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REPORT ON ALIEN ENEMY INTERNMENT CAMP
STRINGTOWN, OKLAHOMA, JUNE 25-28, 1942.

I. INTERNMENT CAMP COMMANDER: Colonel A'Noble Ladd,
Lt. Col. Bertram Frankenburger

Executive Officer: Captain John White. Date: 8/5/42

Medical Officer: Major E. E. Darnell. *OK*

On June 27 command of the internment camp was relinquished by Colonel Ladd and assumed by Lt. Col. Frankenburger.

II. CAMP VISITED BY: Dr. Max Habicht, Representative of the
Swiss Legation in charge of German Interests.

Accompanied by: Mr. Whitney Young, Special Division Department of State.

At the time of the visit of Dr. Habicht and Mr. Young, the camp was also being visited by Lt. Col. Daniel B. Byrd, Assistant Provost Marshal for the Eighth Corps Area.

III. PERSONS DETAINED IN THE CAMP:

There are interned in the camp 531 persons classified as German nationals, arrested in Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Samoa, Alaska, and the continental United States.

Spokesman for Germans: Willi Dalchow, Ingo Kalinowsky, and Franz G. Wirz.

Spokesman for Panama Jews: Fred Kappel.

IV. GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Stringtown Internment Camp is not a part of an Army cantonment and exists solely for the purpose of detaining internees. It is situated about four miles from the village of Stringtown, Oklahoma, on that portion of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad connecting Kansas City and Dallas. A tract consisting of 128 acres has been leased by the United States Government from the State of Oklahoma. This tract takes in a part of an Oklahoma State subprison farm where the labor of convicts is utilized in farming and raising stock.

The internment area is entirely without trees to afford protection from the full force of the sun so that high temperatures are registered during summer days. The nights are said to be cool throughout the summer offering welcome relief from the days. Throughout the year the temperature ranges from a reading in summer well above a hundred to a winter reading below zero. The internees are housed in two red brick buildings measuring 245 feet in length and 36 feet in width. (See picture accompanying this report.) Each building has two floors and one-half of the lower floor in one building consists of a cell-block made up of cells of varying size. The remaining floor areas are used as dormitory units.

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Internees Section

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The buildings are steam-heated and contain such shower, toilet and washing facilities as are provided. The appearance and atmosphere of this camp are those of a penal institution and the attitude of the Camp authorities has apparently not served to mitigate the situation.

The first internees to arrive at Camp Stringtown were billeted in the cells, the doors of which were locked, the cell-block as a whole was locked off from the rest of the building and the outside doors of the building were locked. The Commanding Officer in an introductory speech to this group is reported to have stated that no infraction of camp rules would be tolerated and added the disheartening comment that the ground around the camp was available for establishing a graveyard for internees who failed to obey the rules.

The attitude of the Camp authorities is well illustrated by the fact that Dr. Habicht and Mr. Young were "frisked" for weapons each time they entered or left the stockade.

The sleeping quarters are overcrowded and it does not appear that the internees have the cubic air space assured them by Article 10 of the Geneva Convention, namely, the same amount of air space allowed American troops at base camps. This figure is understood to be set at 720 cubic feet in the American Army. Some internees have their cots placed in the corridor of the cell-block and in many instances "double-decker" bunks are in use. Upon taking up this matter with the Camp authorities assurance was given that certain additional space would be provided by rearranging the storage of some supplies, but it is not believed that the provisions of the Geneva Convention will be met by such measures.

Owing to the fact that flood lights have not as yet been provided to illuminate the fencing around the enclosure, the Commanding Officer has considered it necessary to lock the doors of the two buildings during the hours of darkness, a move which has further increased the feeling among the internees that they are being treated like convicts.

The stockade area is a rectangle, approximately 700 feet by 350 feet, enclosed by a double barbed wire fence eleven feet high and overlooked by five guard towers. Within the inner fence a single strand of barbed wire is stretched waist high to serve as a "dead line". The internees are forbidden to touch or cross this wire.

The hospital enclosure consists of an irregularly shaped area roughly 300 feet by 300 feet in size surrounded by a double fence as previously described. It is separated from the main stockade by the areas in which the Administration Building and the quarters for the guard troops have been placed. A fenced runway approximately 600 feet in length connects the two enclosures. Several guard towers will also be placed at intervals around the hospital area.

The mess-hall and kitchen are in buildings attached to one of the dormitories and are inadequate for the present number of internees. Two "sittings" are now required and the arrival of any more internees will make a bad situation worse. Colonel Byrd is filing a recommendation with the headquarters of the 8th Corps Area to add four stove units to the present two

units

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units and is also recommending an increase in the number and size of the sinks in which the dishes and silverware are washed.

The Commanding Officer outlined a plan now under consideration to amend the present lease of the camp site to take in the subprison lake, from which the camp obtains its water supply, as well as an additional area to include a truck garden and nursery to be irrigated by the subprison lake. The proposed camp site would also embrace the subprison barn lot, granary and blacksmith shop.

If this plan is put through employment will be given to a number of internees who may volunteer their services to run the truck garden. It is estimated that throughout the greater part of the year enough fresh vegetables could be raised to supply the Stringtown Internment Camp and to afford a partial supply to the internment camp to be located at McAlester, Oklahoma. Furthermore, ten or twelve teams of Army mules with wagons could be cared for in the barn and could be used for farm work and for transportation within the camp area. It is believed that if this plan is put into operation, it will improve conditions at Stringtown.

V. WASHING AND TOILET FACILITIES:

Washing and toilet facilities are inadequate. Wash tubs are lacking and any laundry work is supposed to be done in wash-basins, obviously unsuited for handling large pieces such as bed-sheets. Flush toilets are insufficient in number and frequently out of order. Shower baths are available but not enough to accommodate the number of internees now held at Stringtown.

The Camp authorities stated that it was intended to convert a part of a building formerly used as the kitchen for a convict's mess hall into a laundry, but no steps have as yet been taken to effect this conversion.

VI. FOOD AND COOKING:

The inadequacy of the cooking ranges has been covered under heading IV. There was little or no criticism of the food aside from mention that there was a lack of fresh vegetables, a situation believed to be unavoidable at times in any camp. The cooking is done by volunteers among the internees and apparently their efforts are appreciated. "K.P." duties are shared by the other internees in accordance with a duty roster. The amount of the per capita food ration is a fraction over 56 cents per day, an amount considered entirely adequate.

Article 11 of the Geneva Convention provides that prisoners shall have facilities for preparing additional food which may be sent to them, but no such facilities are available.

VII. MEDICAL FACILITIES AND SICKNESS:

A modern and complete 50-bed hospital has been constructed and awaits only the arrival of certain essential parts for the water and heating system to enable the Camp authorities to place it in operation. This hospital has been built at a reported cost of \$240,000 and will have surgical facilities, X-ray rooms and a dental unit, all with most modern equipment

However,

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However, at the present time the medical officer, Major Darnell, is forced to keep his patients in two rooms over the mess-hall and kitchen. Three advanced tubercular patients are isolated in one room, while the other patients occupy beds around a larger room. The sanitary facilities of this temporary infirmary are entirely inadequate. Major Darnell is apparently a well-meaning and humane person, but lacking in initiative or administrative ability and it is not believed that he is capable of operating a hospital. He is assisted by a doctor from the ranks of the internees, but the primitive equipment placed at the disposal of these two men is appalling.

Major Darnell reports that there are over 200 out of the 531 internees who require dental work, many of them urgent cases, but there are no dental facilities available and none will be available until the new hospital is in operation and a dental officer arrives. The Camp authorities state that funds are not available for the most urgent cases to be treated by civilian dentists in some of the surrounding towns.

VIII. CLOTHING:

Internees at Stringtown are required to wear green uniforms issued by the Camp authorities. In response to objections voiced by the internees against these requirements, the Camp Commander stated that as long as civilian employees of the construction company were required to pass in and out of the stockade, it would be necessary for the internees to wear distinctive uniforms in order to avoid any possibility of their unauthorized departure from the enclosure.

IX. CANTEEN:

A canteen has been set up and run by the internees with supplies received from the post exchange. No currency is used but canteen coupons are used exclusively.

Internees are not permitted to use their personal funds and such money as they may have had on their persons at the time of arrival at Stringtown and such funds as are sent to them by friends or relatives subsequent to their internment at Stringtown have been forwarded to the Office of the Provost Marshal General at Washington for deposit. Canteen coupons in the amount of ten cents per day per capita are issued to each internee but a new internee must wait twenty days before a two dollar book can be issued to him, resulting in considerable privation to the new internees. This matter was taken up with the Camp authorities who stated that they were unable to change regulations but would take up the matter with Washington.

X. MAIL:

Internees are permitted to send two letters and two cards per week. Communications in the English language addressed to persons in the United States are censored in the post but letters to addressees abroad are sent to Chicago for censorship. There is no limit on the amount of incoming correspondence but internees are not permitted to send out packages.

XI. RECREATION

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XI. RECREATION AND EXERCISE:

Owing to the limited extent of the enclosed area recreational activities are practically impossible. Internees have arranged for pitching horse shoes and that game together with walking about the enclosure constitutes their only form of exercise. This arrangement is entirely unsatisfactory but there appears to be no indication that recreational facilities are to be extended at Stringtown.

XII. COMPLAINTS:

Numerous complaints were made concerning the presence in the temporary buildings of bed bugs and other insect pests. This matter was brought to the attention of the Camp authorities and the statement was made that this matter had been reported to the Chemical Warfare Section at the 8th Corps Area with the request that the dormitory buildings be properly treated to remove insect pests. It was stated that the dormitory buildings have tunnels under them in which insects can breed and that treating the buildings themselves would serve no useful purpose unless the tunnels were also treated. The Camp Commander stated that he would also require permission to engage the services of a civilian insect exterminator but that this request had been turned down.

The Jewish internees complained about their treatment at the hands of the German internees stating that at all times they were discriminated against and generally ostracized. They stated that there was definite discrimination against them in the mess-hall and that all social activities that take place within the enclosure were enclosed to them. One shower-bath-room was situated at the end of their sleeping quarters so that many of the other internees had to pass through their room on their way to the shower room. This offered frequent opportunity for insults to be showered upon the Jewish internees. It is strongly suggested that the Jewish internees be transferred to another camp where they would not be forced into such close proximity to Germans with Nazi sympathies.

It was stated that approximately one hundred internees transferred to Stringtown from Camp McCoy had brought with them a profit of \$500.00 from the Camp McCoy canteen but the Camp authorities at Stringtown had not permitted this money to be used for the benefit of the internees, as provided in Article 12 of the Geneva Convention.

Internees complained that their personal effects and outer clothing were taken from them and placed in storage in a nearby town, contrary to the provisions of Article 6 of the Geneva Convention which states that all effects and objects of personal use shall remain in the possession of the prisoner.

The patients visited in the temporary infirmary complained that their bed linen had not been changed since they were originally confined. In some cases this meant the use of the same

bed sheet

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bed sheets for over four weeks without washing. This matter was brought to the attention of the Camp authorities, but it is believed that this constitutes a reflection on the administrative ability of the camp physician.

XIII. SUGGESTIONS:

It is recommended that at no time should the number of internees at Stringtown exceed five hundred due to the limited facilities now available. The inadequacies of medical facilities have been indicated in earlier portions of this report and it is suggested that every effort be made to place in operation the hospital which is practically ready for use at the present time.

While it is realized that little can be done to modify or change the physical makeup of the Stringtown Internment Camp it is believed that an alteration in the attitude and view point of the Camp authorities will go a long way to improve the morale of the internees.

Whitney Young