

# Hay Camp currency with Faith

Internment camp currency souvenirs by chaplains of two religions by Tony James



Hay Internment Camp, 1941. Detail from a watercolour by Theodor Engel.

**C**URRENCY notes of the internment camps at Hay have been researched with great enthusiasm. The notes are eagerly sought after by both Australian banknote collectors who collect banknotes of their own country, and those who concentrate on military, prisoner of war (POW) and internment camp currency. Numismatists have been fortunate enough to have had access to the records of two collections that are outstanding for their provenance and rarity. The ephemera and information about the original owners of the notes has been documented by family and researchers, for which we may be really grateful. The notes mentioned in this article belonged to two visiting chaplains of different faiths and other currency is included to show the progression of camp currency, as life in Hay Internment camp number 7 was played out particularly during the early days of the internees' incarceration.

## Mementos and ephemera records saved

For those who have never visited the Hay plains and the town that is on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, half way between Sydney and Adelaide, a distance of 1400 kilometres. The terrain is a flat, almost treeless, saltbush plain, with a magnificent 180 degree skyline. My abiding memory of the town is the width of the main street. Required, I was told, so that during the halcyon days of the wool industry, a team of oxen could turn their cart around without difficulty (this could be up to eight pairs in harness). When the chaplaincy visitors paid their pastoral visits to the camps, they received mementoes. While being concerned with spiritual as well as personal needs of their flocks they appreciated the little gifts that were pressed upon them. Examination of the items and research provide some interesting insights into the men who visited the camp and their humanity.

## The camp situation

Commenced in early 1940 the camp was still being completed as new inmates marched in on 7th September 1940. There were three compounds, numbered 6, 7 and 8 in the camp. Together they held approximately 3,000 prisoners and internees. Camp 6 held Australian-Italian internees. Camp 7 was supposedly entirely Jewish, holding internees off the *Dunera* from the United Kingdom, (although we shall see that there were Christian internees in this camp). Camp 8 had a mixed population of Germans and Austrians who were Catholics, Protestants, Communists and a few Jews.

The camp was visited by several official visitors as well as members of different religious faiths. The government inspectors organised by the Minister of the Army, Percy C. Spender, included Colonel W. B. Simpson, Major J. McCahon and later Dr H. O. Lethbridge as an Assistant to the Official Visitors. Their reports of visits to this and other camps can be located in the National Archives.

There were other organisations that conducted inspections and visits to the camps at Hay. Rabbi Leib Falk reported to the Jewish Welfare Society after a visit from 9th to 12th December 1940. His main concern was pastoral, as he was aware of the terrible conditions suffered by the internees on the *Dunera*, and during his association with the inmates of the camp he encouraged frequent and regular visitation by the Welfare Society and application for release by inmates as they sought review of their cases.

Representatives of the Society of Friends (Quakers) made a visit on 22-23 January 1941. The visitors were Mr Alfred C. Clarke and Miss Margaret Pierce of Melbourne, who attended not only to the needs of the internees but also to members of the Garrison. The visitors had been referred to internees who had been helped by Friends in England. They

made a written report to their Melbourne Meeting of The Friends. The report is lodged with the La Trobe Collection, Library of Victoria.

Another to visit was the priest, Father J. Carroll from the local Catholic church. He supported internee Father Walter Konig, a German Jesuit priest who had been caught up in the British alien round-up in May 1940 while teaching at a college in Sheffield, England. Father Konig looked after the Catholic internees. He estimated that there were three percent Catholic, seven percent Protestant and the remainder Jews.

A Miss Margaret Holmes, secretary of the Students Christian Union, attended to educational needs of the internees, as she organised books, writing equipment, matriculation enrolment and later university entrance for those in the camp.



Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk -Commissioned as Chaplain to the Australian Military Forces during WWII and to State prisons as well as to the Jewish internees of Camp 7 Hay.



### Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk

During the First World War, Rabbi Falk had served as Jewish chaplain in the British forces and when the Jewish Legion was formed in 1917, he became chaplain of the 38th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. After World War I, he and his family came to Australia and during his tenure at the Great Synagogue in Sydney, Falk was appointed Chaplain to the Australian Military Forces (AMF) in 1935. In 1942 he became senior chaplain to the AMF Eastern Command, a position he held until 1952. Rabbi Falk combined his pastoral duties with his office as an executive member of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. The rabbi was active in his duties as chaplain at Hay and worked hard for the release of internees. Well known for his addresses given on Anzac Day, he was also chaplain to the NSW Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.

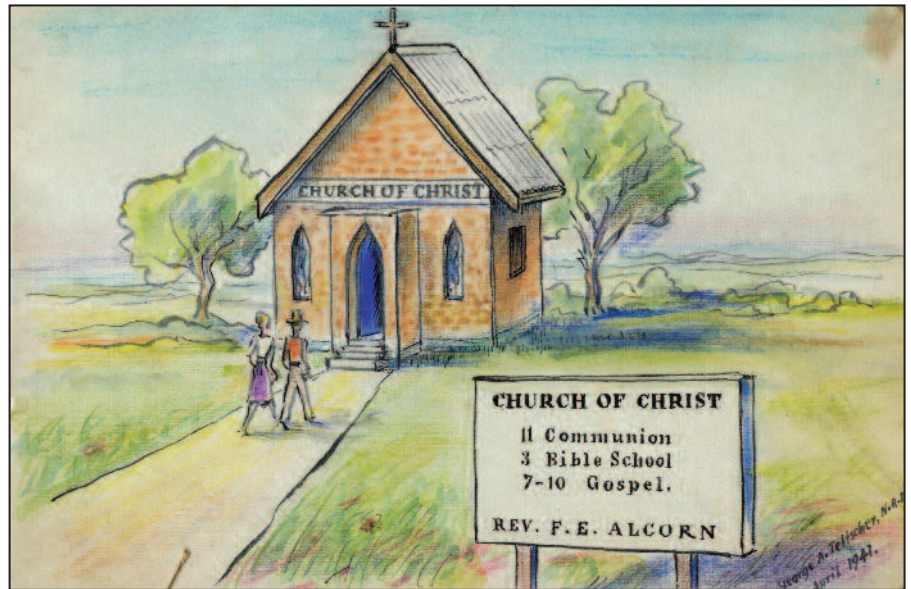


*Reverend Alcorn as sketched by P. Glass*

### Rev Franklin E. Alcorn

Reverend Franklin Edwin Alcorn, a minister of the Church of Christ, was, for a time, a chaplain at the Hay camp. It seems that he was semi-official from the Government point of view as although he was on the AMF records from 1923 as Chaplain 4th class, he was transferred to the Unattached List for the 2nd Military District on 27 October 1928, and then placed on the Retired List on 27 October 1933, with permission to retain rank and wear uniform.

His records note that he was again to be Chaplain 4th class with effect from 4th January 1940, however it was not until the 24th of March 1942 that he completed and signed his Mobilization Attestation form. This was some time after his association with the Hay camp had ended. He preached his last sermon there on 9th May 1941 and many of his congregation of internees were transferred to the Tatura internment camp in September 1941.



*Colour sketch by George A. Teltscher of Church of Christ with mention of Alcorn*

His Record of Service notes that on 26th March 1942 he was posted to the 114 Australian General Hospital (AGH) at Goulburn. The Army established this facility when it requisitioned the Kenmore Mental Hospital near Goulburn. The 114 AGH specialised in treating members of the AMF who had suffered psychological problems such as shell

shock. This order of events seem to confirm Alcorn's semi official position while acting as chaplain at the Hay camp, and recognises the skills of a man willing to work with those who had major problems in their lives.

The sketches in the ephemera that Alcorn retained illustrate his work with the internees. Several scenes show him



*Hay note 6d serial number C39696 given to Padre Alcorn*

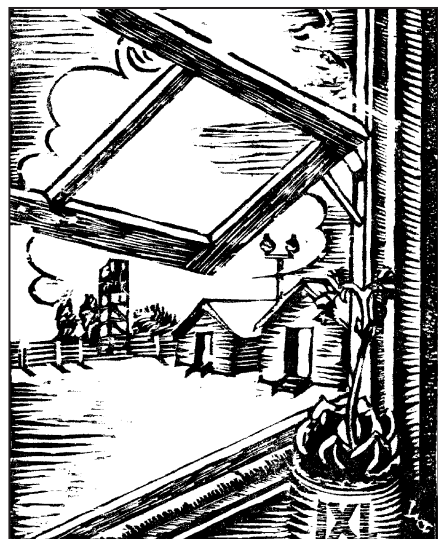


in conversation with groups of prisoners and one shows him conducting a church service in a hut. Others are wood cuts of camp views and sketches and paintings, one of which is particularly interesting. It was completed in April 1941 by an internee George A. Teltscher and depicts, in an allegorical way, a building named "Church of Christ and outside the church is a sign displaying service times and the name of Rev. F. E. Alcorn as minister.

I say allegorical as there are trees shown, as well as a male and female figure approaching the church, both aspects of the environment that were decidedly lacking at the time. Names in the list of "Christian Internees belonging to denominations other than the Church of England or Roman Catholic Church," that are of interest to numismatists are: Hermann Robinow - Bank Clerk, a signatory on the notes issued 1st March 1941 from Hut 32 and none other than George Teltscher - 'Free Lance Artist', from Hut 26.

Other items belonging to Alcorn include two Player Navy Cut cigarette tins. The first is engraved with scenes of a bible and a European city square, and the second shows Australian flora and the inscription 'Sincere thanks Hay 1941 All Good wishes' engraved on the tin. The family records note that while he was a 'man of god,' his humanity was displayed by his only vice - tobacco. His pastoral work before and after the war years also show that he and his family lived frugally and more than once the pastor came home without his coat, his reason being, that there were more deserving folk!

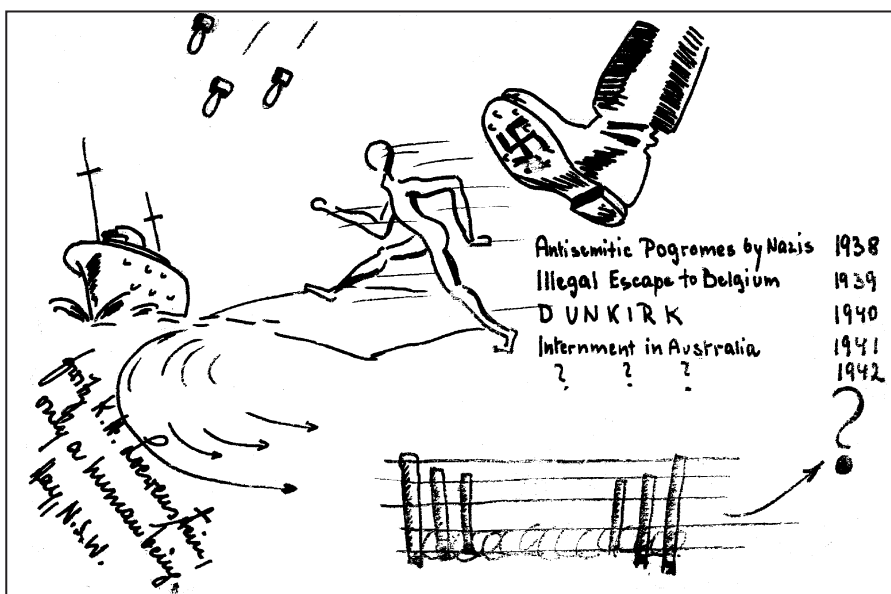
Fortunately the farewell gift to Alcorn from his congregation when he left the camp, a pair of carved wooden Bible covers, has survived to this day. This is mentioned in a book plate expressing the sentiments shared by people of all faiths at the time. "As a humble expression of



Hay Internment Camp, 1940-41.  
Detail from a woodcut by Alfred Landauer,



Hay Camp note 1/- green



An internee's pen and ink sketch illustrates stylistically his progress from persecution by the Nazis in Europe to an uncertain future in an Australian internment camp.

our deep gratitude for his help at the time of our need in a world in distress, and with heartfelt wishes for his happiness in the future and true peace for the world, we offer this pair of hand-carved book covers to 'Padre F.E. Alcorn' on the day of his departure. The Protestant Congregation - Internment Camp 7. Hay, NSW, the ninth of May Nineteen hundred ~ forty one."

#### Teltscher note designer

Teltscher, who has been credited with designing the Austrian schilling of 1934, designed the Camp 7 notes dated 1st March 1941. The same design is used for each of the three denominations. The text "THE CAMP SEVEN BANK, INTERNMENT CAMP, HAY, WILL UPON DEMAND PAY AGAINST THIS NOTE (SIXPENCE ONE OR TWO SHILLINGS) LEGAL TENDER AUSTRALIAN CURRENCY". The barbed wire border of the notes has the words "We are here because we are here because we are here" interwoven in darker text. At the bottom of the wire fence in the body of the notes are the words H.M.T Dunera Liverpool to Hay. The sheep in the shield at lower centre has the name Eppenstein hidden in the fleece; this was the name of the camp leader. The notes have two signatures, one the camp bank manager Richard Stahl signed on the right; the other is that of W. Epstein, E. Mendel or H. M. Robinow on the left.

The back of the notes features 25 sheep in five rows of five and the words "THIS NOTE IS VALID ONLY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF CAMP SEVEN INTERNMENT CAMP HAY. / The Bank is under no obligation to honour this note if presented by Holders outside this Camp."

The name George A. Teltscher appears on the front of each note at the lower right.

The sheep all have the number 7 on their fleece and hidden in the wool are names that are still the subject of debate by researchers. Some say they are the hut leaders, others that they were prominent members of the camp.

## Catalogues compared

The Hay camp notes have been catalogued in the following references

Campbell	Schwan & Boling	SW-Feller
1212a 6d Mendell & Stahl	S&B 551a	AU910a
1212b 6d Epstein & Stahl	S&B 551b	AU910b
1212c 6d Robinow & Stahl	S&B 551c	AU910c
6d cancelled by rubber stamps	S&B551x	AU910d
6d specimen zeros	S&B551s	AU910s
1213a 1/- Mendel & Stahl	S&B 552a	AU911a
1213b 1/- Epstein & Stahl	S&B 552b	AU911b
1213c 1/- Robinow & Stahl	S&B 552c	AU911c
1/- cancelled by rubber stamps	S&B552x	AU911d
1/- specimen zeros	S&B552s	AU911s
1214a 2/- Mendel & Stahl	S&B 553a	AU912a
1214b 2/- Epstein & Stahl	S&B 553b	AU912b
1214c 2/- Robinow & Stahl	S&B 553c	AU912c
2/- cancelled by rubber stamp	S&B 553x	AU912d
2/- specimen zeros	S&B 553s	AU912s

Another series of low denomination notes issued by "Camp Seven Bank" were in two denominations of 1d and 3d, well printed on cardboard with some of the 3d notes stamped and signed by Stahl, the manager of the Camp 7 Bank.

Campbell	S&B	SW-Feller
1210 1d green	558	AU915
1211 3d cream stamped & signed Stahl	559	AU916

An interesting point about this series is that the stamp on the 3d note corresponds to that on the envelope given to Rabbi Falk which contained his souvenir set of hut notes, some of which were marked sample. These would appear to date the woodcut series before the series of 6d, 1/- and 2/- printed by the *Riverine Grazier* with the kangaroo and emu which are dated 1st March 1941.

Since the inmates of the camp had arrived in Hay in September 1940 they had organised their camp life with a canteen, a coffee stall and judicial, music and educational systems. As time went on, internees and POWs were allowed to have 1/2d and 1d coins in their possession, and when transferred between camps or discharged, a maximum of one shilling in copper coin was allowed to be credited to their account with the authorities. (Standing Orders for Tatura camp quote this several times in its official War Diary).

This would indicate that while Australian paper currency was forbidden, inmates had a variety of small change at various times during their incarceration.

From mid-1943, the camps had their own internment camp metallic tokens with 1d, 3d, 1/-, 2/- and 5/- denominations. (See Australian WWII Internment Camp Tokens by Nik Sharplin Parts 1 & 2 CAB March 2004 and February 2005.)

## Hut and Geometric notes

The other series of notes produced and used in Camp Seven are what are known as Hut notes and geometric notes.

Type one according to Campbell has a serial number at the top, two signatures at the bottom and the denomination in the centre on the side of a camp building

Campbell	S&B	SW-Feller
1231 2d Hut	561	AU941
1232 3d Hut	562	AU942
1233 6d Hut	563	AU943
1234 1/- Hut	564	AU944
1235 2/- Hut	565	AU945
1236 5/- Hut	566	AU946

Type 2 notes with serial number at top and bottom, and a written denomination in the centre have a design which consists mainly of vertical and horizontal bars

1237 1d circle w/bars	560	AU940
1238 10/- in text in rectangle	571	AU955

Type 3 has serial numbers at top left and right. The denomination at the centre and the two signatures in the middle or at the bottom. The whole note is crudely printed and is sometimes described as a postmark

1239 1d	S&B568	AU950
1240 3d	S&B569	AU951
1241 6d	S&B570	AU952





A Selection of Type 1, 2 and 3  
early notes of Hay camp Wood cut printing blocks (?).

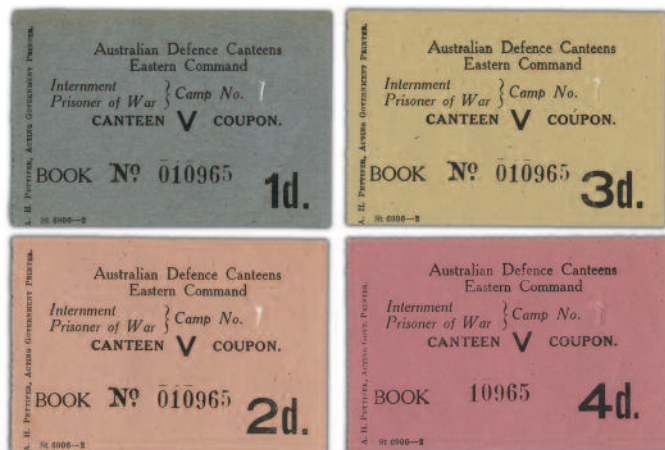
### Australian Defence Canteens coupons

In September 1941, the Australian Defence Canteens Service took over the operation of canteens in all camps. Coupons were issued in books with four denominations - 1d, 2d, 3d, and 4d. The booklets were perforated with the number of the camp and to date only Camp 7-Hay has been recorded. The printer is A.H. Pettifer who was acting NSW Government Printer during 1942 and NSW Government Printer from 1946 until 1958.

Campbell		S&B	SW-Feller
1201	1d	572	960
1202	2d	573	961
1203	3d	574	962
1204	4d	575	963

### A Chaplain's work continues

An interesting comment appears on a postcard that Alcorn received after he finished his work at Hay. Werner Baerwald, a musician, wrote from London in October 1941 that he "was very sorry that you could not be with us any longer. But I would like to assure you that your Divine services, your kind readiness to help and your so sympathetic understanding of all our troubles have won the hearts of many of us and made a deep impression on me." Rabbi Falk wrote in his report, "I would personally vouch for these men who would be an acquisition to the progress and development of Australia." Today, Australia's multicultural population and diversity is a tribute partly to men like these who by their faith in action persuaded many internees to settle and become citizens.



Set of 1d, 2d, 3d, 4d Canteen V coupons with camp 7 perforation

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Internees at rest, Hay Camp, 1941.  
Detail from a watercolour by Theodor Engel