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Special War Problems Division

Inspection Reports on
War Relocation Centers, 1942-1946
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Kenedy

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Internees Section

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*Neary (S.A. 6/2)**American Red Cross**(Message Center)*

REPORT ON CIVILIAN DETENTION STATION - - CAMP KENEDY

Kenedy, Texas - May 4, 1942

*Justice { Maj. Delagard**34 for letters* MAY 21 1942RETURN TO SD
Internees SectionI IN CHARGE OF THE CAMP: Chief Inspector *A. G. Hudson,*
United States Immigration and
Naturalization Service.II VISITED BY: Mr. Albert Greutert, Acting Swiss Consul,
New Orleans, representing German and Italian
interests.Accompanied by: Mr. F. van den Arend, Special Division,
Department of State.III PERSONS DETAINED:

There were 707 persons (all males) detained in the camp, comprising 537 Germans, 156 Japanese and 14 Italians. Included in this total were 21 diplomatic and consular officials and employees scheduled to leave May 5 for Jersey City to embark with other Axis diplomats on the exchange vessel Drottningholm. The remainder were civilians deported from South and Central American countries, detained in the United States pending their repatriation.

IV GENERAL ASPECT OF THE CAMP:

The camp occupies the site of a former C.C.C. cantonment about a mile from the center of the town of Kenedy. It is situated on rising ground in the midst of a lightly wooded farming region but there are no trees in or near the camp itself. The camp appears to be well drained. The enclosure, which has an estimated area of 12 or 13 acres, is rectangular and surrounded by a single high barbed wire fence surmounted by the usual sentry towers. These structures, as well as most of the buildings and huts, are of wood and have been erected since April 6 when the work of transforming the former C.C.C. cantonment into a detainees' camp was commenced. The fact that the camp already possesses the facilities essential to the housing, feeding and maintenance of 700 persons attests to the rapid progress which has been made, although it is evident that a few of the installations are as yet incomplete.

V HOUSING

Outwardly the camp appears divided into two sections: the old and the new. The older section consists of former C.C.C. barracks in a fair state of repair. It is here that the 156 Japanese detainees are housed. The new section is

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occupied by German and Italian detainees. This section was the object of Consul Greutert's inspection, in as much as he represents German and Italian interests. The enbntments in the new section of the camp consist of so-called "pre-fabricated" houses, square in plan and measuring sixteen by sixteen feet. In outline these huts resemble the standard United States Army tent although, being of wood throughout, they are better calculated to withstand varying climatic conditions. The window spaces are extensive and well screened, affording an ample supply of fresh air to the five inmates of each hut. The flooring is of wood. Furnishings, at the time of the visit, included iron cots with adequate bedding, as well as a table and one or two stools. The latter had in some instances evidently been improvised by the inmates themselves. On the whole this type of housing impressed one as neat, clean, dry and distinctly healthful.

VI WASHING AND TOILET FACILITIES

Washing and toilet facilities are satisfactory and include showers and wash basins with running hot and cold water. Separate facilities are provided for Asiatics and Europeans. At the time of the visit there was no laundry equipment in the camp but the Chief Inspector in charge stated that several washing machines would shortly be installed. Since the camp is located within the city limits it is connected with the municipal water supply and sewage systems.

VII FACILITIES FOR PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD

Kitchen, dining hall and scullery occupy a separate building. The dining hall, with a seating capacity of about 250, is large, well lighted, and airy. A counter at one end of the hall divides it from the kitchen. The latter is equipped with two coal ranges, butcher block and similar facilities, while a pantry and cold storage room are located immediately behind it. The scullery is at the other end of the dining hall, near the exit, so that eating utensils may be deposited there for cleaning on the way out. The building, which is of wood, is well screened and appeared practical and sanitary. It was being used solely for the European detainees, separate kitchen and dining facilities having been provided for the Asiatics.

VIII HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

The camp's hospital and medical facilities are good. The infirmary comprises two wards occupying separate wings of the building. Each ward has a capacity of from 20 to 25 beds and is well lighted and airy. The entire building is carefully screened. Sturdy iron cots are provided and the bedding is neat and clean. The infirmary has a well stocked dispensary, a doctor's office, chief nurse's office, showers, toilets and ample closet space for linen and supplies. An isolation ward, separately housed and containing four beds

for

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for contagious cases, was nearing completion at the time of the visit. Serious cases, especially those requiring surgical treatment, can be removed to the hospital at Kenedy.

A Public Health Physician residing at Kenedy visits the camp every morning, when a medical inspection is held. He was being assisted by two German detainees, doctors by profession, who volunteered their services. The services of a dentist and an optometrist residing in the town are called upon as needed. A trained nurse, aided by three assistant trained nurses, is in immediate charge of the infirmary.

The physician stated at the time of the visit that the general health of the camp had thus far been good. Only nine cases were being treated at the infirmary, eight of them for minor ailments. The ninth was that of a Japanese suffering from tuberculosis who was in a ward by himself pending completion of the isolation ward.

IX CANTEENS

The camp has two canteens. One of these is operated by the Japanese internees, the other by the Europeans. Here small articles and comforts, such as cigarettes, soft drinks, and toilet supplies may be purchased by internees who have funds.

X RECREATION AND EXERCISE

Good sized recreation halls are available at Camp Kenedy both for the Asiatic and the European detainees. While the hall provided for the Europeans contained no games, the Chief Inspector stated that equipment, such as chess and checker boards, was being procured. Card games were in progress in a number of the huts.

A moving picture projector for showing sixteen millimeter films had recently been procured and was being tested at the time of the visit. Detainees who possessed radios were permitted to listen to local broadcasts.

There is sufficient space within the enclosure for outdoor games and exercises. A number of Japanese detainees were playing catch but there was apparently no interest in organized sports or setting-up exercises.

XI CLOTHING

With the exception of a group of German detainees who had recently arrived from Camp Blanding, where they were issued dungarees, the European detainees wore their own clothing. The Chief Inspector in charge of the camp stated that work clothing was not at present available for distribution to them.

XII MAIL FACILITIES

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The Chief Inspector stated that as soon as the requisite forms could be obtained from the Red Cross detainees would be permitted to dispatch two letters a month through Red Cross channels to relatives in Axis countries. He said they were furthermore permitted to write a letter a week to persons in other countries and that, following the recent arrival of an employee qualified to censor letters written in German or Spanish, such correspondence might be written in either of those languages.

XIII COMPLAINTS

1. Spokesmen for several groups of European detainees complained of an alleged deficiency of vegetables in the camp diet and of an almost total lack of reading matter. It was pointed out to them that in the course of the visit an apparently ample stock of vegetables had been found on hand in the kitchen and that with the advancing season a greater variety of vegetables would become available. The chief inspector in charge of the camp called the Swiss Consul's attention to the "Mess Analysis for the Period April 21 to April 30, Inclusive" (see attached copy) which indicates that the quantities of potatoes and root vegetables, as well as of leafy green or yellow vegetables served during that period was in excess to the "Standard Ration Allowance". Questioned on this subject the Public Health Physician stated that he believed the detainees were receiving sufficient vegetables.

2. Since, with the exception of a few copies of a San Antonio daily newspaper, there was scarcely any reading matter in the camp, the Swiss Consul inquired whether nearby public libraries might not be asked to contribute their discarded books. The Chief Inspector pointed out that local organizations were collecting books for American soldiers and sailors and he accordingly did not think it would be possible to obtain contributions for the camp library from local sources. It was suggested, however, that the American National Red Cross might be able to make suitable reading matter available to the detainees at Camp Kenedy.

3. Most of the complaints that were made originated with a group of 77 German deportees from Guatemala and Costa Rica who had been transferred to Camp Kenedy from Camp Blanding only a day or two before and appeared somewhat nervous and truculent. Their principal complaint was that they had not been informed of the reasons for their arrest, deportation and present detention in the United States. They were told that they had been taken into custody by the authorities in Guatemala and Costa Rica for reasons of national safety and had been delivered to the American authorities to be held pending repatriation. In reply to their inquiry as to how soon they might expect to be repatriated they were informed

that

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that this would probably depend largely upon the availability of ocean transportation. The spokesmen of the group expressed the fear that they might be detained in the United States for the duration of the war and requested that the Swiss Consul endeavor to obtain further clarification of their status.

4. The spokesmen of this group also alleged that upon arrival in the United States on the U.S.A.T. "Florida" their funds had been taken from them and had not been returned. The Chief Inspector in charge of the camp stated that a receipt presented by the group of deportees from Costa Rica, dated April 4 and signed "Thomas M. Sibley, U.S. Army", indicated that a total of \$3,645.73 had been received from them. He said that the deportees from Guatemala had presented a similar receipt, dated April 6 and apparently signed "Kelley", indicating that funds totalling \$3,638.87 had likewise been received from them. The Chief Inspector stated that his efforts to obtain further information regarding this matter had thus far been unsuccessful and that he would appreciate any assistance which the Department of State might be able to render him in this connection.

5. The spokesmen for the deportees from Costa Rica and Guatemala further stated that some of the members of their group had funds in American banks upon which they were unable to draw and that others were unable to obtain the transfer of funds which they had on deposit in the countries of their former residence. They said that while they fully understood that extensive withdrawals would not be permitted, they desired to obtain sufficient funds to enable them to purchase warm clothing in the event that they should be repatriated to Germany. With respect to deposits in American banks they were advised to apply for Treasury Licenses authorizing withdrawals of stipulated amounts from their blocked accounts for the purposes stated. It was pointed out that withdrawals from deposits in Costa Rican and Guatemalan banks were subject to the laws and regulations in force in those countries and it was suggested that this matter be taken up by them with the diplomatic representatives in charge of German interests there.

6. Finally, the spokesmen of this group observed that detainees were not paid for work performed at the camp. It was pointed to them that they might properly be called upon to perform without compensation chores necessary to the maintenance of the camp. The Chief Inspector in charge of the camp added that he had at his disposal no funds to pay for other work which detainees might voluntarily undertake to perform.

XIV COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

It is suggested that an effort be made to provide suitable
reading

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reading matter, such as old magazines and books, for the detainees at Camp Kenedy and that, with a view to improving their morale, they be encouraged to take physical exercise either in the form of work or sports, or both. If the Red Cross is unable to supply the much needed reading matter an appeal might be made to the Friends' Service Committee or to the Salvation Army, or detainees might be permitted to purchase books and periodicals.

It may also be well to point out that the inmates of Camp Kenedy included two minor children, both boys, who had accompanied their fathers when the latter were deported. It was stated that in one case the whereabouts of the mother was unknown and that in the other the mother was not in a position to assume care of the child. The children were Ervin Kissen, age 12, from Bogota, and Jorge Herbert Henricy, age 10 1/2, from Caraz, Peru.

The Swiss representative in charge of German and Italian interests commented upon the presence at Camp Kenedy of 21 diplomatic and consular officials and employees of Axis Governments, who were waiting to sail on the exchange vessel Drottningholm. The unforeseen circumstances, beyond the Department's control, which unfortunately rendered this unavoidable, were explained to him. He stated that while he fully understood that unusual difficulties had arisen owing to war conditions, he was nevertheless surprised that hotel accommodations could not be found for them either in Cincinnati or elsewhere. In view of the fact that the treatment of officials in such a situation involves the question of reciprocity, it is suggested that in connection with any future arrangements special efforts be made to avoid the possibility of again subjecting such officials to the hardships of detainee or internment camps.

F. van den Arend
F. van den Arend

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
DETENTION STATION, Camp Kenedr.

MESS ANALYSIS FOR PERIOD April 21 TO April 30 INCLUSIVE (All quantities stated in pounds)

RECAPITULATION

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Distributed by SD to:

at 10:00 AM 5/10/42
*100-893002 (100-893002)**100-893002 (100-893002)*INSPECTION OF THE CAMPS AT KENEDY AND FORT SAM HOUSTON, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, ON MAY 4, 1942.
AS REPORTED BY ALBERT GREUTERT, SWISS CONSUL
AT NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.*100-893002 (100-893002)*
100-893002 (100-893002)

Date: MAY 2 1942

Upon receipt of a telegram from the Swiss Legation in charge of German affairs, advising me to inspect the camp at Kenedy, Texas, 60 miles south of Dallas, I proceeded without delay to the point of destination. I made contact with the Director and Assistant Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at San Antonio, Texas. Meanwhile Messrs. van den Arend and Seaward, delegates from the State Department, arrived and in their presence I made an inspection of the camp at Kenedy, where I found full cooperation of Mr. Hudson, officer of the camp.

The camp was made up of pre-fabricated barracks formerly used in a CCC camp. It appears that the camp was put into operation only a couple of weeks ago and consequently is not fully organized as yet. As such it was hardly prepared for the influx of about 500 German internees. I found the whole camp--German internees, to say nothing of the 160 Japanese there--in a state of great excitement and uproar owing to the fact, to name one in the first place, that 21 German officials had been placed in the same camp without any regard to their official status. No distinction was made at all between this group and all other inmates, and it happened that these 21 German officials were subjected to the same rigor which inevitably clings to camp life, in a camp like Kenedy where about 700 males are confined.

When I said the camp was not fully organized as yet, this statement applies to the internal situation of the

German

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German section of the camp as well, as it was divided up into several very different groups, especially with regard to their former countries of residence. There were people from Haiti, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, besides the bulk made up of people coming from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. There follows a summary of the various groups as mentioned, namely:

Guatemala	18
Costa Rica	58
Haiti	21
Ecuador	12
Columbia	122 (seamen)
Columbia	149
Peru	23
Peru	56
Bolivia	18

TOTAL 477

In view of this situation, Captain Schuette was not able to exercise his full authority as spokesman for the German internees with a view to fully cooperating with the officer in charge of the camp and to make the relations between the administrators and the inmates more pleasant. Some of the different groups had antagonistic interests at heart and the authority of the spokesman was not fully recognized by all groups. The general discontent prevailing at the camp was accentuated by the high praise given by the group from Costa Rica to Camp Blanding, from which they were newly transferred. They said that at Camp Blanding conditions were much better and their treatment more liberal. Some of the groups also complained that they had absolutely no news from their wives and children, who were left behind in the different South American countries. Some groups, like that from Costa Rica, complained also that they had no money at their disposal and stressed the fact that

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that they needed small allowances for incidentals. To make things all the more difficult, the group of 21 German diplomats was about to leave and consequently all the rest figured they had to stay permanently as prisoners of war and that no exchange was contemplated. While this was an erroneous belief, it aggravated the mental strain of the internees because they had no information, they said, with regard to the future plans of exchange. In the majority of cases they had volunteered for such an exchange and now they felt that they were to remain permanently confined in the country of transit. Because of the uncertainty of their supposed status and actual treatment and confinement, they had absolutely no hope and were very much inclined to criticism.

All these facts put together helped to aggravate the unhappiness of the inmates without apparent fault of anyone. I heard the usual complaints which, in my belief, with the good will of all concerned, will be straightened out in time or will automatically disappear when the camp has had sufficient time to work out its own problems. I am reasonably sure that some quiet disposition will return to the Kenedy camp as soon as the inmates can be convinced that their confinement is only temporary and that their exchange will be executed as soon as feasible. This is what I told them, and the German officials on their way home fully agreed with me that the internees calmed down remarkably after my visit to the camp and after having taken cognizance of their complaints, real or fancied. At least, I think, they saw the point which I tried to drive home, that there was no bad will on the part of the administrator of the

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the camp, Mr. Hudson, or on the part of the American authorities, but that the whole situation was rather to be attributed to circumstances beyond any human control, such as the admission of a large number of internees within a very short time, and the temporary nature of the whole camp, etc., etc. I was deeply impressed by the quiet and efficient manner of Mr. Hudson in dealing with this rather alarming situation, and his earnest endeavors to make a go of this camp of such a large size. I had a conference with him and the medical officer in charge in the presence of the delegates from the State Department, and he showed his willingness to cooperate with the spokesmen of the inmates and to take into account all the complaints that have been made as far as this is possible.

For instance, he promised to see to it that the guards avoided banging of the doors during the night rounds, which deprived the inmates of their sleep. Furthermore, sidewalks would be built in order to assure the cleanliness of the camp, etc., etc. As the doctor in charge said, all and everything boils down to a mental question which can only be remedied by injecting new hope of a speedy exchange into the internees, so that they may take small and inevitable hardships more easily. Aside from this, I think it advisable to mention the following points which should be studied and, if possible, straightened out:

In the camp are confined two youngsters, by the name of Kissenbert, age 12, and Henrici, age 10. They should not be confined in a camp which is exclusively reserved for adult male internees.

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There are a small number of patients suffering from infectious and incurable diseases requiring special medical attention which the infirmary of the camp is not prepared to take good care of. These cases should be transferred as quickly as possible, as well as the case of extreme old age, one inmate being 86 years old, as long as no exchange can be made. At the infirmary there are no isolated rooms provided as yet for the treatment of diseases of an infectious nature. In the same connection, there was a very heavy complaint that in the work of taking up and carrying away the garbage and refuse from the infirmary, all internees had to take turns and, of course, this could lead to spread of infectious diseases and damage among the inmates of the camp. This work should be done by colored people exclusively assigned to this kind of job.

Arrangements were made the same day in order to enable me to visit the Doud Field Alien Internment Camp at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

I found the conditions there in every regard so much better than those prevailing at the Kenedy camp, with everything nice and running smoothly. The number of inmates is as follows: 66 Germans, and 33 Italians.

In the presence of the Commanding Officer in charge of the alien camp and his assistant--a Colonel and a Major--and Mr. van den Arend, the representative from the State Department, I had a conference with the spokesmen of the German and Italian groups, Mr. Stubbe and Mr. Bononi, respectively, and while they had a list of usual complaints, they had to acknowledge the good order and I had the impression after making a tour through the camp

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camp that the inmates seemed satisfied as far as this is possible in their situation. I also spoke with the medical doctor in charge, who also stressed the point that the complaints have more a mental basis, because the inmates live under a certain strain due to the fact that they have nothing much to do and they don't know when their confinement will be ended. All the complaints submitted were discussed and in the minor cases a remedy was promised.

There was some serious complaint about rats and other pests invading the tents and bothering the internees. Furthermore, the question was raised by the internees themselves that their internment camp should not be alongside a military camp for the formation of soldiers, as is the case.

The following points may apply to both camps, and it is interesting to note that they were raised by the internees without previous consultation with each other, viz, lack of tables, chairs, and cabinets in the barracks or tents. There are enough skilled workmen who could easily make this furniture if given the necessary tools and, if possible, working clothes. For those who do work in the kitchen, etc., a small salary should be paid and for those who do special work, even more, in order to keep the inmates busy and keep their minds off their personal problems. To the men without teeth, who experience difficulty in chewing food, knives should be given or dental plates should be furnished. Difficulties have been noticed in getting the necessary food for those on a special diet, and especially, a sufficient quantity of milk has been lacking for those who no longer can take solid food. Furthermore, it was pointed out by the internees that censoring of mail going out from one camp to

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to another should be done only once. This suggestion was made especially with regard to members of the same family who are confined in different camps, and whose correspondence with each other is therefore excessively delayed. In both camps I noticed an almost complete lack of ice water facilities, and there were no books at the disposal of the internees in the respective recreation halls of the two camps. Everything should be done to keep the minds of the internees away from their troubles and to keep them busy, and these books could be mostly in Spanish and English, as most of the internees understand these languages, and just a few German and Italian books, especially for the older men. Also, funds should be made available for those inmates of both camps who are needy and who have no money at all at their disposal. If need be, funds from the Legation in charge of German interests should be made available to the internees through the customary channels.

The opinion of the internees was unanimous in so far as they acknowledged that the superior officers in charge are very courteous and that generally, cases of rough handling or profanity occur very seldom and then are always the fault of the common guards only, not the administrative officers. At both camps I noticed that installations to show moving pictures out-of-doors were in the process of construction, and I had the impression that the administrative officers attempt to do everything in their power to make the lives of the internees supportable.

* * * * *

SOME ADDITIONAL REMARKS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Re Camp Seagoville: The children of the diplomats were served the same food as the adults; however, this food was too highly seasoned to agree with the children. There was not enough milk.

Mrs. Gandlach, the wife of a consul and former general manager of a bank in Colombia, showed my wife her corroded fingers, the recent-looking lesions of which were attributed to the cleaning work she had to perform at the camp.

The ladies of official status not only had to work, they always had to work in a hurry so that each day when night came they were exhausted, almost overcome with fatigue. There were not enough dishes at the camp so these had to be washed in a hurry, in order to enable the Japanese internees to take their meals on time. It goes without saying that very few gentlemen included in this group helped the ladies in their camp work as much as possible.

Re all camps: It should be made a constant policy to visit the internment camps more regularly by delegates of the Swiss Legation in charge of German and Italian interests, with a view to assuring some kind of coordination between the various camps and through this, to relieve the inmates from unnecessary mental strain as much as possible. I was informed by the officers in charge of the camps I had the opportunity to visit that by my coming I helped to calm down the inmates to a remarkable extent.