

REPORT ON VISIT TO DETENTION STATIONS  
FOR CIVILIAN INTERNEES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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August 18, 1942

I.

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that they had a right to converse with the Delegate of the Swiss Legation without the presence of an American official. Only a few asked for an exclusive interview with the Delegate which was readily granted. The American authorities, in every way, facilitated the contact of the Delegate with the prisoners.

The Delegate perfected numerous powers of attorney and initiated the procedure for three marriages by proxy between German prisoners and their fiancées in Germany. About half of the individual problems submitted could be settled immediately while the rest were referred by the Delegate to the Swiss Legation. (See Memoranda of August 1 and 18, 1942, referring 122 matters to the Legation.)

After the inspection and hearing of prisoners, the Delegate held a conference with the American Camp Commander and the representatives of the Department of State, Justice, or War, at which conference the Delegate reported about such suggestions and complaints of the prisoners which the Delegate considered important enough to bring to the attention of the American authorities. A general discussion followed as to the advisability of making changes and in various instances such changes were made. (See Annex 1.)

Before leaving camp a questionnaire was filled out giving details as to the treatment of prisoners in each camp. A German questionnaire prepared by the German Government was used for the German detainees and an English questionnaire for the Italian detainees. These questionnaires were forwarded to Berne at an earlier time.

The information collected by the Delegate in each camp is reproduced in Part II of this report. These individual camp reports permit the following general conclusions:

NUMBER OF PRISONERS

At the time of the visits there were about 3100 German and

For a part of this trip, members of the staff of the Swiss Consulate in San Francisco, Messrs. De Amat, Sanz, and Martin took part in the inspection as representatives of the Protecting Power for Japanese nationals.

Accompanied by Mr. Whitney Young of the Department of State, Delegate of the Swiss Legation visited on

June 25 - 28, 1942      Camp Stringtown, Oklahoma, containing German detainees from Latin America and German internees, former U.S.A. residents. All men.

June 30, 1942              Camp Fort Forrest, Tennessee, containing German and Italian detainees from Latin America and German and Italian internees, former U.S.A. residents.

Lt. Col. Byrd of the Provost Marshall's Office of the 8th Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, took part in the visit of Camp Stringtown.

On a third trip the Delegate of the Swiss Legation, accompanied by Mr. Rolf W. Roth of the Department of Italian interests of the Swiss Legation and Mr. Whitney Young and Mr. Carl Marcy of the State Department visited on

July 30 and 31, 1942      Camp Fort George G. Meade, containing German and Italian internees, former U.S.A. residents, and the crew of the former German M.S. "Odenwald." All men.

about 1500 Italian citizens detained as enemy aliens in the United States. These fall in three different classes:

- a) Former residents of Latin America who were expelled from or leaving their country of residence and were awaiting their repatriation to Europe: about 400 Germans and 35 Italians.
- b) Former crews of German and Italian Merchant Ships arrested in one of the American Republics. These amount to about 1000 Germans and 1000 Italians.
- c) The Federal Bureau of Investigation <sup>has</sup> arrested some 8000 enemy aliens since the declaration of war. Of these 5318 cases were investigated and decided up to July 18, 1942, with the following results:

	<u>Germans</u>	<u>Italians</u>	<u>Japanese</u>
Released	283	93	371
Paroled	706	151	1109
Interned	894	168	1543

In some 800 German and 300 Italian cases no decision has yet been taken.

It is estimated by the United States Office of War Information that the total number of German and Italian citizens in the United States is about 300,000 for the Germans and 625,000 for the Italians.

The policy of the United States as to the apprehension of the enemy aliens has been defined by the Attorney General as follows:

"The Department of Justice is apprehending all those aliens of enemy nationalities who are considered dangerous to the national security. Aliens who comply with the regulations and against whom there is no suspicion of disloyalty need not fear apprehension."

The enemy alien's arrest takes place upon the initiative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The detainee first usually spends some time in a local jail and is transferred later to a temporary detention station for enemy aliens. These stations are scattered all over the country and the Delegate has visited up to

SUGGESTIONS AS TO FURTHER ACTION

Situation in Camp Stringtown:

The report on this Internment Camp of the Army (Germans only, see in Part II of this report) shows in which points the treatment in Stringtown did not conform with the provisions of the Geneva Convention. Col. Bryan of the Provost Marshal General's office in charge of the Prisoners of War Camps promised important changes at the time of two visits paid to him in July.

The Delegate suggests that the Swiss Legation by written inquiries and by another visit to the Camp verifies whether all provisions of the Geneva Convention are now applied.

Domestic Mail of Prisoners:

Upon intervention of the Swiss Legation the American authorities promised on June 22, 1942, to change the existing rules according to which internees in Army camps can only correspond on "Internee of War Stationery." The solution proposed by prisoners is that domestic mail be forwarded in a plain envelope to be sealed after censoring by the camp authorities. 1.)

International mail is forwarded free of charge, but domestic mail of prisoners is subject to postage in the United States. The

Geneva Convention states on this point:

Letters and consignments of money or valuables, as well as parcels by post intended for prisoners of war or dispatched by them, either directly, or by the mediation of the information bureaus provided in article 77, shall be exempt from all postal duties in the countries of origin and destination, as well as in the countries they pass through." (Art.38)

At the end of July 1942, the promised change was not yet in effect in Camp Fort Mead.

The camps which expect another visit from the Protecting Power in the near future are: Missoula, Lincoln, Forrest, Stringtown, Seagoville, Kenedy, Meade.

Fort Stanton is so well organized that no visit seems necessary for quite some time to come.

The following temporary detention stations which have not been visited might partly be included in forthcoming visits:

East Boston, Mass. Immigration Service: 2 German men, 1 German woman, 2 Italian men, on August 9.

Baltimore, Md. Fort Howard: 6 German men on August 9.

Miami, Fla. Immigration Service: 5 German men, 2 German women, 3 Italian men, on August 9.

Fort Screven, Ga. Army Post; 3 German men on August 9.

Fort McPherson, Ga. Army Post: 1 German man on August 9.

Buffalo, N.Y. House of Good Shepherd: 1 German woman on Aug. 9.

Cleveland, Ohio, Immigration Service: 3 German men, 3 German women and 11 Italian men on August 9.

Niagara Falls, N.Y., Immigration Dept.: 5 German and 1 Italian men on August 9.

Detroit, Mich. Immigration Service: 5 German men on August 9.

Cincinnati, Ohio, Immigration Dept.: 7 German men, 3 German women, 5 Italian men on August 9.

Kansas City, Mo., Immigration Service: 6 German, 3 Italian men on August 9.

St. Louis, Mo., House of Good Shepherd: 1 German woman on Aug. 9.

Algiers, La., Immigration Service: 8 German, 2 Italian men on August 9.

Spokane, Wash., County Jail: 1 German man on August 9.

Salt Lake City, Utah, Immigration Service: 7 German, 1 Italian men on August 9.

Denver, Colorado, Fort Logan: 1 German man on August 9.

Los Angeles, Calif., Tuna Canyon: 21 German, 12 Italian men on August 9.

INFORMATION

concerning

CAMP STRINGTOWN



QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SWISS DELEGATE FOR WAR PRISONERS

- - - - -

Visit to Detention Stations in the United States of America

- - - - -

Date of Visit: June 25 - 28, 1942

I ORGANIZATION OF STATION

1. Address of Station: Enemy Alien Internment Camp  
Stringtown, Oklahoma

2. Situated in what environment:

About 160 miles southeast of Oklahoma City  
About 150 miles north of Dallas, Texas  
Situated in Kiamicha Hills. Wooded and hilly region.  
Elevation 1600 Feet.

3. U.S. Department in charge of prisoners: U.S. Army

4. Officer in charge of Station: Colonel A. Noble Ladd until  
June 27, 1942. Thereafter, Lt. Col. Bertram Frankenberger.

5. Number and description of prisoners at time of visit:

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Category</u>
Germans	317		Internees formerly residing in U.S. territories.
Germans & stateless	94		Formerly residing in the Republic of Panama
"	34		Formerly residing in Costa Rica.
"	86		" " Guatemala
Total	<u>531</u>		

6. List of prisoners: Deposited with Swiss Legation, Washington

7. Additional Remarks: (Capacity of Station, temporary or permanent, etc.)

8. Capacity of Station: 550 - could be enlarged later. Permanent Station.

9. Station was formerly used as prison farm for delinquents of the  
State of Oklahoma.

II SPOKESMEN FOR PRISONERS

7. Full name: George E. G. Stubbe
8. Present address: Enemy Alien Internment Camp  
Stringtown, Oklahoma
9. Education: High School
10. Former occupation: In business
11. Former residence: U S A
12. Number, nationality and category of prisoners represented by  
spokesman: 500
13. Method of election of spokesman: By election

Additional Remarks: Mr. Stubbe is assisted by Franz Gottfried Wirz,  
Otto Vosicky,  
Ingo Kalinowsky (Costa Rica Germans)  
Willy Dalchow (Guatemala Germans)  
Heinrich Bruene (Panama Germans)  
Frederich L. Kappel (Stateless persons)

III ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PRISONERS

14. Climatic conditions (highest and lowest temperature):  
Average highest temperature: 100° F.  
" lowest " 99° F.  
Highest recorded temperature 116° F. and lowest - 10° F.
15. Where do prisoners sleep: In brick buildings. 1/10<sup>of</sup> buildings are prison cells.
16. Size of dormitories: 235 ft. x 36 ft.
17. How many prisoners sleep in same dormitory: Up to 50.
18. Condition of sanitary installations: Modern sanitary installation but not enough for 500 men.
19. Description of beds, bedding and furniture: Army cots, mattress, comforter, one pillow with white slip, woolen blankets.
20. Light and heating: Good.
21. Bath and showers: Showers with hot and cold water at any time.
22. Does station suffer from dampness: No.
23. Does station suffer from mosquitoes: No.
24. What other buildings are at disposal of prisoners: One mess hall.
25. Where do prisoners spend free time: Camp grounds or their rooms.
26. Are nationalities and different categories separated: Yes.

IV CLOTHING AND MONEY OF PRISONERS

27. Do prisoners wear their own clothing: No.
28. What clothing is furnished by detention station: Green prisoner of war clothes.
29. How are monies and objects of value of prisoners kept: (In their pockets or in custody of detention station against receipt):  
All moneys taken from prisoners and deposited with Provost Marshal General in Washington.
30. What payments are made by detention station to prisoners outside of remuneration for work:  
10¢ a day in coupons for canteen.
31. What in general are the financial resources of prisoners:  
Prisoners cannot dispose of their own funds.
32. Are prisoners allowed to receive or to send money outside of station and to their country of origin: No.

Additional Remarks:

The provision that prisoners can only dispose of 10¢ a day is too rigid. Delegate suggested change to Camp authorities and Provost Marshal General's Office in Washington.

V FOOD FOR PRISONERS

34. What regulations are in force regarding daily rations:  
Army rations for 50¢ per man.
35. Who controls their application at Station and by what methods:  
By daily mess sheet.
36. Who prepares the food: Internee cooks.
37. From what source does drinking water come:  
From Camp lake filter plant.
38. Can prisoners prepare additional food: No.
39. Have there been any requests by prisoners for special diets because of ill health or other reasons: Yes.
40. What is opinion of prisoners interviewed as to the food:  
There is enough food, but quality and taste varies greatly.  
Delegate found food good and tasty on dates of visit.

VI HEALTH OF PRISONERS

41. What facilities exist for exercise in the open (organized or not organized): Not organized.
42. What sports exist: Soccer ball, horse-shoe. throwing.
43. Are there periodical physical examinations: No.
44. Are physicians attached to detention station: Yes.
45. Is dental care given: No.
46. Where does hospitalization of prisoners take place:  
A new hospital of 50 beds is in construction.
47. What facilities exist for medical treatment outside of station or by outside physician not attached to station: None.
48. What serious illnesses or deaths have occurred at the Station:  
None.

Additional Remarks:

VII THE WORK OF THE PRISONERS

49. What work is compulsory:

Maintenance work.

50. What facilities exist for voluntary work and how many prisoners make use of them:

Practically none.

51. What are the wages: None.

52. What compensation is provided for in case of accident:

None. There were two accidents in camp when kitchen stove exploded.

Additional Remarks:

VIII THE EDUCATION & RECREATION OF PRISONERS

53. Number and types of books in Library (Languages):

Number unknown, but not sufficient.

54. Is text of Geneva Convention in Library or otherwise publicly accessible:

Yes.

55. Organization of lectures: No.

56. Film shows: No.

57. Is Radio permitted: Yes.

58. Musical and theatrical activities:

In process of organization.

59. What facilities exist for special instruction in languages, handicrafts, etc.

Class in English.

Additional Remarks:



II.

PART II :

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EACH CAMP VISITED

1. Camp Kenedy	page	40
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Fort Sam Houston

Fort Bliss

Immigration Station San Pedro

Fort McDowell

Immigration Station Seattle

Fort Lewis

Immigration Station Chicago

IX RELIGIOUS SERVICES FOR PRISONERS

60. What are the religions of the prisoners:

Protestant, Catholic and Jewish.

61. Are there any ministers or priests among the prisoners: Yes.

62. Is there an official Chaplain attached to station: No.

63. What arrangements have been made for religious services and visits of ministers or priests:

A Jewish Rabbi visited camp. Catholic priest in camp organizes Sunday services.

64. What religious literature exists in the Station:

A few English Bibles.

Additional Remarks:

X CONTACT OF PRISONERS WITH OUTSIDE WORLD

65. How many visits are allowed:

Two a month - 1 hour each.

66. Can a prisoner receive any visitor he desires to see (family, counsel, business partner, etc.):

Family only.

67. Is incoming mail restricted: No.

68. How many outgoing letters are permitted and of what length:

2 letters of 24 lines per week.

69. How many outgoing cards are permitted: 2

70. How many outgoing packages are permitted: None

71. How many outgoing telegrams are permitted: None except in case of emergency.

72. Are telephone messages permitted and in what cases:

Only in case of emergency.

73. Who censors the communications:

Camp Censor Officer for English Mail. Otherwise, postal censor in Chicago.

74. Is free postage granted: For International Mail only.

75. What are the special facilities granted for communication with the Protecting Power (Legation of Switzerland):

Censored, but not otherwise restricted.

76. Can prisoners send complaints to U.S. Department in charge of prisoners and in what way:

Yes.

Additional Remarks:

XI GENERAL QUESTIONS

77. Is Officer in charge of Station personally accessible to each prisoner:

Yes, upon written request.

78. Is there a canteen at the Station: Yes.

79. What does the canteen sell and at what prices: Usual prices.

80. Who administers the canteen:

American Camp authorities.

81. What philanthropic organizations are permitted to work in the Station:

None.

82. What is their work in the Station: None.

83. What facilities exist for prisoners to make their Wills or set up Powers of Attorney: Local Lawyer.

84. Are prisoners allowed to smoke: Yes.

85. What are the disciplinary measures applied to prisoners:

Have not yet been necessary.

86. Have there been any cases of acts of violence against prisoners:

No.

87. What is the opinion of the Officer in charge of the Station as to the behaviour of prisoners: Good.

88. What is the general opinion of prisoners interviewed as to their treatment:

Internees had numerous complaints as to treatment, which were justified. Camp Commander was replaced during visit of Delegate to Camp.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Stringtown was not as well organized as other internment camps visited. The Delegate found that certain provisions of the Geneva Convention were not adhered to, (1) and he suggested necessary changes. On July 16th, the American authorities stated in reply:

- 1) In order to improve the situation in Stringtown, the Camp Commander was changed.
- 2) Personal effects such as clothing will be returned to internees.
- 3) Locking of buildings and corridors at night will cease.
- 4) Enemy internees shall receive a space of 720 cubic feet in the dormitory.
- 5) Washing and toilet facilities will be increased.
- 6) The erection of the special hospital of 50 beds for internees will be accelerated.
- 7) Restrictions as to use of own funds by internees will be relaxed.
- 8) If possible, opportunities will be created for internees for work, against compensation of 80¢ per day.
- 9) More facilities for recreation and sports will be provided.

The Delegate proposed to visit Camp Stringtown again in the near future.

(1.) See Appendix

APPENDIX

Geneva Convention

Conditions in Stringtown in June, 1942

- Art. 6: All effects and objects of personal use shall remain in the possession of prisoners of war. All personal effects, including their clothing, were taken from prisoners and stored a few miles away in next town. The camp could not furnish large trousers to heavy men and they are without trousers fitting them. No clothes or underwear to put on when they wash what they now have.
- Art. 9: Prisoners of war may be interned in a town fortress, or other place, and bound not to go beyond certain fixed limits. They may also be interned in enclosed camps, they may not be confined or imprisoned except as an indispensable measure of safety or sanitation and only while the circumstances which necessitate the measure continue to exist. Prisoners were locked up during the night after 8 p.m. in two brick buildings of which one has iron bars and 1/3 of the space consists of prison cells. Stringtown is a former penitentiary establishment. The non-existence of flood lights around the barbed wire was given as reason for locking up the prisoners at night.
- Art. 56: In no case may prisoners of war be transferred to penitentiary establishments (prisons, penitentiaries, convict prisons, etc.) there to undergo disciplinary punishment.
- Art. 10: With regard to dormitories, the total surface, minimum cubic amount of air, arrangement and material of bedding, the conditions shall be the same as for the troops at base camps of the detaining Power. Rooms are too crowded. Internees submitted calculations showing i.e. room size at 72 x 36 x 3,5 with 50 men making 420 cu. ft. per man. Others claimed that they had only 286 cu. ft per man. Also the kitchen is too small for feeding 500 internees.
- Art. 11: Prisoners shall receive facilities for preparing, themselves, additional food which they might have. A sufficiency of potable water shall be furnished them. Facilities for preparing additional food do not exist. Except during meals, the prisoners have no satisfactory potable water. The water available in their rooms is coloured red.
- Art. 12: Profits made by the canteens for camp administrations shall be used for the benefit of prisoners. About 100 internees transferred to Stringtown from Camp McCoy brought with them a profit of about \$500.00 made by their canteen at McCoy and were forbidden by the Camp Authorities in Stringtown to use it for the benefit of prisoners.

Geneva Convention

- 2 -

Conditions in Stringtown

13: Belligerents shall be bound to take all sanitary measures necessary to assure the cleanliness and healthfulness of camps.

Numerous dead bed-bugs were produced as evidence that beds were unclean. Complaints that  
4 W.C. for 50 men  
11 showers for 250 men  
6 washboards for 50 men  
do not suffice.

14: Every camp shall have an infirmary, where prisoners of war shall receive every kind of attention they need. Expenses of treatment including therein, those of temporary prosthetic equipment, shall be borne by the detaining Power.

Internees claim and the inspection showed that practically the sick get no medical treatment. They can sleep in an infirmary and three tuberculosis cases are isolated. But nobody thought of changing the bed sheets which have in several cases not been washed for 4 weeks and are dirty. Some of the Internees have great pains caused by their teeth and have not received relief. There is one case, Karl Vollmoeller, who seems to be very sick. In case he should die in Stringtown, an investigation as to his medical treatment should become necessary: a quick transfer of this case and the three tubercular cases is strongly recommended.

38: Prisoners may, in cases of acknowledged urgency, be allowed to send telegrams, paying the usual charges.

The Camp authorities do not allow prisoners to dispose of their own money except the 10¢ coupon per day delivered them by the Army. Consequently, prisoners are practically deprived of the right to telegraph.

Geneva Convention

- 2 -

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INFORMATION

concerning

PART III

TEMPORARY DETENTION STATIONS

Fort Sam Houston

Fort Bliss

Immigration Station San Pedro

Fort McDowell

Immigration Station Seattle

Fort Lewis

Immigration Station Chicago