men from Camp #55 followed them into the Glacier Bible Camp the next week and held their reunion then. That's the one that Marcella and I attended.

The magazine piece reminded me that I did not send on a copy of the Camp #55 history that I wrote for the reunion this summer. So one is enclosed. As usual, it was a close call: I picked up the self-published booklets from the printer on Wednesday afternoon, and Marcella and I distributed them to the men and their families on Friday night. Hope you enjoy glancing at the booklet.

The Society shifted some funds from a trust account so we could start on the 7th-8th-grade Montana-history textbook. So I next will hire two writers to begin in January. We are looking at a two-year project to get the thing ready for the printer, but we are finally moving.....after ten years of talk.

Hope that you two have an enjoyable holidays. Take care.

Dave
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The Story of Civilian Public Service
Camp #55, Belton, Montana
Rather Than War:
The Story of Civilian Public Service Camp #55, Belton, Montana

by Dave Walter
DEDICATION

To the men of Camp #55—
who lived their beliefs
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WORKING WITH THE TOPIC of Civilian Public Service Camp #55 in Belton has been a most rewarding task. First, it has allowed me to meet and interview some of the men who served in the camp, and that has been both inspiring and edifying. They lived a commitment to peace and service in the 1940s, and they live it today. These men and their families have been most kind in accepting the interest of an outsider. My greatest debt is to the men of Camp #55.

Other debts are less inspirational, but equally valuable in piecing together the story of Camp #55. The Montana Committee for the Humanities provided a research stipend in 1997. This grant funded a 1998 trip to the Mennonite Church Archives in Goshen, Indiana. There, for three weeks, I copied all of the Mennonite Central Committee records for Montana's three CPS camps: #55 in Belton; #64 in Terry; #103 in Missoula. The kind guidance of Mr. Dennis Stoesz and his colleagues at the Mennonite Archives made this a truly rewarding research experience.

Other people provided invaluable assistance by copying repository records for Camp #55. Ms. Deirdre Shaw, the Glacier National Park ranger/archivist in West Glacier, uncovered and reproduced vital Park Service reports and maps dealing with the CPS in Glacier. Her enthusiasm for the CPS topic remains most genuine. Friends at Historical Research Associates, a private company based in Missoula, arranged for two of their employees to copy Selective Service System records dealing with Camp #55 from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. This material proved essential in building a timeline for the camp.

Ms. Jodie Foley, the oral historian at the Montana Historical Society in Helena, graciously spent the 1996 weekend reunion of the Camp #55 men at Creston taping interviews. Jodie has since built a solid collection of CPS interviews/transcripts at the Montana Historical Society for the use of future researchers.

Joining Ms. Foley in taping interviews in 1996—and again in 1999—was my wife, Marcella Sherfy. In addition, Marcella used a portion of a Kansas vacation to copy the full run of The Trailmaker and the Camp Letter at the Bethel College church archives.

Raised in the Church of the Brethren, Marcella has been invaluable in explaining religious context to me, thus preventing me from making any number of serious gaffs. Her constant assistance and encouragement with this project have been essential to its success. Thank you, dear.

Finally, it has taken the expertise of a real craftsman to translate blocks of historical research and writing into an attractive publication. Ms. Kathy Feather of Helena performed magic with the Camp #55 material and did it under severe time constraints. Her work speaks for itself.

Dave Walter
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June, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

"[Civilian Public Service] is an experiment in democracy to find out whether our democracy is big enough to preserve minority rights in a time of national emergency."

General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service, 1941

"The wonder is that it worked as well as it did. That it succeeded is a tribute to youth, ingenuity, goodwill and the energy generated by conviction."

Albert N. Keim, The CPS Story, 1990

THE PREDICAMENT of the conscientious objector (CO) during World War I (1917-1918) was a perilous one. For the federal government had sanctioned no alternative service for those who opposed active military service on religious grounds.

As a result, men of conscience were drafted into the military and posted to military camps, where they posed active military service on religious grounds. Sanctioned no alternative service for those who opposed this, faced various degrees of intimidation and discipline. More than five hundred religious and political objectors faced court martial and imprisonment for failing to perform basic military duties, including short rations, solitary confinement, and physical abuse. In extreme instances, deaths resulted from the harsh treatment of the men.

In the post-WWI period, church officials sought to prevent future occurrences of this situation. These officials and their denominations reflected a 550-year-old, largely German Anabaptist religious movement founded overwhelmingly on the belief that Christ's example dictated loving service to others rather than warfare.

Over a period of years, representatives of the "historic peace churches"-the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, the Amish, the Hutterites, and the Quakers-negotiated with federal authorities. By October, 1940, they had created the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) to handle these negotiations.

The result of this bargaining became law as a method for COs to contribute to the welfare of the nation without bearing arms against another human being. By agreement, the enlistees would perform only "work of national significance" under civilian direction. The program modeled the Russian Mennonite Forestry Service experience developed late in the nineteenth century.

The CPS program became a unique church-state partnership that lasted through one year of uneasy peace (1941), four years of war (1941-1945) and two years of demobilization (1945-1947). The intent of CPS was clear: to provide a system of alternative humanitarian service that developed into the Civilian Public Service (CPS) program.

Thus, in 1941, with war imminent, a conscientious objector faced four choices:

- Classification IV-D, a ministerial deferment;
- Classification I-A-O, noncombatant service in the Army (e.g., medical or signal corps);
- Classification IV-E, participation in the nonmilitary Civilian Public Service program;
- imprisonment for the duration of the war.

Of the almost 55 million men who registered with the Selective Service during World War II, only 72,354 applied for CO status. About 29,000 of these men failed the basic physical exam; 25,000 accepted noncombatant status. Of the remainder, almost 6,000 refused any form of service, and the government imprisoned them for the duration of the war. Ultimately, 12,000 COs entered the Civilian Public Service.

The CPS program initially assigned COs to various soil-conservation and reforestation camps supervised by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Later they performed work in mental hospitals, in dairy-testing districts, in medical research facilities, in juvenile-detention centers, and in sanitary-facility construction.

The federal government provided CPS with transportation, camp furnishings, and housing—frequently using abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps from the Depression era. The responsible federal agency established and supervised the work detail for each camp. The Selective Service Administration, under director Lewis B. Hershey, retained ultimate jurisdiction over CPS.

The three primary historic peace churches (the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Quakers) financed a portion of these camps. The program initially assigned COs to various soil-conservation and reforestation camps supervised by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Later they performed work in mental hospitals, in dairy-testing districts, in medical research facilities, in juvenile-detention centers, and in sanitary-facility construction.

The three primary historic peace churches (the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Quakers) supervised the work for all other elements of the CPS program: day-to-day management of the camps; subsistence costs for the camps; care and maintenance of the men.

This politically savvy qualification provided the peace churches with maximum autonomy within the system. Consequently, however, no CPSer ever re-
ceived a single federal dollar in wages during the war. The COs’ families and home churches contributed more than $72 million—As well as millions in donated goods—toward their support.

The relationship between the Selective Service and the religious agencies was always fuzzy. Were the churches agents of the Selective Service or were they contractors, carrying out a contractual service? The answer remained unclear throughout the war.

Nevertheless, the CPS program solved the federal government’s problem of what to do with conscientious objectors. By placing them in old, out-of-the-way CCC camps, the government could minimize any public-relations trouble that they might cause. In addition, the government gained a force working for the national welfare at almost no cost to the American taxpayer.

The entire CPS network involved 123 camps, units, and projects spread across the nation. In Montana three camps operated: Belton/West Glacier Camp #55; Terry Camp #64; Missoula Camp #105.

The Belton camp performed fire-fighting and maintenance work in Glacier Park for the National Park Service (September, 1942—October, 1946). Terry Camp #64 engaged in construction work on the Yellowstone River’s Buffalo Rapids Irrigation Project for the Farm Security Administration (January, 1945—July, 1946). The Missoula camp conducted smoke-jumping duties for the Forest Service (May, 1945—April, 1946). The Mennonites’ relief agency, the Mennonite Central Committee (located in Akron, Pennsylvania), supervised all three Montana camps.

In theory, work in a Civilian Public Service camp offered the conscientious objector an opportunity to perform “work of national significance.” He could maintain his religious conviction that any form of warfare violated the spirit and the purpose of God, while he contributed positively to the general welfare of the country.

Alternative service allowed the CO to witness against war and for a life of peace and service. Further, CPS provided a practical demonstration of how a principled man conducted himself in wartime. Alternative service was the COs’ “moral equivalent of war.” By placing them in old, out-of-the-way CCC camps, the government could minimize any public-relations trouble that they might cause. In addition, the government gained a force working for the national welfare at almost no cost to the American taxpayer.

The CPS system became official when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8375 on February 6, 1941. By March of 1941, the first five CPS camps had opened to receive CO workers. At the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the CPS system had operated for nine months and had engaged 1,500 men in the network of camps. By July, 1942, there were 5,738 men in CPS; 1,572 in 15 Mennonite camps; 1,048 in 10 Brethren camps. Two Catholic camps housed 66 men, and a cooperative camp included 15 assignees.

Over the six-year life of the Civilian Public Service program, its 12,000 men logged more than 8,000,000 man-days of work to benefit the nation. If the government had paid for this work—at the Army rate, as provided by law—it would have expended $2,000,000. The actual federal bill for CPS was $2,725,000 for administrative expenses.

Although the definition of “work of national significance” remained a debated topic throughout the war, much CPS work was important; many of the results were long-lasting:

- There were long-range benefits from the medical experiments that COs participated in.
- Without CPS work, the New Deal’s soil-conservation programs would have died during World War II.
- Campers accomplished simple construction to alleviate the worst health issues faced by poor Southerners.
- CPSers brought the appalling conditions of the nation’s mental hospitals to public attention.
- COs demonstrated new non-violent, humane and effective techniques for the treatment and care of mental patients.

Moreover, the Civilian Public Service experience changed the lives of thousands of CPSers.

Camp #55 in Belton, Montana, became one of the more popular posts in the entire Civilian Public Service system.

It opened in September, 1942, and ran for four years, nestled against the majestic background of the northern Rocky Mountains. The Belton camp proved one of the real success stories in the entire Mennonite Central Committee network. More than 550 men served in Camp #55 during its 49 months of existence.\*
CHAPTER ONE
CAMP #55, ITS ORGANIZATION, AND THE WORK DUTIES

First impression—Austin Witmer: "This is the longest trip I have made, the farthest west I have been, and these are the highest mountains I have ever seen".

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #6 (May 15, 1944)

"In a part of the country as devoid of civilization as Belton Camp No. 55, men are feeling a real lack of contact with people outside of camp. Many are forgetting what it is like to meet other than CPSers."

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #3 (January 15, 1943)

CAMP POPULATION

DIRECTOR LEWIS B. HERSHEY'S Selective Service Order 55, dated September 2, 1942, created Civilian Public Service (CPS) Camp #55 at Belton, Montana. This site was the abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp #9. The CCC had created Camp #9 in 1936, and the government had mothballed it on July 9, 1942.

The camp was located just west of the West Entrance Station to Glacier National Park, on the bluff above the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. It was just a little more than one-half mile from Park Headquarters and sat at 3,215 feet. The site approximates the current location of the Glacier Institute complex.

Belton (name changed to West Glacier in 1948) was located on the mainline of the Great Northern Railroad and on U.S. Highway #2 (the Theodore Roosevelt Highway). Four passenger trains a day, including the touted Empire Builder, served the town, as did a dozen freight trains. Regular bus service connected Belton with Kalispell each afternoon. The nearest town, Columbia Falls, was 16 miles to the west; Whitefish was 25 miles to the west; Kalispell was 31 miles to the west; Glacier Park Station (East Glacier) was 60 miles to the east, over the Continental Divide at Marias Pass.

Camp #55 received its first assignees on September 14, 1942: 58 men from Colorado Springs (CPS Camp #5) and from Fort Collins (Camp #55), Colorado. By September 22, 1942, there were 120 men in camp. Those initial transferes moved to Camp #55 from a variety of established CPS camps (The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #1):

• Colorado Springs, Colorado: 21
• Fort Collins, Colorado: 17
• Cascade Locks, Oregon: 4
• Hagerstown, Maryland: 4
• Henry, Illinois: 15
• Denison, Iowa: 12
• Weeping Water, Nebraska: 11
• Grottoes, Virginia: 15
• Wells Tannery (Sideling Hill), Pennsylvania: 17
• Marietta, Ohio: 5
• Placerville, California: 1

On November 30, 1942, the camp had reached its full projected complement of 150 men. Through the four years of its existence, the population of Camp #55 varied, depending on the season of the year, furloughs, transfers, and anticipated work projects. It could drop to 85 men during the slow winter season. In summer—with men dispersed to a number of side camps in the Park—the population of the base camp could fall to 60.

At one point (in September, 1943), camp population reached 206 men, 25 of whom had been permanently detailed for blister-rust work in Yellowstone National Park. Men from Camp #55 regularly volunteered in substantial numbers to transfer to "detached hospital service" and dairy projects in the East and the Midwest. A camper's failure to be successful in this quest to transfer affected camp morale negatively.

On the other hand, the addition of a significant group of transfers from another camp brought excitement and new life to Camp #55. Such was the case in May, 1944, when 22 men transferred from Weeping Water, Nebraska (Camp #25). The men of #55 celebrated their arrival on the evening of May 8 with coffee, doughnuts, and ice cream. A similar infusion of energy occurred when 59 men transferred into...
CHAPTER ONE

Nurse Katherine Harder giving a shot to Director Al Zaek in the Infirmary, 1945

"I never really had any opposition at all that I remember. Had a little opposition here in Kalispell, Montana, one time, going into a store and a fellow, the manager, kind of made a thing about 'yellow bellies' and ridiculing us. But, here in camp, our government superintendent and foremen on the jobs never really criticized us or anything. In fact, we had a lot of opportunity to talk about our peace witness and why we were here and not in the army."

As to why CPS mattered so much: "I think probably with fellows with the same beliefs, trying to contribute to society in the best way they could, and living out their convictions had a big impact on me. The comradeship, working with the Government fellows that didn't understand our position and yet worked along with us."


Camp #55 from two Virginia camps, Luray (Camp #43) and Grottoes (Camp #44), and from Sideling Hill, Pennsylvania (Camp #20, April 1944). Mass transfers out of Camp #55 caused proportional disruptions in the unit's routine. For example, following the hectic fire-fighting season of 1945, two large groups of men transferred out in mid-October: 45 to Colorado Springs (Camp #5); 59 to Grottoes (Camp #4).

Just as disruptive were the transfer leavings of 'key personnel'-men with such specialties as radio repair, cooking, surveying foreign-language expertise, and first-aid skills. In some cases, the Selective Service denied the transfers sought by and first-aid skills. In some cases, the Selective Service denied the transfers sought by the nation was represented at one time or another. Among the initial transferees to the camp was more diverse than one would expect. Among the initial transferees to the camp population because the Committee on the presentation of sects Trailmaker, Menno Mennonite, Computer Camp #55, 1942, the following faiths appeared (The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #1):

- Mennonite School of the Bible;
- Church of God;
- Plymouth Brethren;
- Jehovah Witnesses;
- Methodist;
- Church of God in Christ Mennonite;
- Mennonite Brethren;
- General Conference Mennonite;
- Old Mennonite;
- Amish Mennonite;
- Brethren in Christ Mennonite;
- Defenseless Mennonite;
- Krimmer Mennonite Brethren

The religious diversity of the camp increased during its four-year life cycle.

The average age of the assignee ranged between 21 and 25, depending upon the composite of the population. The average age became younger during the camp's existence. About one-third of the men were married. Of the 278 men listed on the camp roster during its first two years (to September, 1944), 110 were farmers or farm laborers, 14 were carpenters, 8 were loggers, 7 were students, and 7 were mechanics. Other occupations created the balance. Throughout the life of Camp #55, men with farming backgrounds dominated the population.

One of the aspects of Glacier National Park that endeared itself to the men of Camp #55 was its designation as a portion of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. In 1932, the United States government and Canadian officials—at the behest of Rotary International—had established the Peace Park as a lasting statement of cooperation between the two countries. That designation held particularly strong connotations for Glacier's conscientious objectors.

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CAMP LAYOUT

CPS Camp #55 was organized around Company Street (please see the diagram of the camp on page 71). This thoroughfare separated the majority of the buildings, including the four dorms, from the Dining Hall/Kitchen. CPSers had settled into the mothballed Civilian Conservation Corps Camp #9 in September, 1942. They moved several buildings—including what became the Chapel, the Laundry Drying Room, and the Education Building—from nearby abandoned CCC camps into the complex over the next year. They also built a root cellar to store the camp's foodstuffs.

- CPS Main Office
- Technical Office Building
- Education Building/Library
- Infirmary
- Dining Hall/Kitchen
- Chapel
- Laundry
- Laundry Drying Room
- Carpenter Shop/Trunk Room
- Recreation Hall/Store Room
- Tool House
- Garage
- Water Tower
- Root Cellar

Pathways and roadways connected the buildings. The men landscaped the compound's grounds by planting grass lawns, iris beds, and pine trees. The camp's flag pole stood immediately in front of the Dining Hall. Also in this area was the camp's fire siren. The design of Camp #55 proved both functional and comfortable.

From the camp's first weeks, a public-address system operated. This feature permitted the piping of announcements, music, and devotions into all of the dorms and the auxiliary buildings. A large outdoor speaker sat on the roof of the Kitchen. Announcement segments regularly ran in the mornings and evenings.
In the fall of 1942, the public-address system carried the World Series games (except on Sunday) between the St. Louis Cardinals and the New York Yankees. Beginning in 1944, camp broadcasts originated from a remodeled booth in the Recreation Hall.

CAMP ORGANIZATION

Under the Arrangement negotiated in 1939 between the federal government and the three "historic peace churches"—the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, and the Friends—the Selective Service provided housing and basic equipment at each CPS site. The total valuation of Selective Service property at Camp #55 was $75,500. This figure included such items as buildings, bedding, kitchen utensils, china ware, office and laundry equipment, and work vehicles (Mennonite Church Archives-Goshen, 10-1-1, MCC Reports, 1940-1959, Box 5: "CPS Camp Directories and Manuals").

The Mennonite Central Committee was responsible for the daily operation of Camp #55. It appointed the camp director and his associates (the "administrative agency"), established camp routines, supervised religious, educational, and recreational programs, and raised and distributed operating funds for the camp.

The Camp Director served as the primary liaison with the Park Service authorities. Other MCC-appointed staff positions included the Assistant Director/Education Officer, the Business Manager, the Nurse/Matron, and the Dietician. The camp director appointed staff to office work at Camp #55.

The "historic peace churches"—the responsible agency—were the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, and the Brethren. The Regional Office of Selective Service negotiated the operating procedures for the groups.

Most often the Council served as a forum for discussing problems and possible improvements that affected the entire camp. It handled such issues as dining-hall rules, the use of the camp station wagon, a Sunday relief system for waiters, the efficacy of private labor-for-wages on Sunday leave, and visitation rules for women at the camp.

Each dorm also featured its own internal discussion group and held meetings to discuss procedures and routines confined to the dorm itself. Leadership for these democratic dorm groups was elective, and topics ranged from common gripes to camp athletic teams. Most dorms met weekly to discuss internal matters.

CAMP WORK DUTIES

Under the 1959 Arrangement negotiated between the federal government and the "historic peace churches", the responsible federal agency became the party that set the work detail. In the case of Camp #55, that responsible body (the "technical agency") was the National Park Service, because the regional office of the Park Service originally had requested the creation of the camp in Belton.

Ultimately, the Superintendent at Glacier National Park established the work detail. He designated one supervisor, two assistants, and one mechanic to coordinate the work projects. During much of the life of Camp #55, Glacier's Assistant Park Superintendent was the CPS coordinator for the technical agency, and M. E. "Jean" Sullivan served as the Project Supervisor. His technical assistants/foremen included Stan Swanberg, Frank Benda, Steve Matteson, Dave Nelson, and Louise Cousineau.

The camp's work-week varied through its life. When Camp #55 opened in September, 1942, the standard was a six-day, 44-hour week. Selective Service changed the requirement to a six-day, 48-hour work week in January, 1943. For the end of the war, in 1945, did the work week return to 45 hours over five days. In the spring of 1946, the standard became a 44-hour, five-day work week. Whatever the standard, the men of Camp #55 adjusted to the work detail as necessary.
requirements. The jobs performed by the CPSers from September, 1942, through September, 1946, were diverse:

- Lookout duty during fire season;
- Fireguard duty during fire season;
- Surveying and mapping of existing utilities;
- Fire-hazard reduction, especially from the 1929 fire, on Aggar Mountain and along roadsides, like Going-to-the-Sun Road;
- Road maintenance, especially Going-to-the-Sun Road;
- Trail maintenance, including bridge construction and corduroy work;
- Crank telephone-line maintenance, including work on the Transmountain Cable (in conduit);
- Blister-rust control:
- Fire, on Apgar Mountain and along roadsides;
- Road; construction and transporting firewood, for the museum-library at Park Headquarters;
- Construction of a workshop at Park Headquarters;
- Construction of a water system at the Polebridge Ranger Station;
- Construction of Heaven's Peak Lookout;
- Organization and cataloging of library/archives holdings;
- Harvest of 100,000 board-feet of Forest Service timber up the South Fork drainage;
- Rewiring, re-roofing, and reflooring of most buildings in camp;
- Forest-fire fighting.

The summer of 1943 was a typically tough fire season in Glacier Park: 31 fires fought by crews from Camp #55. When not assigned to side camps had been confined to the base camp ("grounded") so they would be available when fires broke out. The following account is representative (The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #9; August, 1943):

The Flattop Mountain fire necessitated a 26-mile hike for the 10 men and took them within a short distance of the Continental Divide. Most of the fires required night work and gave the men an opportunity to become acquainted with the sleeping bags and the emergency rations.

The summer of 1944 was wetter and cooler. The 1945 fire season was the worst yet. At one point in late August, the Park had too dozen fires burning simultaneously, and CPSers fought forest fires for weeks.

The logging project in the woods involved the handling of such heavy material and power machinery.
The design and building of the 100,000-gallon concrete water reservoir on the hill above Park Headquarters was a remarkable achievement. Men worked on the precise construction of the tank for months. The reservoir is still in use as a part of the Park Service water system.

The building of Heaven's Peak Lookout during the summer of 1943 proved a comparable feat. After establishing a side camp well below the summit, CPSers poured footings and erected a complete lookout at an elevation of 8,990 feet. Park Service pack trains carried up all of the equipment and supplies for this work. Stu Swanberg served as the Glacier Park foreman, and the crew completed the project during the short building season of 1945.

At one point in the spring of 1943, the Great Northern Railway Company attempted to hire Civilian Public Service assignees from Camp #55 to perform track-maintenance work in the division. During the summer of 1943, farmers from the Flathead Valley approached the Selective Service to detail Camp #55 men to the sugar-beet fields in Lake County. In both cases, the Selective Service rejected the proposals.

In addition to the base camp at Belton, Park Service personnel established summer side camps throughout Glacier. These side camps (or "spike camps") located work crews near specific projects—like blister-rust work on the East Side or the construction of the water system at the Polebridge Ranger Station. The design for each side camp varied from four to 40 men, depending on the work detail. Each group included a CPS leadman; the larger groups included a Park Service foreman. Most CPSers enjoyed side-camp duty because it offered less direct supervision, less camp regimentation, and increased food rations. Side-camp assignments also placed assignees in some of the most remote, spectacular locations in Glacier Park. The side camps were supplied with food and materials on a regular basis by truck and pack string out of the Belton base camp.

Side camps located in Glacier Park included:

1945:
- Waterton
- St. Mary
- Nyack
- Walton
- Starvation Creek
- Polebridge
- Kintla

1944:
- Garden Wall
- St. Mary
- Sun Point
- Coal Creek
- Park Creek
- Camas Creek
- Two Medicine

1946:
- St. Mary
- Waterton
- Heaven's Peak

In addition to dictating the work projects, Glacier Park officials (the "technical agency") could influence movement into and out of the camp. When the actions of a camper displeased those officials, they could work through the Selective Service System to have the fellow transferred to another CPS camp. Such was the case of Glenn Elliott who, in 1943-1944, had used his personal vehicles to haul freight commercially while on leave or furlough. (Please see the stories covering this incident in "Chapter Four: Snapshots of Camp #55").

Above all, the CPSers from Camp #55 won over their critics in the Glacier National Park administration with their conscientious work ethic. From the camp's inception in the fall of 1942, the men impressed the "technical agency" Donald S. Libbey, Glacier's Superintendent noted (Libbey to A.S. Irmiere, Selective Service, October 19, 1942: National Archives, 450–Camps, Box 50, File 450–"C.O. Camps, Belton") the opening of Camp #55, the Selective Service System, the Monomine Church, and the Glacier Park administration created a distinct community. Because they had been placed in an isolated-albeit scenic—location, the men of Camp #55 faced the necessity of generating their own religious, educational, and recreational lives.

For the most part, the men responded with enthusiasm, adaptability, and cooperation. In retrospect, most assignees experienced an adventure in Belton. To some campers, their time at Camp #55 proved life-altering.

Orders to close Camp #55 arrived from the Selective Service System in May 1946. The camp population was systematically depleted once cool, rainy weather ended the 1946 fire season. The last significant groups of men transferred out on September 16: 24 to Camino, California (Camp #51); 9 to Lincoln, Nebraska (Camp #15). By September 30 a crew of a dozen men had closed the operation and said a final goodbye to Camp #55.

The story of Civilian Public Service Camp #55 in Belton remains one of a strong work ethic, commitment to the principle of peace, and dogged determination. On another level, the story of Camp #55 is the story of each of the 550 men who served there.

Actually the CPS camp with only about 80 men did more in one week than we were able to accomplish with an entire work detail from a CCC camp in a whole month.

With the opening of Camp #55, the Selective Service System, the Monomine Church, and the Glacier Park administration created a distinct community. Because they had been placed in an isolated—albeit scenic—location, the men of Camp #55 faced the necessity of generating their own religious, educational, and recreational lives.

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CHAPTER TWO:
CAMP #55'S RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

None of us has entered C.P.S. because of financial or material reasons. There is something less tangible, but more important, than that. The interest of our relatives and friends back home who contribute more than two thousand dollars daily toward our well-being is that we maintain our ideals and develop further mentally and spiritually in ways of service to God and man.

We still have our own lives to live in C.P.S., and the method with which we improve our time will determine our progress. Camp life can be extremely tiresome and boring, or it can be pretty much what we make it.

"CAMP #55 HANDBOOK OF INFORMATION FOR NEW CAMPERS";
MENNONITE CHURCH ARCHIVES-GOSHEN, IX-12-1;
MCC REPORTS, BOX 5: "CPS-CAMP DIRECTORIES AND MANUALS"

The "HISTORIC PEACE CHURCHES" accepted the financial responsibility for Civilian Public Service camps as a labor of love and conviction, and so they could influence the creation of religious, educational, and recreational programs at the camps.

The Mennonite Central Committee committed itself to offering CPSers spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth. At Camp #55 the forms of that commitment changed, based on the needs of the men and on the visions of the various Education Directors. For it was the Education Director who was responsible for religious, educational, and recreational programs in the Belton camp.

The supervisory personnel at Camp #55 clearly recognized the difficulties of an assignee's life at a Civilian Public Service camp. Director Alfred Zook reflected on this subject in a letter to Albert M. Gaedert, MCC General Director of Camps (Zook to Gaedert, June 39, 1945; MCAG, ix-6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 22: "Camp #55, Director, 1945").

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RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS

From the inception of the camp, under Education Director Jesse Harder, religious activities received the highest priority. Harder early established a Religious Life Committee. This group of five elected men became responsible for organizing Sunday morning services, Sunday evening meetings, Wednesday evening services, and daily morning devotions in the Dining Hall. The Committee worked with the Education Director to schedule visiting ministers for the Sunday-morning services. It coordinated with the Sunday School Superintendent to insure a quality Sunday School curriculum.

At Camp #55 attendance at the religious functions was remarkably high, reaching 80 to 85 percent of the camp population for some Sunday-morning services. Winter attendance suffered somewhat because of furloughs and leaves. Summer attendance declined because of side-camp dispersal and firefighting duties. A typical monthly "religious report" appeared in the Camp Letter on March 9, 1945 (#54; statistics for the month of February):

- Average Sunday School attendance (let's improve that): 45
- Average Church attendance (very good): 104
- Average Sunday evening attendance: 65
- Average offering: $1.34
- Average attendance at Wednesday prayer meeting: 29

Of particular note here is the generous amount contributed by the men to the relief fund, given their limited income.

The second Education Director, Willard Unruh (1945-1945), developed the camp's spiritual program even further. He assigned laymen-campers to assist the visiting clergy and to lead other services; he integrated music into all of the camp's spiritual endeavors. The importance of singing to CPS life cannot be overemphasized: it was a religious keystone in Camp #55.

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the men to their religious assignments.

The Mennonite Central Committee and the super-
visory personnel at Camp #55 assessed the spiritual
level of the men at all times. The Education Director
was responsible, on a monthly basis, to make this
assessment ("Religious Activity Report—July, 1944", MCAG,
ix-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence.

Spirit in camp seems to be quite good at the presen
time. It is interesting to notice that the men are more
inclined to come to church and
prone to come to church and
they have been out on side camp for a while and
then come in than if they had not gone out at all.
Attendance at Prayer Meeting is good, almost twice
as many coming as during the time when camp was
at full strength.

However, there are still many that should be there
that aren't. Offers have also held their own
and even increased in spite of lowered base-camp
strength—the last two Sundays both being over six.

As with other camp activities, the level of religious
enthusiasm varied because of transfers in and out of
the camp's facility. A factor that guaranteed greater
religious involvement was the arrival of a visiting
Mennonite minister. The Mennonite Central Commit
tee scheduled these inspirational guests and paid for
their transportation. Some summer preachers stayed
long enough to visit the men in side camps in the
Park.

One of the more ephemeral aspects of the camp's
religious program was building relationships with
churches in the Flathead Valley. Interaction with the
Mennonite Church in Creston was immediate and
long-lasting. Reverend John G. Hostetler directed
direct services at the camp regularly and welcomed all as-
signees and their families to functions at the Creston
church. Through the years, men from Camp #55
participated regularly in that church's Sunday and
holiday services.

Willard Unruh also pioneered other relationships
in 1944. He reported Unruh to Albert Gaeddert, Mennonite Central Committee, February 24, 1944;
MCAG, ix-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 15;
"Camp #55, Religious Activities, 1944."

Several Sunday evenings ago, I spoke to the Youth
Fellowship of the Methodist Church in Kalispell. Al-
though they had given little thought to this idea of
pacifism (the minister has three sons in the service)
and though I spoke on Post-War Planning, they
were very attentive and were quite interested in our
position.

Last Saturday afternoon the leader of this group,
who is also the State Chairman for the Youth Fel-
lowship and a pacifist, accompanied by a young
lady, visited camp and was much interested. She
offered to undertake a project for us and will pro-
vide curtains for our new chapel. Since she is the
State Chairman and there will be a meeting of the
Fellowships in this part of the state
soon, she plans on suggesting this project to be taken up jointly by
several groups.

She is also interested in lining up people to have our
fellows over for Sunday dinner when they come to
Kalispell for weekends or Sundays. Jess [Harder] tells
me that this is about the first contact we have had
with the churches in Kalispell, and I think it prom-
ises to be a pleasant one. The pastor of the Christian
Church has also been out to visit the camp, and we
would like to have him out some evening of the
week for a meeting, since he is always occupied on
Sunday.

One of the regular Flathead Valley clergy who
derived Camp #55 was the Reverend A. P. Becker, the
Brethren minister from Whitefish. Reverend Becker
usually preached on the first Sunday of the month.
The men grew to rely on his realism and on his
inspirational words. On occasion Reverend Daniel
Brenneman from the Creston Mennonite Church also
served the camp.

During the summer of 1945, the MCC detailed
Paul Buchwalter to Belton as the "coordinator of
religious activities"—to enhance the camp's religious
programs. Buchwalter brought enthusiasm and or-
ganization to the spiritual activities, as evidenced in
higher numbers of camper participants. The prob-
lem he faced was voiced by Education Director Jesse
Harder in early 1945 (MCAG, ix-1-12-1, MCC Reports,
Box 7: "CPS (Quarterly Educational Re-
ports, 1943-1945)."

There is that group in camp which, though
not anti-Christian, is rather indifferent to
the religious activities carried on. On the
other hand, there is a group that is especial-
ly zealous. There is a tendency for friction to
arise between the two groups. Fortunately
there is a large body in the middle that
serves as a stabilizing factor.

In the discussion of whether the work in Camp #55 was
of national significance: "Well, I think that the attitude
of one bunch was that, 'We're here to fight fires, but in
the meantime we've got to make firewood for all of the
Park rangers to heat their houses in the wintertime!'"

"One of the highlights of the CPS experience was the
interaction with other groups and how their beliefs
differed from my beliefs and how you can start seeing
people—you can start seeing yourself in other's view-
points, too. It was a tremendous experience. Very, very
very valuable. Just like when you go to school, when you
graduate you go to another level, and this was an­
other level. It was not the end by any means. The end
isn't yet. We're still going to school, still progressing,
and I enjoy it to the full."

Oral History 1945: John Bender, August 18, 1995;
Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena.
work over the next three months improved morale among the majority of the men during this period of confusion. Finally Selective Service announced that the official closing of the camp would occur on September 30.

In reflecting on the advantages of having a full-time pastor in camp, Director Richard Weaver stated (Weaver to Elmer Ediger, Mennonite Central Committee, July 24, 1946; MCAG, 12-6-5; MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 29; "Camp #55, Director, 1945"): "I feel that a pastor in each camp should be encouraged. When a minister comes in and lives right with the fellows—works with them and plays with them—there is a friendship made that opens the way for real heart-to-heart talks, and the minister has a real forethought and preparation.

Overall, the solid religious program sponsored throughout the life of Camp #55 proved its own stabilizing force in this remote community.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The men of Camp #55 were fortunate to have a string of highly qualified, imaginative Education Directors. These leaders realistically gauged the relative isolation of the Belton camp and the debilitating effects of the long, dark winters, and they fashioned educational programs to combat those influences.

The first Education Director was Jesse Harder, who served from early October, 1942, until he became the director of Camp #55 in September, 1943. He organized the camp's educational program immediately upon arrival.

During the fall of 1942, the camp offered courses in the New Testament, Spanish, typing, photography, and chorus. As soon as Harder could obtain a transferee with first-aid certification, he offered basic and advanced first-aid courses. He also instituted a very popular course in Disaster Management—the first of its kind in the entire CPS system.

When he served as Education Director (December, 1945-September, 1945), Willard Unruh arranged for correspondence courses for academic credit. Campers could enroll in high-school courses that would lead to a GED (General Educational Development) degree. Those men already holding a high-school diploma could enroll in correspondence courses on an individual basis through Montana State University in Missoula.

Approximately forty members of Camp #55 took advantage of Unruh's program. At various times, Harder and Unruh organized courses in botany, leathercraft, plaque-making, basic music appreciation, woodworking, bookkeeping, auto mechanics, the Life of Christ, psychology, practical electricity, welding, calisthenics/tumbling, German, livestock-judging, and trigonometry.

Frequently a qualified camper served as the instructor for these courses, although sometimes a member of the supervisory personnel taught a religious course. A recurring offering was the Core Course in Mennonite history/theology. Another favorite was a course called Rural Community Living, which investigated ways that the men might improve the situations in their home communities.

Regarding the organization of the course offerings, Willard Unruh observed (MCAG, 12-12-1; MCC Reports, Box 7; "CPS Quarterly Educational Reports, 1942-1945"): "We feel that we learned quite a bit through our experience of accelerating our classes during the first part of the quarter while the weather was not nice enough to spend the evenings outside. We speeded up our classes by having them twice-a-week instead of once-a-week as had been the practice the winter quarter.

Two things that stood out from this experience were the continued interest of the group and how much more was retained from one meeting to the other when they were only several days apart rather than a week. From this experience we may go on in the fall to having all classes twice-a-week and run two terms a quarter or have fewer classes and stress the importance of concentrating on one thing rather than dabbling in a lot of things."

Camp football team

In the fall of 1945, Education Director Martin Schrag tried a different approach: he organized classes based on a survey of interests taken among the men during the preceding summer. The Camp Letter quoted (#86, October 18, 1945): "The first fruits of the educational program are the three scheduled interest groups. Camera Club, Chorus, and Typing will get underway during the latter part of the week. Let's make our last winter in CPS the best and the most valuable.

Schrag added a class in electric welding to the curriculum in December, 1945. Early in 1946, Schrag used the Camp Letter to remind the men of some scheduled offerings to combat the winter doldrums. He listed (#98, January 11, 1946):

- a Thursday-night series of talks by Reverend Becker of Whitfish on "Building the Christian Home";
- the Saturday-morning course on electric welding;
- a music course led by Oscar Roth on note-reading;
- both beginning and advanced typing courses;
- a public-speaking class;
- a seminar in relief-work training;
- a how-to course in farm accounting;
- weekly instruction in basic first-aid.

**Skiing on the ski hill at Belton, April 1 (Easter), 1945 (l-r): Elvin Lowen, Kansas; Eldon Schrock, Fairview, Oregon; Luke Birkey, Fairview, Oregon; Amos Gerig, Fairview, Oregon; Oscar Fry, Pennsylvania; Lloyd Larrew, Shariadan, Oregon; Elwin Herre, Pennsylvania; Ralph Miller, Zian, Oregon**

Photo courtesy of Bob Schrock

**Camp football team**

Photo courtesy of MCC, Bolivia
Chapter Two

By means of the educational-program offerings, the Mennonite Central Committee endeavored to promote learning on multiple levels at Camp #55. The Belton camp's Education Directors organized imaginative responses to the needs of the men. The educational program provided a solid basis for camp life through the years.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

Faced with scores of young, energetic men, the supervisors of Camp #55 recognized the value of a strong recreational program, one with lots of options. Thus—with the aid of a four-man, elected Recreation Committee—they developed a seasonal offering of crafts and sports. Moreover the Committee organized tournaments to generate competitions among the dorms and among groups of campers. The CPSer at Belton encountered a wide array of leisure-time recreational activities. The choice was his.

The Education Director established a number of craft projects in the camp's workshops each fall. These how-to courses ranged from leatherworking to plaque-making to woodworking to knife-making. An ever-popular alternative was rug-weaving from scraps of cloth. In 1946 a class addressed the working of plastics into lamp bases.

Sporting activities were just as wide-ranging. They included organized sports like softball, baseball, volleyball, track, and football. These team sports frequently pitted one dorm against another or teams from different regions—as the East versus the West.

Softball became the mainstay of the camp's summer-evening activities, when the men often were "grounded," awaiting deployment on forest fires. Recreation proved just as important at the side camps during the summer.

The second category of sports included those outdoor activities afforded by Glacier National Park: hiking, fishing, boating, swimming, skiing, skating. Although seasonal in nature, these options drew many of the men on evenings and weekends.

Campers flooded a skating rink beside the Middle Fork River, just below camp. A ski run in the Belton Hills, two miles from camp, drew some of the more adventurous men. In the fall, hunting on nearby National Forest land was possible. The hunters added this meat to the camp larder, providing an interesting menu diversification.

The lack of a building sufficiently large to serve as a gymnasium seriously hampered the sports options that camp administrators could offer the men in winter. In November of 1944, Director Al Zook addressed this issue with the Glacier National Park authorities (Zook to GNP Assistant Superintendent L. A. Garrison, November 8, 1944; MCAG, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 22: "Camp #55, Director, 1945"):
Our present recreational hall is crowded each evening and it now appears to us that more recreational facilities would be very desirable. We suggest building a gymnasium to enable us to play basketball, volleyball and other more active games than are permissible with the present facilities. We feel certain this would appreciably raise the morale of the entire camp and reduce the desire of many men to transfer from this camp during the long winter months.

Although the gymnasium never was constructed at Camp #55, the Recreation Committee found a solution the following winter. It made arrangements to rent the Whitefish high-school gym on selected Saturday afternoons. In this gym, Camp #55 men played other basketball teams from the Flathead Valley—with remarkable success, given their lack of practice time. The campers also had erected an outdoor backboard near the Dining Hall that could be used in season.

In terms of recreation, Camp #55 offered real diversity. A summer sample appeared in The Trailmaker in August of 1945 (Vol. 3, #5):

"Not only was I interested in whatever assignment I had, but I was at liberty to choose some curriculum. I did take typing and I did take language. I enjoyed it, I thought there was opportunity. I did some work in higher mathematics, trigonometry and so on, from the University of Montana. That was how I spent my evenings: pretty much in study. There also was a record club and we would get together with records. I learned a lot to enjoy classical music. I just loved it.

"I became involved in teaching Sunday school. I taught every person in camp some first aid... I learned to know myself there. I think I learned to know that I could be responsible and something of a leader I understood something of my possibilities in a bigger and better way."

Interest in sports is at a low ebb during the summer with side camps in existence. The only exception being when the fire season is in full swing and a large percentage of the fellows are grounded all the time. During this time there is a renewed interest in all types of sports.

Almost any night of the week groups of fellows can be seen playing croquet on the front lawn. The crowd-drawing games of the week are the baseball games, featuring Dorms 1 and 2 against Dorms 3 and 4. The latest rivalry has been between the Project and the Overhead fellows. So far it has been an even draw between them.

The hot weather has driven most of the fellows to the Flathead Valley—with remarkable success, given their lack of practice time. Hiking has been a favorite for many of the fellows. The only way to really see the Park is by hiking back into the many lakes and into parts that have been completely undisturbed by man. Hiking 20 miles a day hasn't been uncommon this season already. No one as yet has reached last year's record of 41 miles in one day—the distance covered by Andy Lyndaker.

Although a good percentage of the fellows are grounded all the time, the majority of the fellows have been practicing. During this time there is a tendency for the men to lose interest in sports, but the members of the Recreation Committee are working diligently to provide campers with diverse activities on weekends—when leisure time hung heavy on the men's shoulders. For example (Camp Letter, #101, February 1, 1946):

WEEKEND SPECIALS—Something new and different has been added! Basketball is something many of us have been waiting for, and this week plans materialized. We got the Gym (in Whitefish) from 1:00 to 4:00 on Saturday. We will probably eat the midday meal a little early and be back early so as to give time for those going to Kalispell for the concert.

There is some bad news on the Social front. The girls from Kalispell can't come out because of sickness. But, man to man, let's not let a few girls keep us from having our fun. Saturday evening it's 'All Quiet on the Western Front.' More specials next week. In two weeks the County Agent is coming out and will speak on the subject of 'The Farm Outlook.'

Similarly, the camp's Recreation Committee constantly sought new sports opportunities for the men. This goal was especially important during the spring of 1946, as the Selective Service built up the camp population for summer fire-fighting and men faced a work week of only 42 hours. The Camp Letter reported (#117, May 31, 1946):

Round one and round two of the softball schedules will probably be finished next week, unless the rains continue. After round two has ended and the playoff between the winners of round one and round two have been completed, the emphasis in sports will probably go to track.

Track events will include the 100-yard dash, the 200-yard dash, the high jump, the broad jump, throwing the shot-put and discus, and dorm relays. Since the shot-put and discus will have to be returned soon, the track meet will be held in about two weeks. See the next week's Camp Letter for final notification of the meet and the method to be used in scoring. Competitions should be keen in track.

CONCLUSION

The supervisors of Camp #55 invested a good deal of time and effort in its religious, educational, and recreational programs. That effort resulted in a high percentage of camper involvement and a relatively high level of camp morale. Education Director Willard Unnah reflected (CMAG, 12-12-4, MCC Reports, Box 7; 'CPS Quarterly Educational Reports, 1942-1945'):

On the whole, I think we can say that most of the fellows are busy in their spare time. Some work quite steadily outside camp in the evenings, and we cannot hope to reach them with the educational program. Others who do not attend classes spend their time either in the carpenter shop, in the darkroom, or maybe in the Recreation Hall bowling or playing shuffleboard. In all I doubt if we have more than half a dozen 'ceiling-gazers'—i.e., those who spend most of the evening lying on the cot staring up at the ceiling or sleeping.
CHAPTER THREE
CAMP LIFE

"Let us keep in mind to help one another, to work for a common cause, and to keep our goal high. In doing the things beneficial to all, we will have joy and satisfaction. Our success is not measured in personal attainments; it is measured in the amount and the attitude of service."

HERMAN LIECHTY, The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #7 (June, 1944)

"During the past two years, 279 of us have had our names on the camp roster; but not one of us is the same person he was before entering this camp. The impact of the different ideas and personalities has left a definite mark upon each one. When we are on furlough, our friends tell us we have changed. Undoubtedly so, but are we the men they were expecting us to be?"

"Only if we take advantage of each opportunity which comes our way will we attain the development which we owe ourselves and our fellow men. No change of environment or location alone can produce this change in us."

"It is a matter of self-discipline and adaptation, and one which necessitates divine help. It is a task which will take a life time, but we will be able to live with ourselves and others for it."

ALFRED ZOOK, The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #10 (September, 1944)

EACH ASSIGNEE’S ADJUSTMENTS to life in Camp #55 were substantial. From an existence featuring relative privacy and personal freedom, he moved into a communal situation that required restraint, compromise, and diplomacy. The dorm normally housed forty men, each with his cot and wardrobe cubicle. The usual bathing and bathroom facilities were restricted to the two washhouses. The camper’s day ran on a precise schedule (Camp Manual; Mennonite Church Archives—Goshen, ix-12-1, MCC Reports, 1940-1959, Box 5: "CPS—Camp Directories and Manuals").

Friends and relatives are welcome to visit the camp. The Camp Car may be used to meet visitors at the Belton Depot if arrangements are made with the director for this purpose. The office will provide pamphlets for those interested further in the CPS program.

If our visitors wish to take meals here it is requested that arrangements be made before hand with the dietician. Payment is made in the office for guest meals at 25 cents per meal.

There is limited lodging space for men only in the camp. It is considered improper for ladies to remain in camp after ten o’clock in the evening. We regret we have no better accommodations to offer but feel our friends will understand since we are in CPS.

The general reception of guests in Camp #55 was dictated first by necessity and somewhat by convenience. The following paragraphs from the Camp Manual outline the procedure (Camp Manual; MCC, ix-12-1: MCC Reports, 1940-1959, Box 5: "CPS—Camp Directories and Manuals").

SUMMER SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising whistle</td>
<td>6:00 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First bell</td>
<td>6:20 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>6:30 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bell</td>
<td>7:25 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First dinner bell</td>
<td>12:05 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>12:10 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bell</td>
<td>12:45 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supper bell</td>
<td>5:30 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights out, retire</td>
<td>10:00 P.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINTER SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>6:50 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First bell</td>
<td>7:00 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>7:15 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bell</td>
<td>7:55 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First dinner bell</td>
<td>12:10 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>12:15 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bell</td>
<td>12:55 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supper bell</td>
<td>5:45 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights out, retire</td>
<td>10:30 P.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Camp Car was a 1941 International station wagon that the Mennonite Central Committee had purchased for camp use from Camp #4 in Colorado Springs. At one point in 1944, the men repainted the vehicle cream and maroon. The station wagon was subject to the same gas rationing that applied to private citizens’ vehicles during the war.

The Camp Car was intended for official use only—that is, for use in the case of camp emergencies and for camp business. It carried campers to and from dental, optical, and medical appointments in Columbia Falls, Whitefish, and Kalispell. It also was used to shuttle men and supplies to summer side camps in the Park and could carry men to religious, educational, and recreational activities in the Flathead Valley.

Some campers owned private vehicles and parked them either in the camp or in Apgar or Belton. Use of these cars was at a premium, since gas rationing also applied to their drivers. Access to one of these private automobiles opened a world of possibilities for camper activity both in Glacier Park and in the Flathead Valley.

The transfers of men into and out of Camp #55 frequently interrupted life in the camp. Furloughs and weekend leaves caused lesser disruptions. A camper earned furlough time at the rate of 2.5 days per month, and furloughs had to be scheduled well in advance, unless in case of an emergency. The Park Service could—and did—deny any furloughs during the fire season.

Photograph courtesy of M.E.C. Bulleth.
away from Camp #55 was particularly important because of the real isolation of the camp from other communities.

Each Mennonite assignee to Camp #55 received an allowance of $5.00 per month from the Mennonite Central Committee. In some cases, home churches supplied or supplemented this amount. Since he received no pay from the federal government, this stipend comprised the camper's spending money. The fact that most men contributed a significant portion of this allowance to the Sunday offerings speaks to the commitment of the Mennonite CP'ers.

The men of Camp #55 generated two publications on a regular basis. The Trailmaker was a monthly journal that first appeared in November, 1942, and ended in November, 1945. Five issues of The Trailmaker were not published between February and August, 1945, for lack of an editor. For the same reason, the journal did not run to the closing of the camp in September, 1946.

A series of editors designed The Trailmaker to serve as the "public face" of Camp #55. It was a generally up-beat compilation of news items that reported on camp activities for outsiders—the friends and families of campers and the men from other camps. It was The Trailmaker that campers mailed home.

A 'special issue' of the journal appeared in September, 1944. It listed all of the assignees who had served at Camp #55 during its first two years of operation and profiled the camp population. This reflective issue summarized camp activities over that two-year period and even included a photo collage.

The second publication was called the Camp Letter. Education Director Willard Unruh created this weekly newsletter in February, 1944; it ran until the week before the camp closed in September, 1946. The Camp Letter appeared each Friday and was widely read among the men of Camp #55.

The Camp Letter was an internal publication, designed for just the men of Camp #55. It contained camp-wide announcements, short news items, and listings of daily devotional leaders and weekend K.P. substitutes. During the summer, Unruh used the newsletter to keep side-campers in touch with the base camp and with the other side camps.

In June, 1946, Education Director Orlando Friesen changed the name of the Camp Letter to The Trailline, but it continued to serve the same purposes. In all, the Education Directors generated 132 issues of this newsletter. It became the internal operational record of Camp #55.

One of the highlights of life at Camp #55 was the weekly showing of films on Saturday evenings in the Recreation Hall. The Education Director arranged for these instructional films, and they tended to be educational in nature. For example, the silent films that ran on Saturday, February 26, 1944, included: "The Benefactor," two reels on the boyhood of Thomas Edison; "The Wool Yarn," one reel addressing the history of the woolen industry; "Mountains of Copper," one reel covering the operation of the world's largest copper mine.

In the beginning, the selection was limited because the only projector available was a 16mm one borrowed from the Park Service that ran silent films. Subsequently the camp obtained a 35mm projector through the Mennonite Central Committee, but it developed sound difficulties, and all films became silent films.
CHAPTER THREE

... that mixed campers with young men and women from the Flathead Valley. All-camper variety - program nights that pitted one against another. Later they became gatherings that mixed campers with young men and women from the Flathead Valley.

The isolation of Camp #55 prompted the realization that these mixed 'socials' could provide an interaction with outsiders otherwise lacking in camp life. The camp's elected Social Committee instigated and supervised these recreational events.

A typical mixed 'social' was described in the Education Director's quarterly report for winter, 1944 (MCC. Box 2, 1942-1945): "... because they provided new perspectives and inspiration. When someone like Albert M. Gaeddert, the MCC's Director of CPS, arrived, he could anticipate a Recreation Hall full of men with questions about CPS policy. Those meetings ran well into the night.

Visiting speakers traveled best in summer, when weather conditions were more hospitable and when the colleges were on summer break. Some of the most sought-after of the CPS speakers were 'on the circuit' most of the summer, traveling from one camp to another and taking the time to visit side camps.

Speakers frequently presented religious messages and proved inspirational to the men. Some guests - like a Kansas housewife and the Flathead County Extension Agent - offered more practical talks on specific topics. The men of Camp #55 received these visitors warmly and appreciated the efforts they had made to appear at the camp.

The appearance of visiting speakers was as important to camp morale as were the 'socials.' Because of Belton's remote location, it received few of these religious and intellectual visitors in 1942 and 1943. Education Director Unruh then worked with the Missoula Central Committee to schedule speakers more frequently. The location of the camp on the Great Northern mainline proved a bonus for scheduling.

These guests always attracted campers' attention because they provided new perspectives and inspiration. When someone like Albert M. Gaeddert, the MCC's Director of CPS, arrived, he could anticipate a Recreation Hall full of men with questions about CPS policy. Those meetings ran well into the night.

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The frequency of the 'social' increased through the years, until they were scheduled bi-monthly in 1945 and monthly in 1946.

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Park Service men from Headquarters also created a weekly lecture series that ran every winter for the duration of the camp. Its purpose was to acclimate new as-

sigees to Glacier National Park. Speakers included the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, the Chief Ranger, the Chief Naturalist, and the Fire Chief.

The Park administrators discussed topics that ranged from general Park policies to the birds and animals of Glacier to Indians and Park history. These sessions helped to build cordial ties between the CPSers and the 'government fellows' at Park Headquarters.

One of the primary components of camp life was the evening 'bull session' in the dormitory. Some campers astutely avoided these sessions, but others participated as a means of wresting with important issues affecting the CPSers. The topics of discussion evolved through the years, but included:

- Is the work we are doing 'work of national significance'?
- Should a CPSer be paid the soldier's wage by the federal government?
- Who is responsible for supporting a CPSer's family while he is in camp?
- Why is demobilization such a slow process?
- Is conscientious objection valid in the United States?
- Can the quality/quantity of the food be improved?

'Bull sessions' proved to be one of the 'leveling devices' in Camp #55. Men were exposed to viewpoints different from their own and frequently developed a tolerance for the opinions of others. Some CPSers recall these evening discussions as pivotal factors in their personal, intellectual growth while at Camp #55.

The Education Director supervised the Camp Library. Jesse Harder (1942-1943) set an admirable standard for reading material available to the men. One of his first acts upon reaching the camp was to order magazines and newspapers for the Library (Harder to Robert Kerides, September 21, 1942: MCAG. Box 3. MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 3, 'Camp #55. Educational Director, 1942').

We are sending a list of the magazines we want in our library. If you will please order these for us from Hanson and Bennett, we will appreciate it. Enclosed find a check for the approximate amount.

Atlantic Monthly

Christian Digest

Hygeia

Nature Magazine

Omnibook

Time

Reader's Digest

Life

Christian Herald

Country Gentleman

Saturday Evening Post

Cappers Farmer

Successful Farmer

Home Craftsman

National Geographic

United States News

The selection of magazines increased through the years. The Library also subscribed to a number of...
friendly relationship with newspapers, including the (Kalispell) Daily Inter Lake, the Great Falls Tribune, the (Missoula) Missoulian, and the (Spokane) Spokesman-Review.

Harder also set a lofty precedent in building the book collection in the Camp Library. He purchased some basic volumes, but also requested free copies from publishers and absorbed an old Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) library collection. Harder acquired other books on loan from the Kalispell Free Library and the library at Montana State University in Missoula. An early letter to the MCC office remarked (Harder to Robert Kreider, November 6, 1942; MCAG, xx-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 5: “Camp #55, Educational Director, 1943”):

Our efforts to stock our library are proving quite successful and not very expensive either. We now have 356 volumes accessioned, for which we have not expended more than $10.00 in all. However certain departments still need to be built up.

The camp amassed an impressive, topically-diverse book collection during its four-year existence. In the summer of 1945, Education Director William Unruh compiled a Library Guide and distributed it to the men in the base camp and the side camps. It was designed to encourage reading and listed the library’s holdings by topic. The Library disposed of its holdings—more than one thousand volumes—in the summer of 1946, just prior to the closing of the camp. Some of these copies were shipped to other CPS camp libraries, and some were sold to the men of Camp #55 at minimal cost.

At our Director’s Conference we ought to consider this problem further.

One of the few resident women—the Camp Nurse—and the Infirmary played a central role in camp life. The Nurse became an “angel of mercy” to sick and injured men. “Sick call” at the Infirmary occurred four times a day, following meals and in the evening. If ill, a camper could be confined to a bed in the Infirmary or to his own bed in the dormitory.

Director Jesse Harder delivered a summary of the camp’s health status in February, 1944 (MCAG, xx-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence, “Camp #55, Director, 1944”):

Since recovering from the “flu” epidemic of late December and early January the health of the men in camp has been very good. I think, for the winter months. One of the men had an appendectomy in January and is getting along nicely. Another had to have all his upper teeth extracted but is back at work again.

Not counting the two above-mentioned cases, we had an average of 34 men sick in camp each day for the month of January. With an average camp strength of 99 for the same month, the number of sick seems not to be out of proportion. The “cold-bricker” is also known here but does not constitute a major problem.

Injuries occurred either on the job (“on project”) or as a result of leisure-time activities. The cause of reported injuries between these two was approximately even. In a survey of lost-time accidents running from October 1, 1942, to February 15, 1945, typical entries included (MCAG, xx-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 22: “Camp #55, Director, 1945”):

- Chris Yoder (wound on leg-wedge)
- Ludy Allen (gash in forehead-skiing)
- Karl Ernst (lacerated hand-sue)
- Leslie Adams (sprained ankle-skiing)
- Howard Nice (bruised knee-football)
- Jacob Roth (abrasion to left ankle-falling log)
- Daniel Headings (sprained ankle-ball game)
- Roland Jaentzi (tracked ribs-log)
- Wilmer Martin (cut left wrist-sue)
- Henry Spackman (fractured wrist-skiing)

An associated piece of correspondence noted (Director Alfred Zook to GNP Superintendent J. W. Emmert, February 20, 1945; MCAG, xx-6-5, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 22: “Camp #55, Director, 1945”):

It might be of interest to know that in the aforementioned period, the Menno­nite Central Committee has thus far paid $4,695 for medical expenses for this camp. Of this amount $4,695 was spent on two accidents alone! Burns to Leslie Adams and a skull fracture to Leeland Weibring.

The topic of food was a constant concern for the men of Camp #55. Meals dominated the daily routine, and the subject crept into evening “bull sessions” with regularity.

At full strength, the kitchen operated with a dietician, two cooks, and four workers. Another four men served as waiters in the Dining Hall during meals. However, the kitchen frequently ran short-handed, especially in the summer when some of the kitchen staff moved to the side camps.

In March, 1944, the MCC sent traveling-dietician Ms. Mary Emma Showalter to Camp #55 to as-
30.
her survey pleased Director Jesse Harder (Harder to
sess the food-preparation operation. The results of
Directors of CPS Camps Albert M. Gaeddert, March
30, 1944; MCAG, 10-6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence,
"Camp #55, Director, 1944"):
Miss Showalter's quiet, frank ways were well-ap­
ticipated here. She left helpful suggestions and gave
us some interesting comparisons as to the amounts
of foods consumed per man/month in several of
the camps.
Before giving up the comparisons, we were told that
in general the western camps used more food per
man. She used Groeters, Fort Collins, and Belton in
her comparison, and in almost every case our con­
sumption was the highest. In several commodities
the difference was quite a bit. The one case in which
we were far down was milk. We also were lowest in
the amount of eggs used.
Camp agents purchased fresh fruits, vegetables,
meats, and dairy products in the Flathead Valley.
They supplemented these supplies from the large
store of canned foods shipped to the camp by the
Mennonite Central Committee. Individual Mennonite
churches also contributed canned foods to the larder.
Although the camp occasionally suffered shortages
of meat, milk, and butter; in general the men found the
food adequate.
Campers could complement the camp diet by
purchasing items in the canteen. The first Business
Manager, Walter Unruh, helped to organize the "Gla­
cier Co-op" in the fall of 1942. Although it experienced
several reorganizations, the Co-op functioned well
through the life of Camp #55—offering basic clothing
items, toiletries, writing supplies, candy and nuts, and
ice cream. The Co-op regularly returned dividends to
its subscribers and filled a very necessary void in the
life of Camp #55.
Inspection trips to Camp #55 by Selective Service
personnel generated reports on the condition of the
camp and the morale of the men. For example, in
mid-September, 1945, a Lieutenant Colonel Bier (a
physician) inspected medical aspects of the camp. He
reported (Bier to Selective Service System, September
15, 1945; National Archives, 450-Camps, 1945, Box 55,
File 450-"CO Camps-Belton"):
In closing the report on the Belton camp, I wish to
state that as far as the men are concerned, it was
about as good a camp for morale, etc., as I have
visited. The superintendent of the project, Mr. (Ezra)
Sullivan, volunteered the information unsolicited that
he did not know where we could find one
hundred men who were as good as those at Belton.
The work at Belton is very arduous and at times
dangerous, and coupled with the extreme cold, taxes
men's physical and mental stamina. Except for one
or two, the men who presented themselves to me
apparently did not do so with an idea of reclasifica­
tion, but only to seek medical advice and counsel.
Camp morale remained a major priority for the
director and his associates, as well as a prime concern
of the Mennonite Central Committee office. Reports
from both the Selective Service inspectors and the
MCC visitors note the relatively high level of morale
in Camp #55, even during the long, dark winters.
That sound morale largely was the re­

sult of diverse, imaginative educational and
recreational programs, as well as a strong,
consistent schedule of religious
services and activities.

Given the entire CPS experience and the particular
work project at Belton, one of the most important
components of camp life was humor. These were
young men, and their inherent playfulness led to
practical jokes, like the short-sheeting of cots, with
regularity. A general recognition of humor in the day­
to-day routine eased many of the camper's concerns
and reminded him of his commitment to peace.
For example, Business Manager Walter Unruh
faced the chaos of opening Camp #55 in the fall
of 1942 with this post-script on a letter to the MCC
office (Unruh to John M. Snyder, October 4, 1942;
MCAG, 10-6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 5:
"Camp #55, Business Office, 1942"):
Word of this CO camp must be getting around
pretty well, as even the bears are paying us a visit
now and then. They sure do the dirty work with the
garbage cans.
In the same vein, retired Camp Director Dan
Neufeld wrote from his California home in June,
1946, to his former Education Director Martin
Schrag:
Neufeld told a joke in an attempt to raise Schrag's
spirits (Neufeld to Schrag, June 10, 1946; MCAG, 10-
6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 5: "Camp #55,
Director, 1946"):
It seems that a young man was drafted into the
Army. After a short time he wrote to his mother and
told her that he liked it fine: the food was good, the
beds were good, and they treated him fine in gen­
eral. The only thing was that he missed the little pot
that they always had standing under the bed at home.
His mother wrote back and told him that was
O.K.—he always missed that at home too.

Humor also crept into the most mundane situa­
tions. For instance, Director Sturgis Miller remarked
concerning men using tobacco in camp (Miller to
Emler Ediger at MCC, August 15, 1946; MCAG, 10-
6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 29: "Camp #55,
Director, 1946"):
In this camp, as in other camps, you have dorms in
which no smoking is found and usually one dorm
called "the blue room" if they are looking for relief
workers for darkest Africa where living is tough.
choose some of these men. If they survive these
smoking dens, they can take anything.
The very, playful nature of Camp #55 humor is
perhaps best expressed in this blurb from The Trail­
maker concerning the camp dog, "Conchie" (Vol. 1, #53,
January, 1943):
That mongrel dog, (collie-strain predominating),
un­
officially adopted by the camp as a mascot, is quite
an addition. "Conchie" is rather an apt name. The
dog has definite C.O. qualities—a dirty yellow streak
down its back, friendly, non-violent, etc.
When all the components of life in Camp #55
were combined, the camp experience became some­
thing different to each of the CPSers. To most, how­
ever, their time spent in Belton was an adventure—a
time of mental and physical exploration; a time of
adaptation to new places, new ideas, and new cir­
cumstances; a time of commitment to a lofty ideal, a
time to make a statement for peace.*

*Photo courtesy of Bill L. Buller

Photo courtesy of Bill L. Buller

Mess hall interior

The cooking crew
CHAPTER FOUR
SNAPSHOTS OF CAMP #55

"Courage, patience, and sacrifice—CPS"
The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #1 (November, 1944)

"Going to C.P.S. camp is one isolated act of testimony for one's beliefs. Living there presents vastly more of an opportunity to testify among one's fellow-campers. Living in the post-war world as a C.O. or as one who renounces war is going to mean a still greater opportunity and a harder test."
Clark Fuller, The Trailmaker, Vol. 5, #3 (January, 1945)

COOPERATION FROM THE TECHNICAL AGENCY

The Park officials are going out of their way to insure good public relations and satisfactory working conditions. The project superintendent (Jean Sullivan) is ready to cooperate on every point.

An example of their willingness to cooperate might be in order. Several weeks ago, the project superintendent, in speaking of the work program they had lined up, mentioned something about gathering scrap iron. I spoke to the director (Mr. Nafziger) about the matter, and he went to the Park Superintendent to explain our position in such a case. The Superintendent said that, rather than to risk unfavorable reaction, he would just call off the scrap-metal collection. Quite human, don't you think?

Jesse Harder to Robert Kreider, October 12, 1942; Menonite Church Archives-Goshen, 16-5: MCC and "Other Correspondence; File 5: "Camp #55 Educational Director, 1942"

LESLIE ADAMS' ACCIDENT

Leslie Adams, campee from Portland, Oregon, was severely burned on December 24 (1942), while working with a creosoting crew, when the tank containing the inflammable liquid boiled over and ignited, belching clouds of resinous black smoke and yellow flame. The crew of which Adams was a member was waterproofing the bottoms of telephone poles by dipping the ends in a 1,200-gallon tank of hot creosote.

Adams was working on an 18-foot scaffold above the tank, guiding the poles from the top when the tank boiled over and caught fire. He was immediately beside the flaming liquid.

With much of his clothing burned from his body, he was rushed to the camp infirmary, where he was given preliminary treatment by the camp nurse and brought to the hospital at Kalispell. Leslie Adams, a fellow campee, has been confined there since December 24 because of serious burns sustained while helping to creosote telephone poles. Since the accident, he had not shown the improvement anticipated.

The doctors hoped to bolster his strength by giving several blood transfusions preceding his transfer to another hospital at Portland, Oregon, where a new type treatment is being given. Four of the eight men had the right type blood and transfusions were made on three successive days starting February 10th. "Les" was moved to Portland on February 14th where, according to latest reports, he is improving satisfactorily.

Jesse Harder to Robert Kreider, October 12, 1942; Menonite Church Archives-Goshen, 16-5: MCC and "Other Correspondence; File 5: "Camp #55 Educational Director, 1942"

LESLIE ADAMS GETS BLOOD

In response to an emergency call for blood donors, eight men sped by auto to the hospital at Kalispell on February 10th. Leslie Adams, a fellow campee, has been confined there since December 24 because of serious burns sustained while helping to creosote telephone poles. Since the accident, he had not shown the improvement anticipated.

The doctors hoped to bolster his strength by giving several blood transfusions preceding his transfer to another hospital at Portland, Oregon, where a new type treatment is being given. Four of the eight men had the right type blood and transfusions were made on three successive days starting February 10th. "Les" was moved to Portland on February 14th where, according to latest reports, he is improving satisfactorily.

THE TRAILMAKER, Vol. 1, #5 (March, 1943)

ADAMS VISITS CAMP

It has been a very good feeling for me to return to camp and see and visit many of my friends who are still in camp, but I'm sorry I couldn't see the many others who have now gone into detached service.

Camp 55 appears generally the same, though there have been new fellows move in to make this their home, but I have enjoyed meeting and visiting with them. I see a couple or three more buildings which will aid in camp life.

The morale of camp is much higher than when I left, that is to say the fellows seem to get along smoother between themselves and with the administration of camp, without all the "griping" which was so popular at the time I was in camp.

I was especially pleased to find that the new director for camp was Jesse (Harder), as I feel that all the fellows will be met more than half-way by Jess without having to argue to get some consideration on their points of view.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to all the boys of Camp Belton and many of their folks...
for the cards, gifts and visits which I received while spending my time in the hospital. My gratitude to the Mennonite Church for standing the expense of my hospital and doctor bills is quite inexpressible, but I give my most grateful "Thanks" and hope that the government will reimburse the whole amount.

I hope to get back for another visit in the spring, but in the meanwhile, if any of you get out towards Oregon, I would enjoy seeing and entertaining you.

Leslie Adams

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #11 (October, 1943)

ADAMS RELEASED

The release of Leslie Adams was received here on March 6, 1943. Leslie is well known to most of us through the fellows in camp, if not personally, because of the serious accident which happened to him on the day before Christmas, 1942.

He was working on a platform above a 500-gallon creosote vat in which the ends of telephone poles were being dipped. The platform was almost absorbed by a mass of smoke and flame that shot up when the creosote boiled over and caught fire. Since the ladder to the platform immediately caught fire, it was necessary for him to jump to the ground, a distance of about 25 feet. This he did, but not before he was seriously burned. After first-aid treatment, he was taken to a hospital in Portland for special treatment.

On the day before Christmas, 1942, Leslie is well known to most of us for standing the expense of my hospital and doctor bills is quite inexpressible, but I give my most grateful "Thanks" and hope that the government will reimburse the whole amount.

I hope to get back for another visit in the spring, but in the meanwhile, if any of you get out towards Oregon, I would enjoy seeing and entertaining you.

Leslie Adams

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #11 (October, 1943)

THE CAMP GARDEN

Our Victory Garden this year proved to be somewhat of a failure. After debating whether it would even be advisable to try to raise food, because of deer, bears, birds and, most of all, the Columbian ground squirrels, it was decided to give it a try.

Ground was cleared, a fence was put up, and the seed planted. The first week showed real signs of producing something worthwhile. The second was an entirely different story. In several days time, the Columbian ground squirrels and birds utterly destroyed the garden, leaving nothing to show for our efforts.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #8 (June/July, 1943)

CAMP MEAT

At the present date, the final score on the success of camp hunters is now six deer, two elk, and one bear. New additions to the supply in the ice box have been contributed by the following hunters: Omer Yo-der, Lloyd King, Ralph Kauffman, and Mark Harshbarger—one deer; Freeman Stutzman—one bear.

Special mention goes to Harshbarger who proved his hunting ability by being the only man in camp to have made both his deer and his elk limit. It seems that Mark gave himself a frightful scare with both kills; thinking he had killed a female deer. His elk was a young bull without horns, and the deer was at such a distance that he had visions of shooting a doe.

"Big-enough" Stutzman was the hunter to bring in the bear. It really was quite by accident that the bear appeared out of a log at nearly point-blank range. Without sights, Stutzman let him have it. Was it really fair to shoot before the bear had wakened from his winter sleep?

Henry Metz, the local butcher, reports that there was 1,600 pounds of meat from all the hunting trips, with only 250 pounds remaining. He also states that no meat has been purchased for the camp since October 15.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #12 (November, 1943)

OPEN HOUSE

Director and Mrs. Jess Harder entertained the members of the CPS camp with a series of open-house parties held in the director's apartment.

Wednesday evening, October 20, was the night for the first party in which Dorm #1 was entertained. Each of the dorms was entertained on the following evenings. After introductions were made, games of chess, checkers, Chinese checkers, and Monopoly were started. Each evening the Monopoly board held a capacity group.

After the games a pleasant surprise of pie and coffee concluded the evening. In this way the wife of the director was able to become better acquainted with the men of the camp.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #12 (November, 1943)

THE GLACIER CO-OP

Little over a year ago, the Glacier Co-op was organized for the service and benefit of all the fellows at CPS. Since that time it has handled a business amounting to $2,500. This includes articles such as gloves, sweat shirts, shorts, socks, toilet articles, ice cream, candies, nuts, pastries, and a number of miscellaneous articles. Due to a large number of men transferring and to side camps which are operating during the summer months, the co-op became somewhat disorganized.

Now that the winter season is here again and all the men are back in the base camp, a meeting was held recently to decide on the future policy of the store. It was decided to dissolve the present co-op organization and reorganize so that the new management may start the new period with a clean slate.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 1, #13 (December, 1943)
"JAKE" JACOBSON'S LETTER

Dear Editor,

...Christian pacifists must accept the responsibilities of their belief. The one responsibility which, at first glance, seems clear cut and final is the refusal of our very existence in society we can not free ourselves from our responsibility for the evil consequences of the world....

If this is true, it is also our responsibility to try to remove the cause of this evil and to counteract its consequences. We must try to relieve the suffering caused by war or any other social conflict; we must try to seek ways and means of eliminating the tensions which tend to cause them.

Although there are perhaps such opportunities within the C.P.S. program, it can hardly be said that an honest attempt to eliminate war and its results and evils is one of the basic aims of the program.

C.P.S. is not an alternative to war, but merely an alternative to military service. There is a great difference. A real alternative to war must include honest, positive action, by self-sacrificing men and women, working together toward real peace.

I went to C.P.S. because I was not prepared to make the real sacrifices necessary for total opposition to war. I put convenience ahead of conviction. I went to prison, but I feel that I am prepared for the consequences of my action. As long as I am free to do so, I shall try to live according to the principles which have led me to C.P.S. I hope to eliminate from my life the sort of compromise which permitted me to accept C.P.S. in the first place.

Sincerely,

Robert C. "Jake" Jacobson.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #1 (January-February, 1944)

A SHIPMENT OF FOOD

Thursday, January 15, 1944, was a busy and exciting day in camp. The shipment of canned goods arrived from the reception center at Denison, Iowa. This food had been prepared by the Mennonite churches of the north-central states. The total quantity sent was 19,544 quarts of food, and required a full freight car to ship it to Belton.

There is a large variety of vegetables, fruits, and also an assortment of small items such as sorghum, jams, lard, pickles, and sandwich spread. The men of the Belton C.P.S. camp would like to express our gratitude to each person who labored to make this food supply possible.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #1 (January-February, 1944)

TOBACCO USERS

Recently I made a survey and found that about a fifth of the men have the tobacco habit. It is always a bit puzzling to know just what is the best approach in trying to solve problems that arise with the "smok-ers" in camp. Our men do their smoking in two small buildings at the edge of the camp. This is desirable to some extent at least in that the main part of the camp is free from this practice. When these two small buildings become a place where a few of the men spend much of their leisure time, it is not so satisfying.

Director Jesse Harder to MCC Director of Camps Albert M. Goodyear, February 8, 1944; MCC-CPS Correspondence, "Camp 855, Director, 1944".

THE MOVIE PROJECTOR

The 35mm. projector is being worked on, and it is hoped that we can soon use it. Full-length sound features will be scheduled occasionally. Of course nothing is sure about the whole matter, but we've got our fingers crossed.

Camp Letter, #1 (February 18, 1944)

A WELCOMED ADDITION TO THE REC HALL

For the information of those who aren't already acquainted with our camp, our Recreation Hall has heretofore been equipped with only pin pong tables and shuffleboard. Now under construction we have a duck-pin bowling alley, which is approximately 52 feet long from the foul line to the pit. At the present time two men, Levi Hostetler and Ralph Belzer are working on the alley. With the amount of interest already shown by the men in this form of recreation, it is quite possible that it would be right in style to ration the number of games allotted to each player so that each and every one may have his chance at bowling.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #1 (March, 1944)

MENDING

It seems that boys just weren't made to patch and sew. Realizing this, the ladies of our camp have volunteered to do our patching and sewing for us. Thanks to Mrs. Harder (director's wife), Miss Marie Ediger (nurse), and Miss Marie Groening (dietician). The fellows can now put away their needles and thimbles.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #2 (March, 1944)

THE SOCIAL ROOM

C.P.S. #55 will soon have completed a Social...
Room. It is a room, in the Library, that has been re-modeled and decorated so the fellows can entertain guests with somewhat more privacy than possible in the dorms.

The walls are to be light cream, with trimmings. The floor will be covered with linoleum. This Social Room will also be furnished with a lounge, electric record player, two floor lamps, and writing tables and chairs.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #6 (May, 1944)

THE RELIEF FUND

Congratulations, fellows of CPS #55! Since camp opened 16 months earlier, we have given $183.10 to the MCC Relief Fund through our morning offerings. That is an average of $10.15 per Sunday. Lately our offerings have been averaging between $12 and $15 per week, and that is very good for a group of our type that has no regular income.

Camp Letter, #9 (April 15, 1944)

A NIGHT OF CAMP SKITS

One of the socials for the month of April took the form of a skit-and-stunt night. Each dorm presented its contribution on the stage of the recreation hall. First on the program was Dorm #3's presentation of night life in the dormitory. On the stage were three beds made up for sleeping. Three members of Dorm #3 showed what goes on before everyone is ready to retire for the night. This included short-sheeting the beds and tying pants-legs together. After a short night's rest, the night watchman arrived to try to rouse the three sleepers for breakfast. The victims of the gags, after trying to get into his pants, finally gave up and went back to bed.

Several members from Dorm #2 put on the popular contest of bobbing for apples. Scouring the opponents seemed to take precedence over getting an apple, which added a great deal of fun to the show.

Dorm #5 contributed some accordion numbers by Monie Miller and Ray King.

Climaxing the evening was a skit presented by Dorm #1, which dramatized the daily activities carried on in the camp office. Each of the staff members was carefully portrayed by the actors. Star of the show was Ralph Miller who gave a fine performance as Miss Marie Ediger, camp nurse.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #6 (May, 1944)

ALVIN STUTZMAN GOES FISHING

We regret to report the incident of Saturday evening, June 5, when Alvin Stutzman from Harrisburg, Oregon, left camp under the pretense of going fishing, but we are, at the same time, happy to report his return to camp again.

From appearances at the lake, it was evident to the camp and Park authorities that he had met an accidental death as a result of his raft capsizing on Rough Lake McDonald. Men had dragged the lake for four days when a phone call was received that Alvin had appeared at home.

As already stated, although the incident is one we deeply regret, Alvin has made it known that he is sorry it happened and doesn't know why he did it. Let's all meet Alvin with a forgiving spirit, hoping that in spite of increased difficulties he can adjust himself to camp life.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #7 (June, 1944)

Photo courtesy of James Card

FAREWELL BANQUET

A farewell banquet for [Director] Jess and Mae Harder was held at the Dining Hall on Saturday evening. Mr. and Mrs. Jean Sullivan, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Nelson, Mrs. and Mrs. Frank Benda, and Louie Cousineau were guests of the camp. The cooks outdid themselves for the occasion and really served a fine meal. Searing, etc., also went off slick as a whistle.

After the meal a short program was presented in which Walt Uranau said "Goodbye to Glacier". Jean Sullivan was called on for a few remarks. Ossie Frei presented the gift of eight lace table napkins and $52 in cash. Jess responded and also said a few words about leaving camp, and the program ended with "Blest Be the Tie That Binds".

The decorations were in the Fourth of July theme, with big firecrackers on the table. There was a very fine array of wild flowers.

Jess and Mae were serenaded by some of the fellows on Tuesday night. They left from Kalispell by bus the next morning at 8:00 a.m.

Camp Letter, #18 (June 29, 1944)

CAMP #55 IN Mennonite

C.P.S. in Glacier National Park is an article in the last issue of The Mennonite, written by Rev. Lester Hostetler who visited us about a month ago. The cover of the paper has a picture of St. Mary Lake.
The article sizes up the situation pretty well for only a three-day visit, mentioning our dissatisfaction as well as some of the more rosy side.

In a letter to the camp Rev. Hostetler said, "While the boys find that the work they are doing is not entirely to their liking in every case in the camps, I have new admiration for the way in which they make the best of the situation. It has been interesting to me to note their progress in camp, socially and spiritually."

**CHERRY PICKERS**

It seemed much too early to be called out of bed at 4:15 on Saturday morning, August 5, when eleven campers crawled out and made ready to leave. Nine of the group were those whose physical disability would not allow them to do regular project work. The other two were from the office force.

They were headed for a place south of Big Fork on the east shore of the Flathead Lake, approximately 55 miles from camp. Although Flathead Lake is known as the largest body of water surrounded by American soil, it is also known for the cherry orchards that line its shores.

It was for these cherries that the fellows went. There they were, large, black, sweet cherries (technically called Republicans) hanging on the trees so heavily that some of the branches were broken. The fellows were soon pulling off the fruit almost by the handfuls. In the afternoon, upon the return, 886 pounds of cherries were unloaded into the refrigerator.

Then came the troublesome job Monday of stemming and canning the fruit. It was a good eight-hour job requiring the combined efforts of cooks, K.P.'s, and the 4-F's too. The yield was 662 quarts of cherries and 87 quarts of juice. Again no account was made of the cherries slipping down throats during the canning procedure.

Just two weeks earlier the same task was carried out. The fruit picked then was about 414 pounds, yielding 252 quarts of cherries along with 21 quarts of juice.

Everyone seems satisfied that we will have plenty of cherries on the tables and the shelves too.

**GLENN ELLIOTT TRANSFERRED WITHOUT REQUEST**

Word was received Tuesday, July 18, 1944, of action by Selective Service which authorized the transfer of Glenn E. Elliott from Belton to the government camp at Mancos, Colorado. The only explanation given was that a public-relations problem had arisen between him and the Technical Agency.

Immediately questions arose among the campers as to the cause of this unrequested transfer. Glenn had always been friendly and popular within the camp and at no time had there been any complaint from the Project Superintendent concerning his work on the project.

Elliott was assigned to the Belton camp from Rupert, Idaho, in September, 1943. Previous to coming to camp, he owned and operated a fleet of trucks doing contract hauling for that farm area and also for several government housing projects. In October his wife and small son moved to a trailer camp near the C.P.S. camp with two of their trucks. During the winter Elliott and his wife were able to do some hauling on his furrows and on some weekend leaves.

In February of this year, the C.P.S. coordinator from Park Headquarters made it known to Elliott that he should no longer carry on this off-time hauling. Not thinking that this statement was justified, Elliott continued the work, and no further statements were made.

On receiving the order for transfer, an attempt was made to hold up the transfer long enough to learn the reasons behind his being transferred to government camp without a request on his part. No satisfaction was forthcoming, so it was necessary for Elliott to report to Mancos on August 5.

**ELLIOTT SENT TO MANCOS**

As soon as it was known in camp that Selective Service had ordered the transfer of Glenn Elliott to Mancos, Colorado, there was much discussion among the men as to why such a transfer was being made. A large majority of the men expressed the opinion that this action did not seem fair in the light of Glenn's camp record. Many desired that some action be taken in order to express the feelings of the campers at Belton.

A public-relations problem between Elliott and the Technical Agency was the only reason given for the change. The problem had arisen because of Elliott's off-time trucking activities. This week had been done only on furlough time and after work hours.

Thus it becomes a problem of how an individual is free to do what he feels he is justified in doing during his furlough and after-work hours. Civilian Public Service was set up with the Technical Agencies directing the work program of the men in camp from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Under this agreement, it would not seem within their power to control the off-project hours of the men.

It can be understood that, with public opinion not too favorable toward Conscientious Objectors, sentiment might arise against such trucking operations. In February, the acting Assistant Park Superintendent, who is the C.P.S. coordinator, first made it known that Elliott would be no longer permitted to continue his trucking after project hours. At that time it was learned that the Assistant Superintendent had received a communication from an outside source asking for information concerning Elliott's trucking operations. On those grounds he made a recommendation to Selective Service that Elliott be transferred to an Eastern camp.

After the transfer order from Selective Service arrived, the Technical Agency made the statement that they were satisfied with the situation as it existed at this time, but did not feel able to make any further commitments.

**CAMPER'S PETITION N.S.B.**

Two days after the transfer papers were received, a group of assignees presented the suggestion to the camp that a telegram expressing a desire to have more investigation on this case be sent to the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSRBO). This was unanimously approved by the group and handled by Willard Unruh, acting Director.

Unruh sent the following telegram to Paul C. French: "Campers opposed to transfer of Glenn Elliott to Mancos without investigation of case and statement of reasons. Request temporary withholding of transfer until such is done. Campers sending petition. Wire reply?"
Interest in this situation was high among the assignees and more than seventy-five percent of the men in base camp signed their approval to the petition, which was forwarded immediately to the N.S.B. In response to these inquiries, word was received by the Camp Director from the N.S.B. stating that, in a case of this kind, it could not be expected that Selective Service would reverse its decision.

Apparently this transfer was brought about by a combination of objections from several sources both within the Technical Agency and outside. It was never fully revealed by Selective Service what the objections were. Therefore it was not possible to answer the accusations made. In this country, it has long been the judicial theory that one is innocent until proven guilty, which does not seem to be the case in this situation.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #9 (August, 1944)

ELLIOTT MOVES TO MANCOS

Glenn Elliott left for Mancos Wednesday night about 10:30. Selective Service System seems to be convinced that its action is justified, but the Menno-nite Central Committee is not satisfied and is continuing its investigation. Among other things what SSS wants to know is how "Elliott was free from 10 to 5 daily for the trucking business." It would seem from that question that the SSS decision was not altogether based on fact.

Camp Letter, #25 (August 3, 1944)

A CAMP #55 WEDDING

Miss Esther Kiweer and Mr. Alvin Penner were married Saturday evening, August 28, 1943, in the chapel hall by Rev. A. F. Becker of Whitefish, Montana. The guests assembled while Richard Bentzinger softly played piano melodies. The bride entered on the arm of the groom while Wagner's Bridal March was played. Isaac Harms sang "O Perfect Love," followed by a quartet composed of Menno Kaufman, Ernest Kauffman, Richard Bentzinger, and Elvice Loewen singing "Only Trust in Jesus." The ceremony was performed under a beautiful arch made of cedar boughs. A reception was held in the camp dining hall immediately following the ceremony. The couple was presented with a lovely wool blanket by the camp.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 2, #10 (September, 1944)

QUARTZ CREEK SIDE CAMP

Things are going very smoothly. That is, if that's what you call playing with a grizzly bear, setting the cabin afire with gasoline from the lantern, and tearing up the oil house by falling a tree on it. Ho hum, I wish something exciting would happen. The fishing is terrible up here. I caught five big bull trout in less than 15 minutes—just an example to show you how poor it is. (Signed) "Worthless"

Camp Letter, #28 (September 2, 1944)

SHIFTING LIGHTS

During the quarter we moved the fluorescent lights in the Recreation to the Library, the Library fixtures to the Chapel, and the Chapel lights to the Recreation Hall. This three-way shift gives us a brighter light in the Recreation Hall without shimmer, which is better for playing ping-pong, etc., a better reading light in the Library, and globes over the bulbs in the Chapel.

"Quarterly Educational Report, Fall, 1944"; MCAG: 08-12-4; MCC Reports, Box 7, "CPS Educational Reports, 1942-1945"

HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES

There is an old adage which says, "If you want to keep boys out of mischief, give them something to do." So the Social Committee got busy and brought forth a brilliant idea for the celebration of Halloween: A MAN HUNT.

The idea clicked, and about 75% of the boys participated. I think the other 25% would have participated if it had been a "girl hunt" instead.

Each dorm selected a boy to represent them. The boundary line was set, and each of the four men was given a whistle that he was to blow every five minutes. One long blast for Dorms #1/#2, and two short blasts for Dorms #3/#4. The men from Dorms #1 and #2 were supposed to catch the two men representing #1/#4 and bring them to the Recreation Hall or before 9:00 P.M. And the men from Dorms #3 and #4 were to do likewise with the two men representing #1/#2.

The contest began about 8 o'clock, and the four men were given a five-minute start before the Belton Bloodhounds were turned loose. In about an hour, Vernon Gingerich and Ezra Miller, representing #3/#4, met their fate and were brought, heavily guarded by Dorm #1 and #2 men, to the Recreation Hall in a battered condition, but still alive. Wålmer Martin and John Garber, representing #1/#2, were not found, so we must take their word for their whereabouts during the man hunt.

After the man hunt, we were served refreshments in the Dining Hall suitable for the occasion. Then the witches and goblins had their sway after 10 P.M. I must report that several campers were drenched from head to foot, and it wasn't from rain either. Thus another Halloween passed quietly in CPS. #55.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 5, #1 (November, 1944)

INFINARY HOURS

Kindly observe the following hours for visits to the Infirmary:

Morning: after breakfast until 8:30
Noon: after lunch until 1:30
Evening: after supper until 11:30 and 9:30 until 10:00.
In case of emergency or sickness at other times, come immediately. For those who do not observe the hours listed, I am requested to state that the Infirmary has a large bottle of castor oil on hand, and offenders will be dealt with accordingly.

Camp Letter, #39 (November 31, 1944)

MARRIAGES AND ICE CREAM

It can't be spring fever, so is it something else? Is there anything like "winter fever"? At any rate, people are still getting married, even while in CPS. Among those from this camp who have broken from the state of bachelorhood are Albert Gross and Andy Kauffman.

We should be getting more ice cream, fellows! Incidentally, the victims who undergo marriage follow the tradition adopted by CPS. #55 which calls for a serving of ice cream to all fellow assignees.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 5, #1 (November, 1944)
THE SKATING RINK
A letter of appreciation has been sent to Park Headquarters thanking them for the effort put forth in getting the skating rink built for us beside the river. They were also invited to make use of the rink and, if they saw fit, to include those in Belton and Apgar who might wish to use it.

The use of the skating rink by outsiders can be a definite source of improved relationships with the people nearby if we exercise hospitality. On the other hand, it can become a source of trouble, especially if our attitude toward children in particular is not what it ought to be.

**Camp Letter, #32 (December 1, 1944)**

THE HOLIDAYS AHEAD
Christmas will soon be here again. As usual it is slipping up on us so fast that the only ones who realize it are the committees planning the activities for the season.

To help us get in the Christmas spirit, a cast of 22 persons will read Dickens' "Christmas Carol" on Friday, the 22nd. This reading will be illustrated by a film strip of 22 pictures.

We have invited a number of young people (mostly of the fairer sex) from the Methodist and other churches in Kalispell to be our guests at a Christmas party Saturday evening, the 23rd. After games, etc., refreshments will be served and carols will be sung.

For Christmas Eve a program is being planned by the Religious Life Committee following which we plan to go caroling at Park Headquarters and Belton.

For Christmas Day a dinner is being planned. Since we have a complete recording of "The Messiah" no doubt a group will gather to listen to the Christmas portion some time during the day.

At the rate that packages are coming in, already at this date, no doubt we will need the skating rink during our spare moments to get in shape for the next meal.

On the whole, however, we can say that spirits are high and, though we would like to be with our loved ones, we will remember the purpose for which we are merry, and be able to be deeply grateful that a Savior was willing to come to earth.

**The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #2 (December, 1944)**

CAMPER CONTRIBUTIONS
During the month, a check of $216 was sent to the Mennonite Central Committee for relief in war-devastated countries. This includes the amount received in Sunday-morning offerings and the proceeds from the "unclaimed laundry" sale, which amounted to $15.00. Belton Campers are glad to give to this worthy cause.

**The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #2 (December, 1944)**

THE FOOD SHIPMENT
The food shipment from Denison has been inventoried and valued. Major items are: peaches, 2,260 qts.; blackberries, 518 qts.; apples, 273 qts.; pears, 568 qts.; applesauce, 714 qts.; dried fruits, 200 lbs.; dried vegetables (corn and beans), 370 lbs.; tomatoes, 440 qts.; pickles, 498 qts.; vegetable soup, 499 qts.; lard, 694 lbs.; and varying amounts of about 50 other items.

The total value of the shipment was $2,065.59. That represents a lot of money, but more than that it represents many hours of labor and a sincere concern for our welfare on the part of our mothers and the ladies of the church.

**Camp Letter, #20 (January 12, 1945)**

### Photos:
- Photo courtesy of Ben H. Matherlin
  - Heaven's Peak Lookout spike camp; work crew
  - Packing into spike camp; Al Thiessen; Bert, Hank Yoder; Rudy Neufeld

Photo courtesy of Ben H. Matherlin
CHAPTER 

presented a program of sacred songs at the Creston Mennonite Church on Sunday evening, January 21 (1943). A fine group attended, and they all received a spiritual blessing from the splendid singing. The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #5 (January, 1945)

THE CAMP CAR

One of the welcomed arrivals in camp is the new Station Wagon that Mr. and Mrs. Lauver (the Business Manager and the Dietician, respectively) brought back from Colorado Springs on their return from Pennsylvania. It is a 1941 International which was formerly owned by the U.S. Army. It has been reconditioned and is in fine shape.

We fellows would express our appreciation to the Mennonite Central Committee, owners of the vehicle, for the advantages derived from its use.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #4 (February, 1945)

PARKING PRIVATE CARS

A motion was made and carried at the Camp Council meeting on March 19 to have a meeting of all the car owners on Tuesday night (March 20) to decide on a committee to see Jean Sullivan about grading and fixing a parking lot.

Camp Letter, #56 (March 25, 1945)

THE CAMP GROUNDS

Some of us will remember from past experience how our camp grounds look in the summertime. Visitors who came here from other camps quite often mentioned the fine appearance and arrangement of this camp. One of the things which helped to make this camp attractive was the beautiful lawn. Our orderlies spent considerable time keeping them in shape.

Now, since the frost is out of the ground, our lawns are a bit soft. Whenever we stop on the lawn at this time of year our footprints will remain for quite a long time. Our walks have been newly graveled during this past week, making them more suitable for walking. Also footprints last but a short time in the gravel. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Camp Letter, #57 (March 30, 1945)

THE CAMPERS’ WIVES

A number of the wives of fellows in camp met yesterday afternoon in the staff quarters to sew and serve. The children of these families attend also, and, needless to say, there is plenty of activity. The plan is to get together in this way about every two weeks.

Camp Letter, #59 (April 15, 1945)

THE MENU DURING MARCH

Statistics from the kitchen—foodstuffs used during March 1945:

Meat (all kinds), 1,628 lbs.

A SHORTAGE OF RED POINTS

A shortage of Red Points (covering meats and fats, including butter and oleo) has caused the disappearance of canned milk from the table for use as cream.
in the coffee. We have been cut 20% in our last allotment of Red Points.

Presumably this is to make for more even distribution of meats, and this would seem logical, for it has become increasingly difficult the last few weeks to buy meat of any kind. Even at that, we can feel fortunate for we are told that, in some of the California camps, it is impossible to buy any meat, regardless of how many Red Points or how much money you have.

Camp Letter, #62 (May 13, 1945)

A FULL DAY IN TOWN

The boys quartet—made up of Ray Kliewer, Cliff King, John Friesen, and Abe Heinrichs—will have a full day in Kalispell on Sunday. In the morning they will sing in the Christian Church during their worship service. In the afternoon at 2:00, they will furnish music for Rev. Jones' half-hour radio program. And then they will present a full program in the Church of God in the evening.

Camp Letter, #65 (May 24, 1945)

DISCHARGES

Discharges from Camp #55 since the camp opened were tabulated the other day, before the individual folders of these men were sent to the Montana Central Committee. The score stands as follows:

Military:
1AO 1
1A 7
Occupational 5
Physical disability 16
Walk-out 1

Camp Letter, #67 (June 2, 1945)

BLISTER RUST AT YELLOWSTONE

On June 14, 1945, 25 men arrived in Yellowstone National Park to establish a side camp. They made the trip by truck, taking two days and spending the night in Butte. The men are housed in an abandoned CCC camp which is about a half mile south of Mammoth Hot Springs, about six miles from Gardiner, Montana, the northern entrance.

The elevation of the camp is about 6,420 feet. Much wildlife lives in the surrounding area: moose, deer, and bear have been seen on the camp grounds, with antelope and elk very near.

Project work consists of the eradication of gooseberries on about 1,400 acres of park land in the vicinity. The men will also be available for use in case of forest fires. John Friesen is the Unit Leader, and Dan Franz is the cook.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #5 (August, 1945)

ICE CREAM QUOTAS

From the Minutes of the Co-op Board of Directors meeting on August 6, 1945: The problem of the decrease in the Co-op ice-cream quota was brought up and discussed. The Glacier Dairy informed us that our quota for this month is 88 gallons. The ice cream served in the Dining Hall is also taken from this allotment. It was decided that in the future the kitchen would be limited to serving ice cream twice a month.

Camp Letter, #76 (August 9, 1945)

END OF THE WAR

Biggest news this week, of course, is that the war is over—at least officially declared war. The Russians and Japanese are still at it, as they are in several other theaters. But for all practical purposes we can be thankful that wholesale murder and bloodshed have stopped. No word has come through so far on when CPS will be demobilized. Gas and canned-fruit rationing are all. The fellows here in base camp were given a two-day holiday Wednesday and Thursday, and a good many took the opportunity to visit Spergy Glacier, Swiftcurrent Lookout, Grinnell Glaciers, St. Mary and south, and Heaven's Peak Camp, etc.

Camp Letter, #77 (August 16, 1945)

BIG FIRE CALLS 50 MEN

The first fire of the season of any major importance was the fire on Three Top Mountain located in the southwestern area of the Park. The fire was first reported on Saturday afternoon, July 21, 1945, by Jasper Roth, a CPS lookout man stationed on Lone-man Mountain. A small crew went out that afternoon and stayed out all night. No more fellows were called that night, as usually fire doesn't spread very fast in the evening when it starts getting cool.

Everyone was awakened early Sunday morning to hear that 20 more men would be needed immediately after breakfast. The 20 men left soon after breakfast, and about eight o'clock the fire got going again, and more men poured out into Company Street for the "briefing." The boys were practically holding their breath as the Project Superintendent called for various crews to make up another 20 fire-fighters.

In order to reach the fire, the men had to cross the Middle Fork of the Flathead River in a cable car and then hike for five or six miles. About after 3½ to 4 hours, the crew finally saw smoke. Approaching they could hear the saws and axes of the men who were falling burning snags.

After eating dinner, two relief crews of twenty men each took over. The first crew which started on Saturday went back to the fire camp, which was by this time almost set up at a location ¼ miles from the fire, for their much-needed rest.

The remainder of the work consisted of knocking down "hot spots" and guarding the fire to prevent its jumping into unburned territory. The radio was set up and a report was made to Headquarters as to the conditions of the fire. Soon the smoke began clearing and one crew put up for the night while the other crew kept patrolling the fire. By Monday afternoon every spark was extinguished and all the fighters were back in camp.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #5 (August, 1945)

THE MIXED CHORUS

A Mixed Chorus has been serving the camp at various times with selections of music. The campers' wives furnish the "needed element" necessary to make a mixed chorus in CPS. Willard Unruh is the director.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #5 (August, 1945)

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF CAMP #55

The third anniversary of CPS #55 passed unnoticed last Friday, the 14th. Since its opening, at least 408

Camp #55 work crew in the "Big Drift" on GTJ3 Road.
men have been campers here. During the past year, 54 men were inducted, 75 transferred in, 7 discharged to military or civilian life, while 65 transferred out. In three years, our offerings for Relief totaled $2,005.57. During the last year we gave $529.96, averaging $18.57 per offering. The record is 14.87 received on the Sunday before last. Church attendance is not too impressive, though—our record is 117 on February 25, 1945, long before we had a camp strength of 200.

Camp Letter, #82 (September 21, 1945)

OUTSTANDING FIRE-SUPPRESSION WORK

Memorandum from the National Park Service Regional Director to the Superintendent of Glacier National Park:

"From the verbal and narrative reports received in this office, I note that special tribute and recognition have been given to the splendid work performed by the Regional Director and the individual members of CPS Camp No. 55 can be justly proud of the important contribution the entire camp made in meeting this emergency."

(Signed) Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director

Camp Letter, #82 (September 21, 1945)

WORK WEEK SHORTENED

Civilian Public Service, in projects under federal supervision, went back again to a 40-hour work week beginning September 9 (because of the end of the war). CPS originally had a 40-hour week, but as the work progressed it was changed to 51 hours in January, 1945. This means that, in addition to Sundays, we have Saturdays off also. Such an arrangement permits campers to begin their weekend leave on Friday evenings. This also means that many fellows will avail themselves of the opportunity to take extended hikes in the Park.

Besides the shorter work week, all legal holidays are to be observed also.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #6 (September, 1945)

WIVES GIVE PROGRAM

The CPS wives rendered a very inspirational program for the campers on Sunday evening, September 16th, 1945. Mrs. Abe Unruh was the leader, and our nurse, Miss Mary Hostetter, was the chorister. Devotions were conducted by Mrs. Edwin Frienis. The numbers included: a reading, "The Skeptic's Daughter" by Mrs. Abe Miller, a talk, "Opportunities and Responsibilities of CPS Wives" by Mrs. Melvin Lauver, and a talk, "More Precious Than Gold" by Mrs. Art Liebelt.

Special music was furnished by the Abe Miller children, the primary department, and a quintet composed of Mrs. Paul Buckwalter, Mrs. Glenford King, Miss Mary Hostetter, Mrs. Charles Reeder, and Mrs. Melvin Lauver. They closed the program with the entire group of women singing several songs.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 3, #7 (October, 1945)
EARLY SNOWSTORM
Oscar Roth and the Waterton Ranger, in trying to bring the pack horses back to Park Headquarters, ran into a snowstorm on the Highline Trail following the Continental Divide during the last week in September. They considered themselves very fortunate for getting out alive. Oscar reported that they went through snow 50 inches deep and the going was so tough for the horses that they had to go ahead and break a trail in the snow so the horses could keep going.

The Trailmaker, Vol. 5, #7 (October, 1945)

DONATIONS
A $25.00 gift was received by the camp from Max Shulkin, the salesman who sells the camp janitorial supplies for Industrial Chemical Company, Omaha. This gift was used for the grapes at the Christmas dinner. A gift of $100 paid for the stuffed dates.

Camp Letter, #46 (December 28, 1945)

NEW RECORD ALBUMS
The following record albums were purchased from the Smokejumper Unit [CPS] #103 in Missoula and are now in the Social Room:

- "Oklahoman"
- "The Nut Cracker Suite"
- "Oratorio Arias"
- "Beethoven's Fifth"
- "The Rite of Spring"
- "The New World Symphony"
- "Stephen Foster Collection"
- "Sheherazade"
- "Great Songs of Faith"

Camp Letter, #98 (January 11, 1946)

DECLINING MORALE
From several recent reports, there appears evidence that things are not going too well at Belton. One can see where it is difficult to keep up good morale in the camp when everyone hopes so strongly that his own discharge will come soon, and the group together wishes for the program to close. We cannot afford to have the program disintegrate in any one of the camps or units, nor as a total program. In fact we must work in exactly the opposite direction, namely to finish as strongly as we know how. We cannot afford to disappoint our men nor to fail them in any way; neither can we afford to disappoint the technical agency.

Albert M. Gaeddert, Director of CPS to Willard H. Unruh, Camp #55, Director, January 21, 1946; MCC, 06-6-5; MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 29:

"Camp #55, Director, 1946"

GROUP MALAISE
I wish I knew all the answers, especially the answer to how to change men's attitudes. I do not think there are any men here who are basically bad; they are just frustrated and do not know what to do with themselves. This leaves them with the feeling that the only thing left to do is to go to town and enjoy themselves. This costs money that many of them do not have.

I have talked with several of them and pointed out that we have a standard to uphold and that being seen in town after midnight will not help our reputation any. I think the main trouble is that they have never thought through the position to satisfy themselves.

Camp Director Dan Neufeld to Albert Gaeddert, Memorial Central Committee, February 21, 1946; MCC, 06-6-5; MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 29:

"Camp #55, Director, 1946"

A DOWNSIZED CAMP #55
As was agreed in the camp meeting the other evening, we have planned to work on the water heater in Dorm #5 and #4 on Saturday, and heat only one stove in each dorm. This will cut out four stoves instead of the five that would be cut out if we closed two dorms, but it will allow us to live as we are now (in four dorms). We have agreed to move [into two dorms] when the camp strength gets down to 60 men.

Camp Letter, #106 (March 8, 1946)

THE CAMP'S FUTURE
[Glacier Park Superintendent] Emmert received a wire today that this camp would be open at least till the first of July and that provisions were being made to build up the camp strength.

Camp Letter, #107 (March 15, 1946)
CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL NEWS ITEMS

We owe a great deal to the men who help out the camp on their own time from time to time. Many thanks to Luke Birk, Clarence Loeven, and all the others who helped put the Station Wagon back in shape. In addition to running well, you now can get in and out of it on both sides.

The other ping-pong table has been fixed so that it is the right height. The top on it is still not very good. These tables would stay smoother longer if no one missed a good shot. As soon as this weather back from Trout Lake proudly displays a catch of fifty, their limit. Dick Weaver, Jim Horst, Clarence Yoder, and Gerhard Nickel came back from Logging Lake with eighteen trout. Doesn't that give you the fishing fever, men? July 4, a holiday, will be a chance to get out and do some fishing, if it doesn't rain again.

FISHERMAN'S PARADISE

Several parties came back from successful fishing excursions Saturday evening. Paul Kinzel, Abe Schrag, Orte Roth, Willner Roth, and "Deacon" came back from Trout Lake proudly displaying a catch of fifty, their limit. Dick Weaver, Jim Horst, Clarence Yoder, and Gerhard Nickel came back from Logging Lake with eighteen trout. As the fire gong sounded Monday evening, every one arrived in Belton, Montana. Little did he know that, four years later, the last men would be preparing to leave. Those who have worked there last year know the situation. Here is a chance to take furlough and make money before you transfer to the next camp. By the way, there is a lot of this type of work in Aberdeen, Idaho, too. It's between here and Orlando, Florida.

HOUSEKEEPING TIPS

Would all the men, especially the men who just came to Belton, please put their names on their lockers so that the Laundry men can put your shirts in the right place. The clothes to be washed should be sorted into the bins in the bathhouses one day before the Laundry washes for that dorm. The dress shirts and white things in one bin and the rest in the other. There is some unclaimed laundry in the Laundry that would be claimed right away. Please check to see if some of it belongs to you.

INS AND OUTS

Our dwindling camp strength was increased by 11 when the men from Terry arrived on Saturday. A few more have arrived since, and the remaining men will be coming in during the month. The total number transferring here from Terry is 29. Twenty-four men had their final-release physical exams at the beginning of this month. Good luck, fellows!

FOREST FIRE

As the fire gong sounded Monday evening, everyone came from the dorms prepared for the worst. At about 10:30 fifty men began their trip to Yellowstone National Park on two crew trucks to battle a large forest fire. They got there Tuesday afternoon at 4:30, after which they had a good meal and bedded down in their sleeping bags for the night.

They began fighting Wednesday morning and, according to latest reports, there are still at it. The fire is not under control yet at this writing, nor is it known when the fellows will be back.

CHANGE OF THE DRYING ROOM

Some of the fellows have been working around camp lately pulling apart and moving the Laundry Drying Room to Park Headquarters. The Recreation Hall will be used as the drying room in case of wet weather. The Park wanted the Carpenter Shop, but we persuaded them that we wanted that rather than the Drying Room building.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTIONS

There are a number of magazines and newspapers which the camp gets that will not expire at its closing. These subscriptions may be bought by anyone who wants them. The titles and length of time left are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine/Times</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>May 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Digest</td>
<td>December 1946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WANTED: POTATO PICKERS

Potato growers near Kalispell have asked that from September 15 and later they would like to have as many men to help in the potato harvest as want to. Those who have worked there last year know the situation. There is a chance to take furlough and make money by coming in during the month.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

Four years ago, on the 18th of September, the first conchie arrived in Belton, Montana. Little did he know that, four years later, the last men would be preparing for...
to move out. In what better way can we celebrate this anniversary of double significance than by a big wiener roast and feed? Come one and all for the feed, with films afterward on Thursday evening, September 19.

Verse: #151 (September 15, 1946)

LIBRARY BOOKS
All library books will be priced and sold within the next few weeks. Look through them and see what you want.

Verse: #151 (September 15, 1946)

FAREWELL TO CAMP #55
As this last issue of the Troutline comes out, our thoughts are all turned toward the future. We’re thinking of that long furlough that we’ve been saving up, of the new camp we are going to, of the new friends we will make, and, finally, for those getting released, of the adjustments and experiences of a normal civilian life. But, even though we are anxious to leave here, there is still a soft spot in our heart for #55.

Can we forget the many friends we have made here and the good times we have had with them? Can we forget the marvellous beauties of nature in the rippling and rushing streams and the majestic grandeur of the mountains? Can we forget those hikes and fishing trips when we delved into the very heart and soul of Mother Nature? Can we forget the tug of our fishing line when a big trout struck, or the numbness of icy mountain streams rushing past our legs, or the comfortable feeling of lying in a sleeping bag early in the morning with the dew lying heavy upon it?

Can we forget the deeper experiences we have had with our Maker in this wide expanse of His wonderful handiwork? Finally, can we forget God’s leading as we witnessed to the people about us of a life of love, rather than hate? Of course, we cannot forget all this. These memories will remain in the depths of our hearts to be often unearthed.

Farewell to thee, #55. Your life has ended, but you will live forever in the memories of those who knew you and were part of you.

Verse: #152 (September 20, 1946)

ADDENDUM
PARTING WORDS

MARTIN SCHRAG, former Education Director at Camp #55 to Harvey Goering, then-current Education Director at Camp #55, May 24, 1946 [Mennonite Church Archives-Goshen, 13-6-3, MCC-CPS Correspondence, File 29: “Camp #55. Education Director, 1946”]:

... It seems to me that if there is anything that men should be getting out of their CPS days it is how to meet problems and how do we as Christians present to the world a better way of solving issues than by that of war. Our witness against war can mean little unless we can show a better way in which to bring about harmony among people. This subject is one of the most vital and important ones that men in CPS face and, therefore, we should be giving it more emphasis.

... It would be foolish to think that two or four years in a CPS camp or on a special project would not leave its mark on the CPS man coming back to his home church.

Camp #55 (southeast) and the Middle Fork from Appar Lookout (NB road system and McDonald Creek)

Verse: Photo courtesy of Clayton Boeker
The above is the opening sentence of an article called 'The Returning CPS Man' and it is written by a CPSer. The author is Carl Lehman, and the paper is the Mennonite.

Camp Letter, #95, (December 30, 1945)

The following message was written by a assignee who, in late 1945, transferred to a dairy farm project. His words appeared in the last issue of The Tailmaker, published in November, 1945. 'His thoughts are timely as we stop to consider the impression we leave with the people of the surrounding communities as we go home or to other fields of service.'

The above is the opening sentence of an article by CPSer ..(December 20, 1945)

Whether we realize it or not, all of us have, while in CPS, been influenced by others. May we each ask ourselves the question, 'Has my influence always been for the best?'

Yes, it was in September (when I got here) We got in here late at night in Belton... On the train—that's the way we came back and forth... This was all new to me. I'd never been away from home and of course at that time I was a kind of homesick, I'll admit. When I got here it was—I don't know. I guess I just looked at it as kind of a young kid had his eyes opened a little wider or what. It was just different, seeing all these guys, and of course the guys all knew it. Some of them would try to help you and some of them would tease you along, so all in all, it worked out. But where it worked out kind of neat for me because several of the guys from my home area, from my home church, knew me quite well. I guess I can say they kind of took me under their arms and made sure I made it along right.'

Of his best memories: 'Oh, I think back of the good times we had. The work that we did. And meeting all different kinds of guys. Finding out that there's some real jewels out there. I had some real good friends and still have those friends. We've traveled back East to the Amish Country and stayed with the Amish people. They've come out to see us, and now we're working here in volunteer work, and we meet the same people again, only fifty years later.'

The world is looking to us to live up to the convictions which we profess and believe, not only in regards to war being wrong, but they are watching our conversation, our dress, our attitude toward our work and those for whom we work, and our willingness to do our work. They are watching our attitude toward the enemies of our country and toward our fellow men. Do we realize that the world reads us more than they do the Bible, especially us as C.O.s? What a challenge to us to be true to God and our convictions...

How sad it is when new campers come to camp and do not find the spiritual life of the camp to be as high as it should be. We are called by some of the world 'jewel?' Are we striving to live so that we will be worthy of a better name? Is it too much for us to forsake the lusts and desires of the world when Christ gave His life on the cross for us so that we could have eternal life?

... My prayer is that we might all realize the full extent of our influence upon our fellow campers, upon the church, and upon the world and that we will do nothing that would cause anyone to stumble or err.

May the Lord bless and help all of us to be a light to the world and bring honor and glory to His name in every way.

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Of his best memories: 'Oh, I think back of the good times we had. The work that we did. And meeting all different kinds of guys. Finding out that there's some real jewels out there. I had some real good friends and still have those friends. We've traveled back East to the Amish Country and stayed with the Amish people. They've come out to see us, and now we're working here in volunteer work, and we meet the same people again, only fifty years later.'

The world is looking to us to live up to the convictions which we profess and believe, not only in regards to war being wrong, but they are watching our conversation, our dress, our attitude toward our work and those for whom we work, and our willingness to do our work. They are watching our attitude toward the enemies of our country and toward our fellow men. Do we realize that the world reads us more than they do the Bible, especially us as C.O.s? What a challenge to us to be true to God and our convictions...

How sad it is when new campers come to camp and do not find the spiritual life of the camp to be as high as it should be. We are called by some of the world 'jewel?' Are we striving to live so that we will be worthy of a better name? Is it too much for us to forsake the lusts and desires of the world when Christ gave His life on the cross for us so that we could have eternal life?

... My prayer is that we might all realize the full extent of our influence upon our fellow campers, upon the church, and upon the world and that we will do nothing that would cause anyone to stumble or err.

May the Lord bless and help all of us to be a light to the world and bring honor and glory to His name in every way.

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The above is the opening sentence of an article called 'The Returning CPS Man' and it is written by a CPSer. The author is Carl Lehman, and the paper is the Mennonite.

Camp Letter, #95, (December 30, 1945)

The following message was written by a assignee who, in late 1945, transferred to a dairy farm project. His words appeared in the last issue of The Tailmaker, published in November, 1945. 'His thoughts are timely as we stop to consider the impression we leave with the people of the surrounding communities as we go home or to other fields of service.'

The above is the opening sentence of an article by CPSer ..(December 20, 1945)

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### APPENDIX B

**CAMP #55 POPULATION, 1942-1946**

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### APPENDIX C

**MAPS**

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park
CPS Camp #55 Environments

Camp #55 Layout

Camp #55 Buildings:

APPENDIX D
CAMP #55 ORAL HISTORIES HELD BY THE MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES, HELENA

OH 1738: Merlin Miller, 1996
OH 1759: Jasper Roth, 1996
OH 1740: Daniel Headings, 1996
OH 1741: Lawrence and Alta Schrock, 1996
OH 1742: Abraham and Olive Miller, 1996
OH 1743: Crist Bontrager, 1996
OH 1744: Alvin Klierer, 1996
OH 1745: Simon and Esta Hershberger, 1996
OH 1746: Melvin and Lucile Gerig, 1996
OH 1747: Earl Kennel, 1996
OH 1748: Henry and Evelyn Mullet, 1996
OH 1749: Daniel and Betty Schrag, 1996
OH 1750: John Garber, 1996
OH 1751: James and Vera Weaver, 1996
OH 1752: Howard King, 1996
OH 1753: Perry and Audrey Schrock, 1996
OH 1754: Jacob and Phoebe Glanzner, 1996
OH 1755: Amos Groff, 1996

OH 1756: Oscar Roth, 1996
OH 1757: Emanuel Schlabaach, 1996
OH 1758: Glenford and Ruth King, 1996
OH 1759: Ralph Kaufman, 1996
OH 1760: Willard Nofziger, 1996
OH 1761: Henry Roger Friesen, 1996
OH 1762: Marvin and Esther Fast, 1996
OH 1763: Howard King, 1999
OH 1782: Howard King, 1999
OH 1840: Emanuel Schlabaach, 1999
OH 1841: Homer Yutzy, 1999
OH 1843: Elvie Loewen, 1999
OH 1844: Adolph and Bernice Reimer, 1999
OH 1845: John Bender, 1999
OH 1846: Lydia and Crist Bontrager, 1999
OH 1847: Willard Nofziger, 1999
OH 1848: Ben Warkentin, 1999
OH 1849: Clifford King, 1999
OH 1850: Herman J. Liechty, 1999
Hammer theory

1. 2  - MEOW
2.  - camp 103 : smoke jumpers
3.  - Madison's CO language in 2nd Amnem
4.  - Eagle parachute CO
5. 20 churches admitted camp: Sealey L.
6. 22 - May '43, marker instruction
7. 23 - physical training: "like a hellhole"
8.  - 2 typed charts
9. 25 - Sealey L one of 6 camps
10. 26 - inquiries in training
11. 30 '43-'44 fire season mild
12. 31 - '45 "heavy"
13.  - 40 balloons
14. 341 - "waffle bottom" desk wearers (marks left after sitting in chair
15. 37. - Camp Passen o Sealey L.
16. 38 - volleyball for upper body strength: played in jump units
17. 40 - dancing an issue
18. 42 - 1/2 CO's college men
19. 45 - Joseph Kinsey Howard on Pacific?
20. 46 - marked epidemics
21. 50 - USFS recruitment
22. 52  - hospitality from towns
23. 54i - exhibition jump @ Wm. Thompson's Hotel
24. 56 - WM James moral equal; fight against nature
25. 57  - Dulles "with life" gate
26.  - lumber for war machine
27. 60 - Cooksey decides against keeping CO's after war
Static Lines & Canopies

1. Skydive jumping program began in April '43 (Sealby Lake)
2. "a lot of hopping abt"
   - gathering bluebirds while clearing fire line
3. Anderson story details
4. non-jumper, dean fences etc.
5. hurt in d bladdy
6. wives @ UM Nursery (2) Selk
7. carrying out broken-up jumpers
8. Travelaire plane; drift chute
9. landing w/ twist & roll
10. camp nurse
16. short tree falling
   - trim tree fr tree gone
17. orange soda
20. smoke jumpers warm rm @ 325 Rt Station
   - Sealby L '43
22. nervous abt jumping
23. feeling "squiggly"
24. injury
25. extra seeds to tie hands to stretcher
   - drink as anesthesia
26. Bim Prairie & feeling
28. Frank Danny
29. lightning prevenion: chair d gum content
30. 70-person contingent @ Sealby L
31. wilderness unexplored in wintime
34. balloon bombs
35. dropping a watermelon
   - disputed Maclean
36. eggs packed in canvas bags filled w/ beef; eggs OK, bread poor
   - descent descent
41. Camp Morand near Merionka airfield
   - history: 60 conchies, spring '43
   - left fuel
Static Lines

44 - Stuck para-spray jump: 12 casualties of 97

46 - Tearing an ankle
47 - Civilian in "world out there"
48 - Chewing tree (or my cutting edge of pubic - scrotum condens (Miller root?)

50 - Splayed meat
51 - Plane on it's side
53 - Burst: & tied
55 - Dog hair: young saplings
58 - Making a new sled: cellulose in tree
- Slip jump
59 - Boil water in a paper bag!
61 - Jumper training
62 - In sickness: wide mark
62 - Jumpers at "Pain's Hotel" in Muscowka
63 - Harley motorcycle: Into town!

64 - Candy too! yeah
65 - Throwing up in plane
66 - Scream on helmet
67 - Squirrely wind!
69 - harassment

70 -

75 - RCAF guys training @ Sarsby Lake in '43
77 - a self-made man...