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ALIEN INTERNMENT CAMP

CRYSTAL CITY, TEXAS.

I. NAME OF CAMP: Alien Internment Camp, Crystal City, Texas.

II. LOCATION: The camp is located about 1.5 miles north of Crystal City, Texas which is 120 miles southwest of San Antonio, Texas.

III. DATE OF VISIT: August 16, 17, 18, 1944.

IV. VISITED BY: Mr. Kurt Ritter, representing the Legation of Switzerland.

V. ACCOMPANIED BY: Eldon F. Nelson, representing the Department of State.

VI. PREVIOUS VISIT: The last visit to German internees at this camp was on January 31st.,and February 1st., 1944.

VII. CAMP COMMANDER: Mr. Joseph J. O'Rourke

VIII. EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Mr. L.T. McCallister

IX. MEDICAL OFFICER: Dr. Robert F. Martin.

X. CAMP SPOKESMAN: Baron Von Faulkenstein

XI. DESCRIPTION OF CAMP: The following improvements have been made since the camp was last visited:

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1 The swimming pool has been completed and is in operation.
2. The surfacing of roads has been completed.
3. Running water has been installed in the shelter area.
4. The canteen of the German internees has been enlarged.
5. A camp beautification program has been started.
6. Cottages have been insulated against heat and cold.
7. Clothing is now being distributed through the medium of the clothing store.
8. Additional cottages have been completed in the German area.
9. A cold storage box has been installed in the food store.
10. Additional fire protection has been provided, including a fire engine and equipment.
11. Part of the hospital proper has been air conditioned, including the surgical room, the delivery room, and dental clinic.

XII. NUMBER OF INTERNEES:

Germans	800		
Japanese	2200	Total	3000.

XIII. STATEMENT OF TREATMENT PRIOR TO ARRIVAL: No comment.

XIV. SANITARY INSTALLATIONS: No changes.

XV. MEDICAL FACILITIES: Air conditioning has been installed in part of the hospital. This is the only change in the facilities although more are contemplated.

Number of beds: 75 bed capacity. Some of the beds are in private rooms; others are in three wards.

Average number of patients: On the day of the visit there were very few patients in the hospital. Since the last visit 161 German patients have been treated in the hospital. This includes cases of childbirth.

Daily sick line: Daily sick line is held at the hospital.

Deaths: 1.

Dispensaries: 1.

Number of physicians: 1 American assisted by several internee physicians.

Number of dentists: 1 American dentist assisted by 2 internee dentists. Since January 1944, 2892 dental treatments have been given German internees.

Number of opticians: None. Optical work is contracted for.

XVI. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: There are no changes in facilities except that a new school building has been completed for the use of the German children. Teachers are recruited from the internees. A larger building is to be provided for the library.

Theatricals:

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Theatricals: Movies are furnished weekly and theatrical performances are given by the internees.

Schools: A new German school building has been constructed for use of the German internees.

Reading Material: No change.

Religious activities: No change.

Correspondence: The usual outgoing correspondence is allowed according to regulation. There was no complaint concerning incoming correspondence.

XVII. WORK, KIND AND NUMBER OF MEN ENGAGED: The number of paid jobs has been decreased because of a cut in the appropriation. Those working receive pay at the rate of 10¢ an hour.

XIX. FOOD AND COOKING: The food provided for the internees equals as nearly as possible the food provided in prisoner of war camps. Families purchase the food in the store and cook in their huts.

XX. CLOTHING: An allowance of $5.25 per person is provided for clothing. Internees may purchase what they desire in the clothing store which is well stocked with an excellent variety of merchandise.

XXI. CANTEEN FACILITIES AND AVAILABLE COMMODITIES: The canteen was adequately stocked and included supplies of beer and soft drinks as well as staple items.

XXII. DISCIPLINE: The morale of the German internees was not too high. There appeared to be considerable quarreling amongst themselves and some were very bitter toward the spokesman. It had been necessary to separate from this camp some of those who showed too much antagonism toward the administration and toward the better element of the camp. Others probably will have to be separated later as there are about 15 more families who are troublemakers.

XXIII. PRISONERS UNDER DISCIPLINARY PUNISHMENT: None on the day of the visit.

XXIV. COMMENTS OF SWISS REPRESENTATIVE: The representative of the Legation of Switzerland found no violations of the Geneva Convention and felt that that administrative staff of the camp were doing a good job. He was especially pleased with the new store for clothing sales and with the other improvements that had been made since the last visit.

The following matters were brought to the attention of the Camp Commander:

1. An internee by the name of Fifer had lost some of his belongings in a fire. He wanted to know if he could recover from the loss of these things. Mr. O'Rourke said the matter would have to be decided by the central office and that it already had been referred.

2. One internee requested that Mr. Flechenstein be allowed to return to Crystal City. Mr.O'Rourke said that he could not grant this request.

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3. Some internees who had parole rehearings requested that they take place somewhere else than in the liason office. Mr. O'Rourke stated that there was no other place available for the hearings where other internees would not find out about them.

4. While Mr. Kolb was spokesman some of the papers belonging to the group had disappeared. Mr.O'Rourke stated that Mr. Kolb had turned into the office some papers which he had stated were personal belongings of his. Mr. O'Rourke thought that some of the papers referred to might be found with these papers that Mr. Kolb turned in, and if found, Mr. O'Rourke stated that he would give them to the spokesman.

5. The internees requested that some correction be made to the ventilators of the huts so that water would not come through when it rained hard. Mr. O'Rourke stated that he would correct this before the rainy season.

6. A request was made for about 100 large cooking pots. Mr. O'Rourke stated that these had been ordered.

7. The spokesman requested larger space for the library. Mr. O'Rourke stated that a larger building had already been assigned for use as a library.

8. A request was made for more nursing bottles to be provided in the layettes. This has already been taken care of so that from now on each layette will contain among other things 12 nursing bottles.

9. Some internees felt that they had to wait too long to get special shoes when they were required. A Mr. Kohn told Mr. Ritter that he had been waiting since March for shoes. Mr.O'Rourke checked by phone on this and learned that the shoes were not yet ready for delivery. Since these shoes have to be specially made they are difficult to get. The camp authorities had followed-up on this case at regular intervals, the last follow-up being a short time before our visit.

10. A question was raised regarding pay for the teachers. Some internees were willing to teach part time and do other paid work for the rest of the time if they could be paid for their teaching. Mr. O'Rourke stated that he could not pay for the teaching on this basis according to his regulations. Mr. Ritter, the Swiss representative, then asked Mr.O'Rourke if a part time teacher could be paid if he did not engage in other paid labor. Mr.O'Rourke told Mr. Ritter that he could pay a teacher under those circumstances.

11. Mr. Ritter also asked Mr.O'Rourke if it would be possible to pay those working on the printing and mimeographing project since this was a project that was of great help to the school program as there was a shortage of textbooks. Mr.O'Rourke stated that he would consider pay for this project and told Mr. Ritter to have the spokesman bring up this matter later if he felt it was worth while.

XXVI. OBSERVATIONS: There seems to be a great deal of friction among factions of the German internees in this camp. As a consequence morale is not too good. The Camp Commander has done what he could to weed out the worst troublemakers but there are still several families there who are creating much discord. The camp authorities have the situation well in hand however, and, if necessary, will make further separations.

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