

The trials and tribulations of Otto Karl Johann Pinnow
as told by his daughter Otla Pinnow

My father, Otto Karl Johann Pinnow, born in 1908 was the youngest son of a Mecklenburg [Germany] farmer's family. He trained to be a machinist and relocated to Hamburg to practice his trade. While in Hamburg he worked for the well known company "Blohm & Voss", a shipyard and engineering company. The company, even today, remains a global leader in manufacturing. It is part of the ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. He earned enough money to go to high school and studied to become a Ship Engineer. His training secured him a position as a merchant seaman and engineer at Woermann-East-Africa-Line which operated passenger and cargo services between Australia and East African, West African and South African ports.

Unfortunately, early in my father's career he contracted typhus. His illness forced him to remain in Germany. Shortly, thereafter his problems with the Nazis began. Like many Germans, he was neither racist nor politically inclined but he was a humanist who could not bear the violation of human rights by the Nazis. This affected my father psychologically—to the point that he was combative towards a co-worker who accepted the Nazi ideology. The incident landed him in a hospital. After a short recovery, my father was released from the hospital and found another job.

In August 1939, my father's elder sister realized that my father was in danger, so she used her connections to get my father a visa, a work permit, and passage on a ship to Peru. His sister said, "He set sail at noon from Bremerhaven to Peru, that very same morning the Gestapo knocked at his door."

The ship my father sailed on to Peru was under the command of Captain Schütte. Ironically, my father later encountered the Captain at Camp Kenedy, Texas, where he was the designated representative for the German internees at the concentration camp. Perhaps, Captain Schütte, like my father, was a humanist. He certainly believed in treating all his passengers on his ship in a civilized manner.

While sailing on Captain Schütte's ship my father was asked by the steward whether he wanted to share his cabin with a Latin American or with a Jewish merchant from Berlin; my father replied, "I leave this decision to you, but I prefer a European." So my father shared his cabin with the Jewish merchant.

According to my father's diary, when the ship reached international waters the mood on the ship transformed as the passengers shed the fear of the Nazi regime. A more normal life returned to the passengers. It was comforting because Captain Schütte treated all passengers with the same human dignity. Only once did Captain Schütte revert to Nazi policy. As the ship neared the coast of South America, the Nazi-cross-flag [swastika also known as Hakenkreuz] was raised. My father voiced his disapproval to Captain Schütte regarding the raising of the Nazi-cross-flag. He argued that it was not correct to raise the

Nazi flag; rather international law required the raising of the German flag. The Captain replied, "OK, but I have strict orders to raise the Nazi-flag and cannot do otherwise."

In Peru my father worked at the company "Gildemeister." He had hoped that the war would end in 1942. In his mind he believed the Nazis would be defeated, and Northern Germany would be separated from Southern Germany, because in his opinion the Nazis came from the south. Northern Germany, particularly Hamburg, had a history of Hanseatic tradition with a historic mission to commerce and freedom.

In 1942, my father was taken from Peru by U.S. Authorities to Camp Kenedy at Kenedy, Texas [1]. Of course, my father lost everything except the clothes he had on his back. To my father this was a gross violation of every human and international right. How could this egregious behavior be justified?

U.S. policy restricted communication with internees; all ingoing and outgoing mail was censored from the internment camps. After several months of internment, my father's sister in Hamburg was allowed to write to my father. In turn, he was allowed to send a letter back—via the Red Cross, two hand-written lines. The two lines just let family know where he was and that he was still living[2]; the process to get this accomplished was lengthy and complicated—it seems that the United States Government wanted to keep these actions, i.e., arrest and internment of Latin Americans and seamen, a SECRET!

On a list of Camp Kenedy internees [dated December 23, 1943] my father's name had been lined through. My father explained to me that the U.S. Government wanted to repatriate him, but when he told them that he would be glad to be repatriated; U.S. authorities scrubbed him from the list—without explanation. My father's preference was to return to Peru; since this was absolutely impossible he decided to go back to Germany. Indeed, my father did not realize the danger of returning to Germany. Certainly, he did not want to stay in a country, the United States, which was responsible for imprisoning him without any charges. Consequently, on February 15, 1944 my father was repatriated on the Gripsholm to Germany via Lisbon, Portugal.

As the war was winding down my father found himself in working in a chemistry enterprise at Magdeburg. This firm was responsible for security so it was a bombing target of the Allies. In my father's last conflict with the Nazis they were pushing him to join the "Volkssturm" [National Militia]. My father referred to his repatriation document that restricted his participation in all military or paramilitary actions. They still seized him. Only with the help of the Department Chiefs was he released. They insisted that it would be prudent to let him go. When Magdeburg was captured, he became responsible for the water system and pumps providing the citizenry with drinkable water. French General Lemaitre who captured Magdeburg made my father Lord Mayor, after determining he was not a Nazi—my father held this position for one day. Ironically, the British military also made the determination my father was not a Nazi; he was employed by them as a clerk.

After the war, my father worked as engineer in the Rhineland, building machines for cane factories for South America, India and Sudan. He died in 1973 shortly after returning from Senegal. Unfortunately, after accepting a new position to build a cane factory in Senegal he had contracted malaria.

Camp Kenedy had traumatized my father. He was a reasonable person, sensitive to issues of humanity, he believed in the rule of law and a civil way of life. He believed in human ethics and their importance in commanding all behavior - especially unwritten law. The USA violated all justice by incarcerating internees with no identification of cause. Internees had no idea of the charges for which they were arrested or incarcerated. Surely, this was unjust and against all human morals and dignity. With one exception my father for the remainder of his life he refused to put a foot on US-soil again. The exception was when he was forced, because there was no direct flight from a South American country, to layover in an airport with American jurisdiction. He restricted his movement to the international section of the airport even though his layover lasted several hours. My father summed up his experiences with this simple sentence: "Never trust the Americans; they do not respect any law."

In conclusion, my father's incarceration left deep wounds. Even simple things like fences affected his behavior. His years of incarceration left so much angst that he avoided all fenced areas. As a child I remember that during beach holidays, for instance, he would avoid fenced areas. Only the "wild" parts of the beach allowed him to be comfortable. Again, it is important for history to document WWII internment stories, like my father's, so others can learn from these experiences.

[1] In April 1942 he was transported aboard the S.S. Etolin at Callao, Peru, taken to California and from there to Camp Kenedy. See extract Ship's Manifest attached to this paper.

[2] See Red Cross cards attached to this paper.

AU COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE — GENEVE
REPLY—ANTWORT—RISPOSTA Urgent
MESSAGE—EXPRESS Urgente

Portobriefe
23. Juli 1943

Reserved for prisoners of war and their families without news for over three months.
 Ausschließlich für Kriegsgefangene, Zivilisten und deren Familien bestimmt, die seit mehr als drei Monaten ohne direkte Nachrichten.
 Riservato ai prigionieri di guerra ed agli internati civili e loro famiglie privi di notizie da oltre tre mesi.

SENDER Name and Christian name in full *
ABSENDER Name and Vorname (voll ausgeschreiben) * *Ina Bender geb. Pinnow*
MITTENTE Cognome e nome (scritto in completo) *

Address *Frankfurt a/M. Voelckerstr. 19*
Anschrift
 Indirizzo

RECEIVER Name and Christian name in full *
EMPPFAENGER Name and Vorname (voll ausgeschreiben) * *Otto Pinnow*
DESTINATARIO Cognome e nome (scritto in completo) *

Address *Kenedy, Texas U.S.A.*
Anschrift
 Indirizzo *U.S.I. A.S. Alien Detention Station P.O. Box 113*

For prisoners state rank, POW number and Camp.
 For civilian internees state internee number and Camp.
 Bei Gefangenen state Anzahl des Grades, des Nummern, sowie des Lagers.
 Bei Zivilisten state Angabe der Nummer und Name des Lagers.
 Per i prigionieri indicare il grado, il numero del prigioniero di guerra ed il Campo.
 Per gli internati civili indicare il numero dell'internato ed il Campo.

Message on back / Mitteilung umgekehrt / Messaggio a tergo

MESSAGE
 All communications should be of strictly private nature only.
 Please write very clearly and on the lines.

NACHRICHT
 Ausschliesslich Familiennachrichten.
 Bitte deutlich und auf der Linie schreiben.

MESSAGGIO
 Ogni comunicazione dev'essere soltanto di carattere strettamente personale.
 Si prega di scrivere chiaramente sulle linee.

*Danken für Nachricht sind erbracht.
 Bisher alle gesund. Vater geht's gut hat
 Hilfskraft. Lust damit da in Deutschland.
 Besundes Wiedersehen erhofft gewisse
 alle herzlich Schwester Ina*

Date *24. Juni 1943.* **Signature** *Ina Bender*
Datum *24. Juni 1943.* **Unterschrift** *geb. Pinnow*
Data *24. Juni 1943.* **Firma** *geb. Pinnow*

Postage free unless sent by Air Mail.
 Portofrei—Bei Luftpostbeförderung muss die Luftpostgebühr bezahlt werden.
 Spedizione gratis a meno che sia fatta per posta aerea.

List SEVEN

41829

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of said insular possessions from a foreign port, a port of continental United States, or a port of the insular possessions of the United States.
This (white) sheet is for the listing

S. S. ETOLIN Passengers sailing from CALLAO, PERU, APRIL 5, 1942

1 No. on List	2 HEAD-TAX STATUS (This column for use of Government officials only)	3 NAME IN FULL		4 Age		5 Sex	6 Married	7 Calling or occupation	8 Able to—			9 Nationality, Country of which citizen or subject	10 Race or people	11 Place of birth		12 Immigration Visa, Passport Visa, or Entry Permit number (This number with QV, NV, P, or E, and the station of arrival)	13 Issued		14 Date concerning verifications of landings, etc. (This column for use of Government officials only)	15 *Last permanent residence			
		Family name	Given name	Yrs.	Mos.				Read	Write	Country			City or town, State, Province or District	Place		Date	Country		City or town, State, Province or District			
1	<i>Enemy Alien</i>	OSHIRO	Jintoku	41		m	s	barber	x		Japanese	x	Japan	Japan	Japan	Okinawa					PERU	Lima	
2		OSHIRO	Joji	34		m	s	farmer	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	do	P 1512/42	Kobe				Lima	
3		OSHIRO	Koeki	41		m	m	carpenter	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	do							Callao
4		OSHIRO	TAKETA	45		m	m	clerk	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	do	P 1455						Lima
5		OSHIRO	Taro	48		m	s	none	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	do	P 49697						Callao
6		OTA	Takashi	24		m	s	clerk	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Shigaken	P 28732						Callao
7		PINNOW	Otto	34		m	s	Mech. Engr.	x	German	do	x	German	German	Germany	Tunel/Schwierin	P 15312						Lima
8		PIONTECK	Friedrich	28		m	s	mariner	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Capplm	P 225/42						Callao
9		POHL	Karl	21		m	s	steward	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Roen	P 192/42						Callao
10		QUITTECK	Hans	25		m	s	mar. engr.	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Breslau	P 172/42						Callao
11		RAHE	Gustav	28		m	s	mechanic	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Bremen	P 222/42						Callao
12		RAITHEL	Berthold	20		m	s	mechanic	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Hoff							Lima
13		RAUH	Theodor	22		m	s	mechanic	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Menningen	P 231/42						Callao
14		REDDIS	Willy	29		m	s	mariner	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Berenswaldern	P 224/42						Callao
15		REIMERS	Rudolf	39		m	s	carpenter	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Hamburg	P 193/42						Callao
16		REITERER	Hans	20		m	s	clerk	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Berlin	P 752 A						Lima
17		ROEDINGER	Hermann	36		m	s	clerk	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Bergedorf	P 717/36						Lima
18		ROEPER	otto	45		m	m	Boatswain	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Hamburg	P 225/42						Callao
19		ROHDE	Paul	45		m	s	mariner	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Rloekenhagen	P 267/42						Callao
20		ROLLER	Gottlob	53		m	s	carpenter	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Lomersheim	P 186/42						Callao
21		ROPERS	Alfred	41		m	m	steward	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Hamburg	P 112/42						Callao
22		SAKO	Makoto	35		m	s	merohant	x	Japanese	do	x	Japan	Japan	Japan	Yamaguchi	P						Lima
23		SASSENHAUSEN	Werner	33		m	s	clerk	x	German	do	x	Germany	Germany	Germany	Elberfeld	P						Lima
24		SATO	Hiroshi	43		m	m	merohant	x	Japanese	do	x	Japan	Japan	Japan	Yamagata	P 0255016						Lima
25		SCHAUMLOEFFEL	Theodor	50		m	m	cook	x	German	do	x	Germany	Germany	Germany	Blumenthal	P 191/42						Callao
26		SCHUEKEL	Georg	29		m	s	clerk	x	German	do	x	Germany	Germany	Germany	Grimberg	P 74/37						Arequipa
27		SCHUBERT	Frits	20		m	s	butcher	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Berlin	P 226/42						Callao
28		SCHROEDER	Hermann	30		m	s	seaman	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Herford	P 165/42						Callao
29		SCHUBERT	Heinz	19		m	s	seaman	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Horsheim	P 236/42						Callao
30		SCHUBERT	Wolfin	17		m	s	merohant	x	do	do	x	do	do	do	Remfeld							Lima

See page 2 - 1st class - alien manifest

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Total passengers 30
U. S. citizens 0
Aliens 30

* Permanent residence within the meaning of this manifest shall be actual or intended residence of one year or more.
† List of races will be found on the back of this sheet.