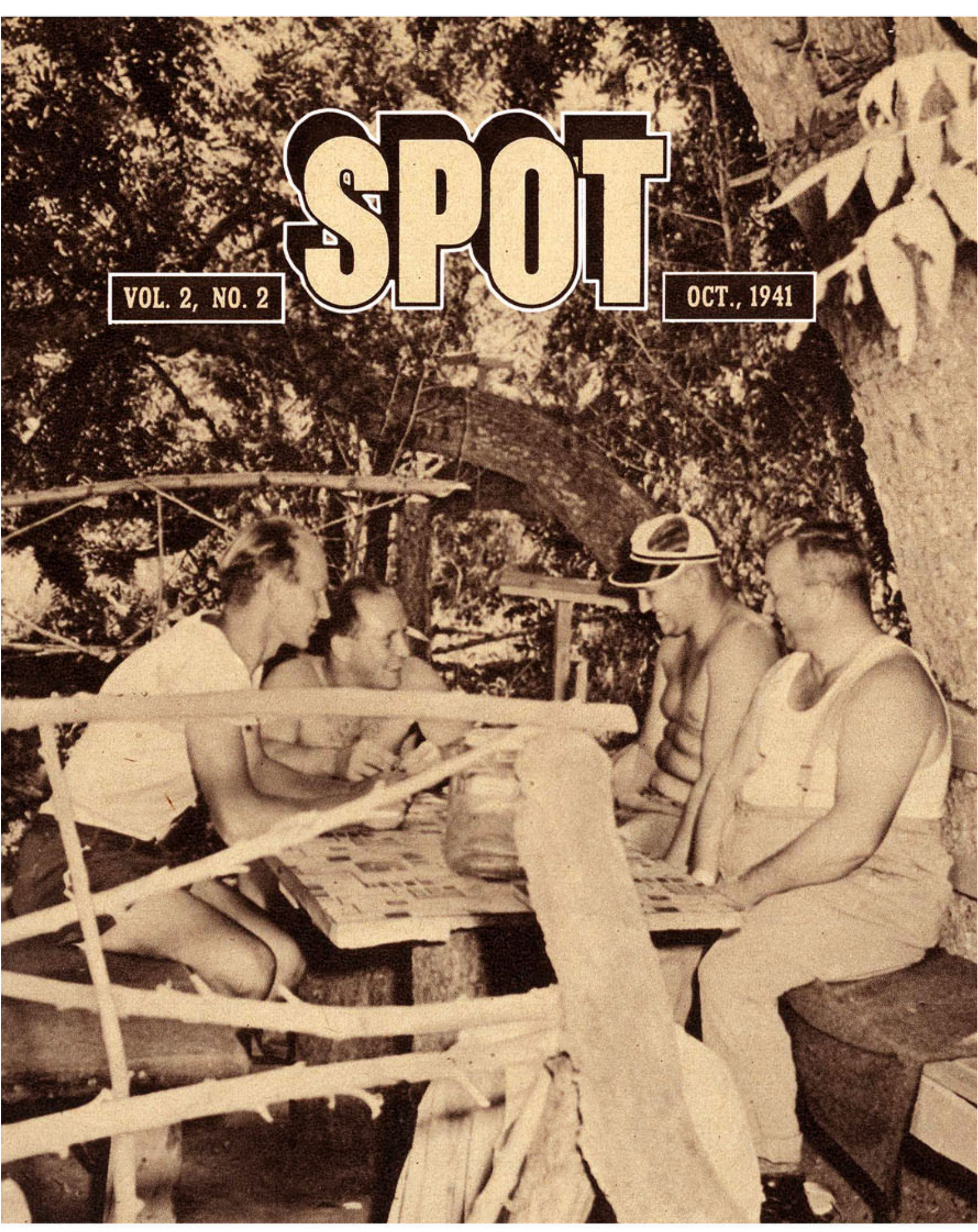


# SPOT

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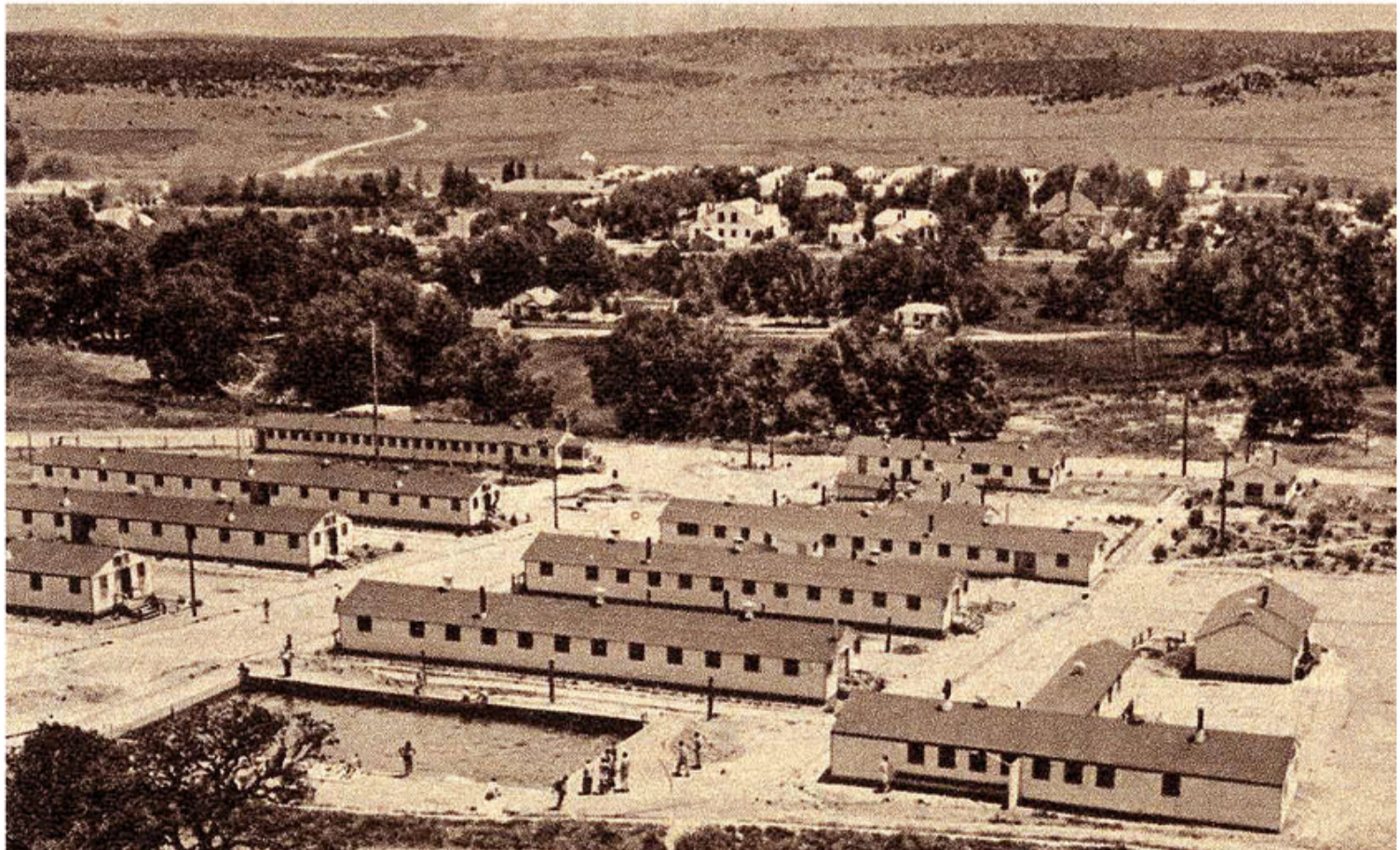


AT ONE OF MANY REST SPOTS UNDER THE TREES, THE SUN-TANNED NAZI SEAMEN CHAT AND PLAY THEIR FAVORITE CARD GAMES—BRIDGE, PINOCHLE, AND A GERMAN GAME CALLED "SKAT"

## AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP

*411 German Seamen Live Country-Club Style in New Mexico Internment Camp*

**O**N THESE pages, in sharp contrast to the brutal hell-holes of Nazi Germany, SPOT presents the only inside pictures ever taken of the first World War II concentration camp on American soil. Interned here, in a former CCC camp in the Capitan mountains of New Mexico, are 411 Nazi seamen—the majority of the crew of the scuttled Nazi luxury liner Columbus. After deserting the world's largest cruise ship off the island of Jamaica in December, 1939, to prevent capture by a British destroyer, the alien seamen were picked up by the U. S. S. Tuscaloosa and detained under terms of international law. They were first interned at Ellis Island in New York harbor,



FROM AN ADJACENT MOUNTAIN, SWIMMING POOL MADE BY INTERNEES IS SEEN IN FOREGROUND

**AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP**

**LIKE MOST OF THE OTHER INTERNEES, STEWARD HEINZ HILKEN ENJOYS A DAILY SESSION OF SEVERAL HOURS AT THE POOL THEY BUILT**

then at Angel Island off San Francisco, and finally at the camp shown in these pictures taken exclusively by SPOT, after censorship difficulties had been overcome.

When the Immigration Department took over the old CCC camp adjoining the Marine hospital at Fort Stanton, New Mexico, to house the 411 German seamen, sleeping space was at a premium. The internees fell to and erected a number of new buildings, improved others, and then built a swimming pool, boxing ring, tennis courts, shops for blacksmiths and carpenters. To complete their community they constructed several rabbit hutches and a pigeon cote.



**SEAMEN COOK THEIR OWN EXCELLENT AND ABUNDANT FOOD**

**AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP**

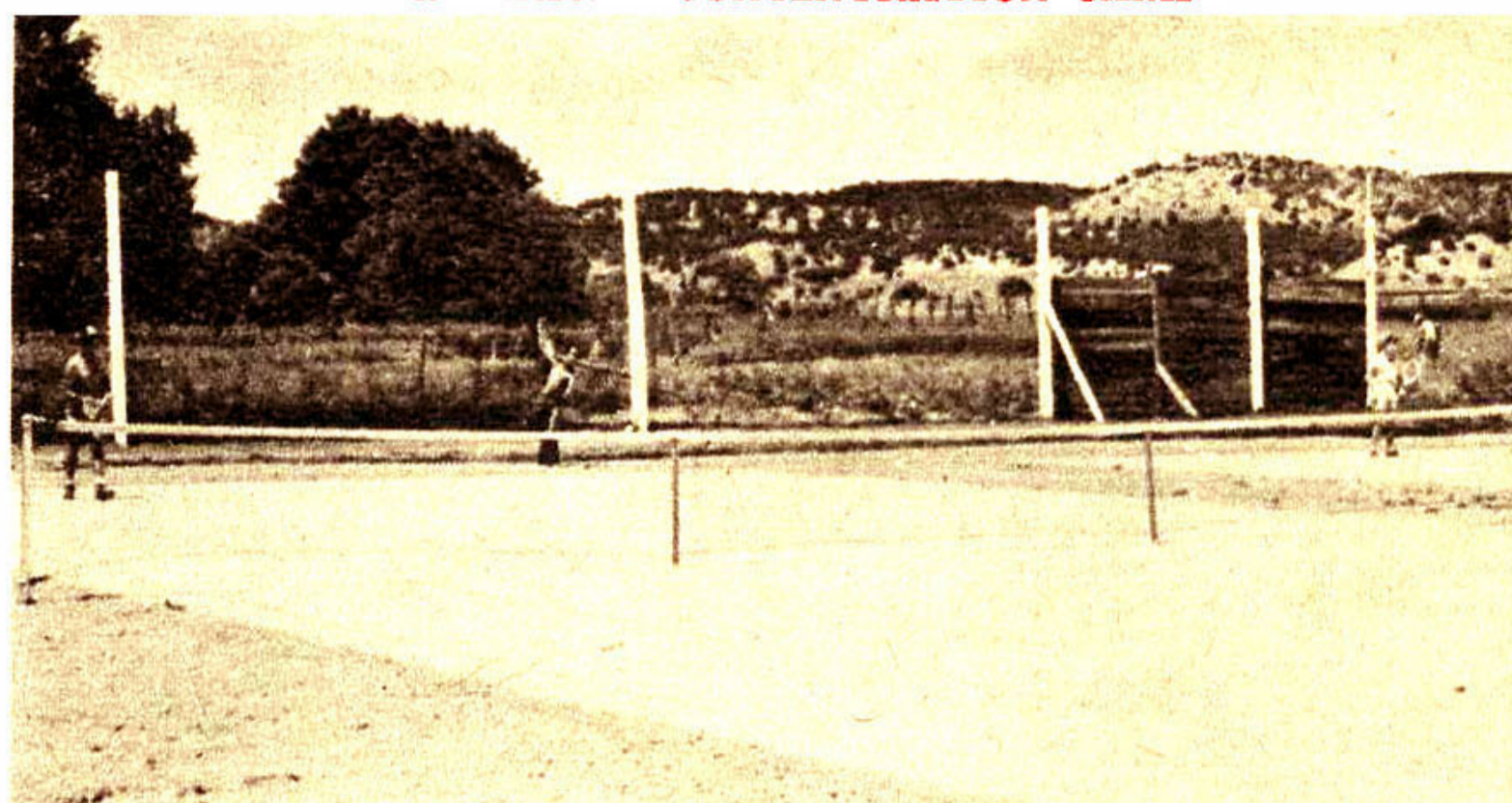
**THE POOL, FED BY SPRING WATER AND WITH A PURIFYING SYSTEM, WAS BUILT BY THE MEN IN FOUR WEEKS**

All the seamen are strongly pro-Hitler and say they would rather be fighting for their Führer than enjoying the comparative luxury of this camp, where they manage most of the living details themselves. If these pictures make you think they are living a life of ease at our expense, remember that they are internees, not yet prisoners, and that the men do their own work and buy or create their own luxuries. Until the freezing of German funds and the expulsion of Nazi diplomats, food and spending money were supplied by Fritz Wiedemann, German consul in San Francisco and until recently Hitler's No. 1 agent in America. Since June, food has come from the Immigration Department and spending money from wealthy American friends the seamen met on cruises of the Columbus.



The detained men are allowed to roam freely over an area of 20 sections (20 square miles), enclosed only by a thin wire fence which serves merely as a boundary reminder. In the first month of their New Mexican exile, four of the crewmen escaped and visited Roswell, 70 miles away. Immigration authorities were lenient and punishment was meted out by officers of the Columbus in charge of camp discipline. The men had only wanted to cut up a little in Roswell.

In the event of a mass escape, possibilities of sabotage would be practically nil. Even if the Nazis managed to elude the Border Patrol and



**THE POPULAR TENNIS COURTS TOOK SIX WEEKS TO BUILD**



**Continued on Next Page**

**ALWAYS INDUSTRIOUS, THEY LEVEL GROUND NEAR THE POOL**

were equipped to inflict damage, there is nothing within striking distance that is strategic to our defense program. Only nine guards watch over the 411 men. In case of emergency, according to the Immigration Department director at the camp, "the situation could be brought under control very rapidly"—by means of short-wave radio in camp and special scouts with two-way radio cars in the surrounding towns of Capitan, Carrizozo, Roswell, and others.

SPOT made the long trip to Fort Stanton, over a series of winding mountain roads, to show you the country-club life led by these German crewmen. The men felt uneasy about being pictured in such luxurious surroundings. Many refused to be photographed. The SPOT reporter was not permitted to ask them any questions about the war or about Germany in any connection. The men would not even tell what towns they came from.

The camp is operated on the same basis as on shipboard, with each man retaining his rank and duties, though now these are much lighter than at sea. In the SPOT interview, Fourth Officer Fritz Welcke, who was appointed guide by Captain Wilhelm Daehne, acted as unofficial censor. Questions were confined to such subjects as favorite sports and the New Mexican climate, doubtless because of fear that on other subjects the man might let slip a careless remark. Such a statement, if printed, would be sure to reach the Führer and result in retaliation when the

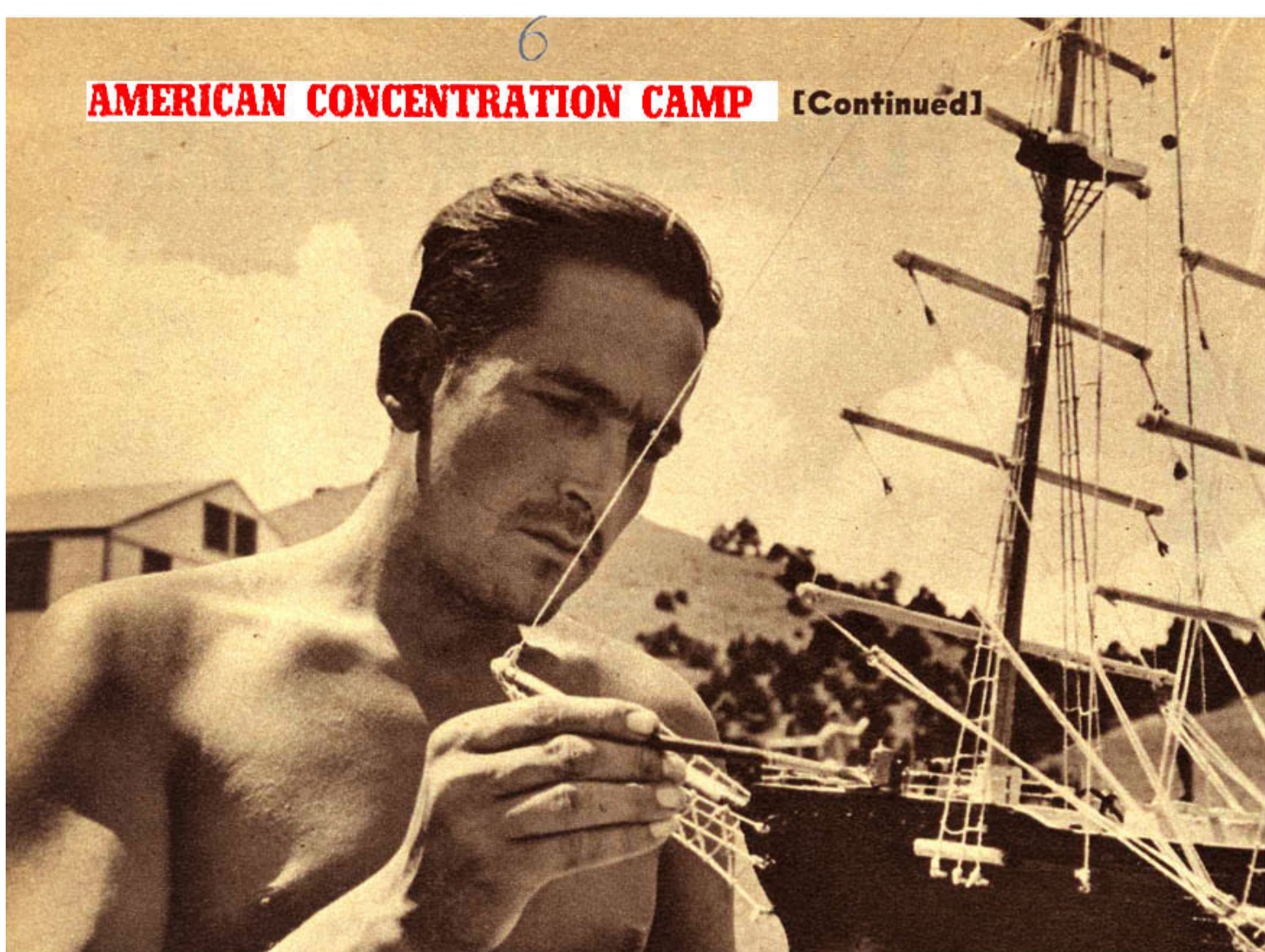


**THREE MEN ENJOY THE "GEMUTLICHKEIT" OF THEIR NOOK BENEATH PIGEON COTE**

men return to Germany. Thus Nazi restrictions against free speech govern them even in this country.

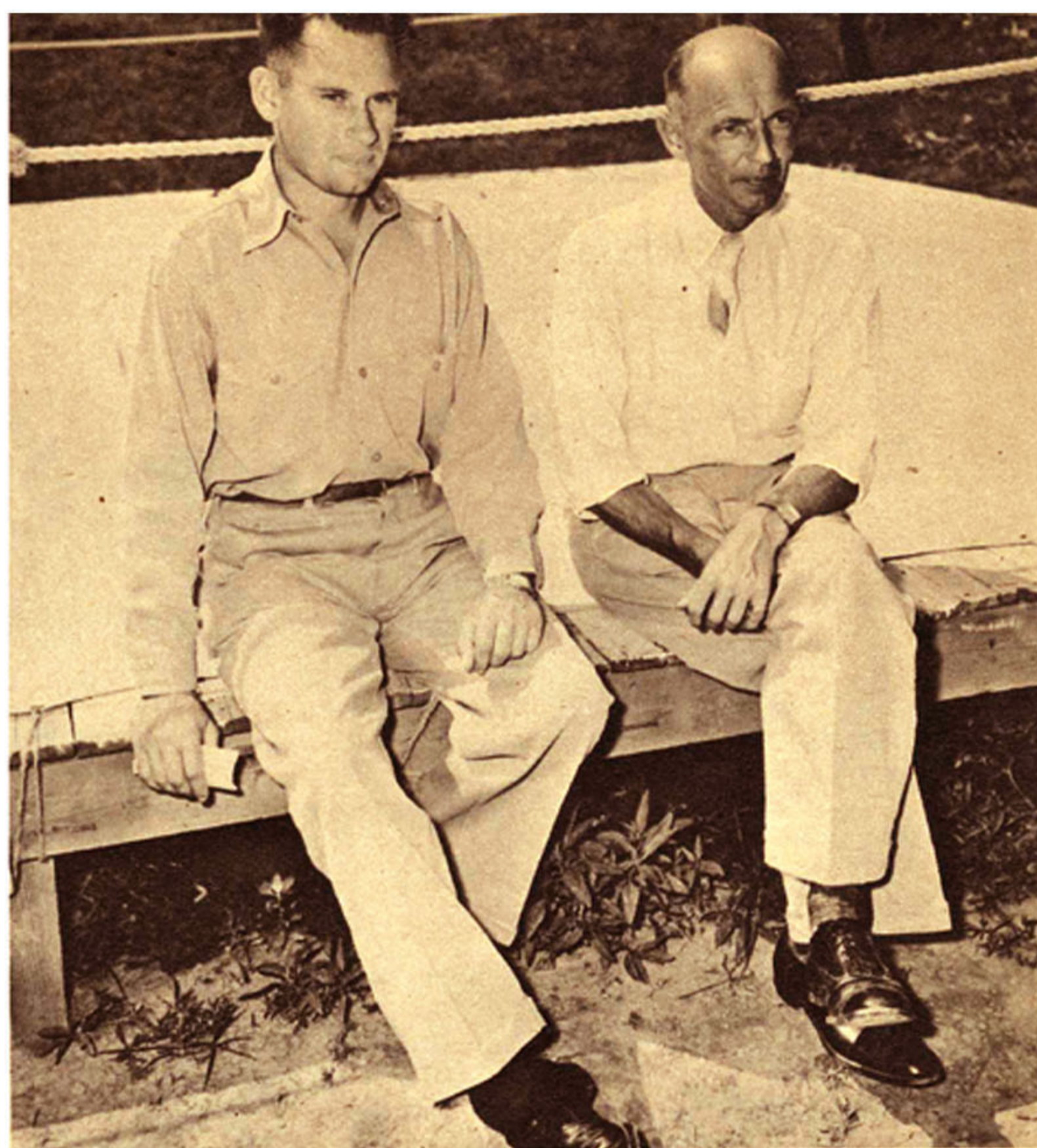
Fourth Officer Welcke stated that they all considered themselves fortunate to be able to see so much varied country. Although Welcke was extremely careful not to admit that the men were enjoying themselves, it was quite evident in watching them at work and play that this life appealed to them far more than would life in a tank or bomber. Nevertheless, they all insisted they would rather be fighting for Germany. In their recreation hall, decorated with a scowling photo of Hitler, they listen avidly to the war news, hoping for word of new German victories. Average age of the men is from 30 to 35, although some are as young as 20 and as old as 50.

In the evenings concerts by the ship's orchestra are usually in order. The band plays mostly classical Teutonic tunes, occasionally make pathetic attempts to play American swing, which many of the men find pleasant. The men may retire at any time they like, get up whenever they please. All are usually up for breakfast—first shift at 7:30. Away from the Nazi regime, they follow peaceable pursuits, work at making their life more comfortable. At a height of 6,300



**Before arriving at the Columbus camp Hans Sievert (a steward) had never tried building a model ship. This square-rigger is the result of his first attempt.**

feet in the mountains, the Columbus camp has all the advantages of an ideal health resort. In the words of Officer Welcke, it is "undoubtedly the best internment camp in the world." Contrasted with Nazi concentration camps, with their unspeakable, brutal terror, their superlative sadism, it is paradise. To these detained Nazis, living in comfort, their democratic hosts must seem either saints or suckers.

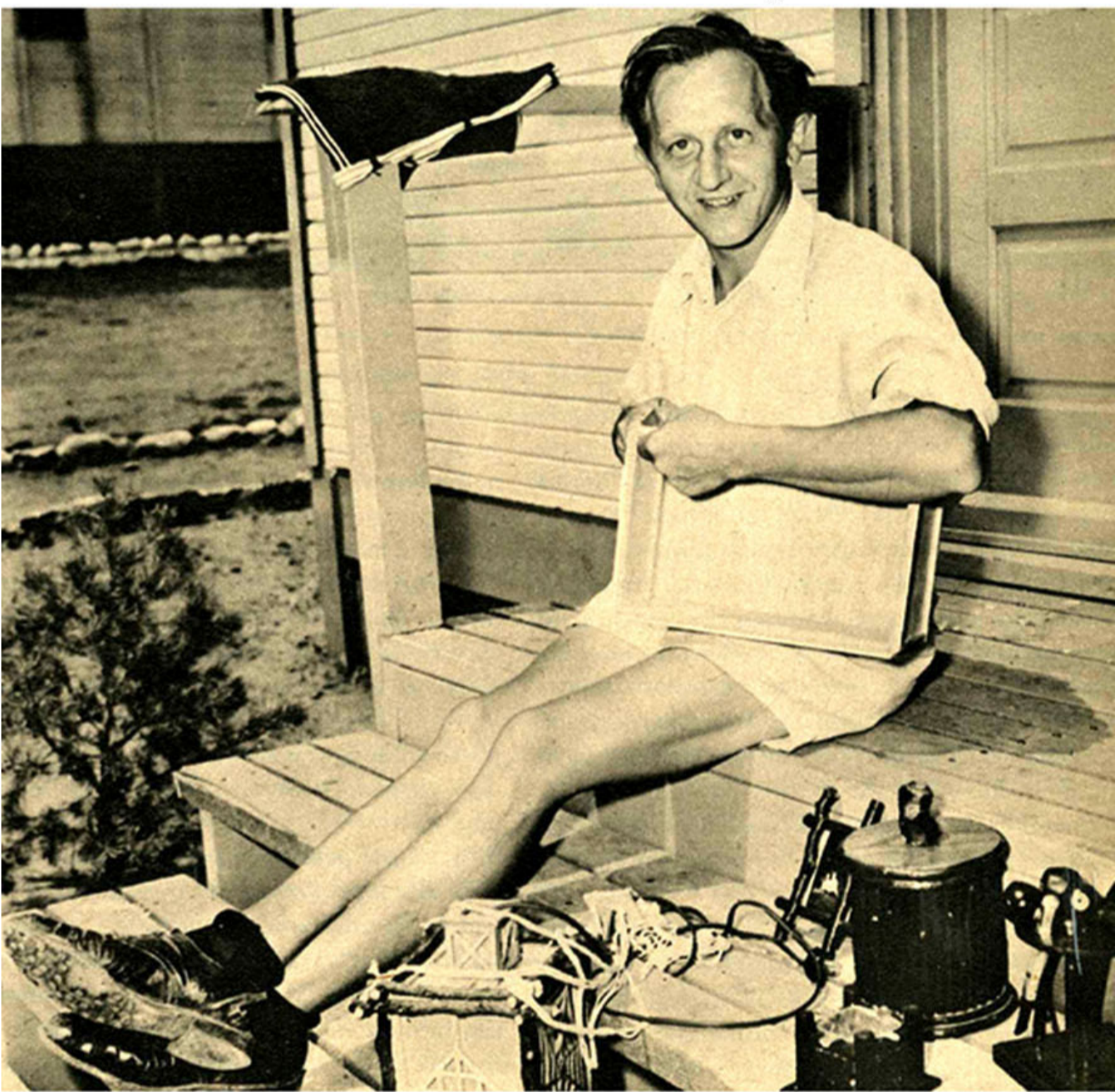


**Fourth Officer Fritz Welcke and Captain Wilhelm Daehne, like the other seamen, would not name the German towns in which they were born.**

**THEY LIVE IN SELF-MADE LUXURY,  
BUT ALL WOULD RATHER BE AT  
HOME FIGHTING FOR FÜHRER HITLER**

**AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP**

**Seamen Hans Schmidt and Anton Greiner pitch horseshoes, another popular sport in the internment camp.**



**Since being interned Hans Schroeder has taken up making pipe-racks, cigarette trays and Japanese lanterns out of wood. Many of the men learned new hobbies to help pass the time.**

**SPOT**