

THE OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP
CHIEF POSTAL CENSOR
WASHINGTON, D. C. (25)

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NAVY DEPARTMENT

July 26, 1943.

Commander John L. Riheldaffer,
Office of Naval Operations,
Room 3644, Navy Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Commander Riheldaffer:

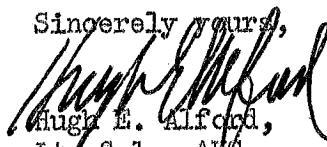
The Secretary of State sent to this office on July 20, 1943, a copy of a note dated June 21, 1943 from the Swiss Legation, having attached thereto a note from the German Government setting forth the procedure followed in the handling of the mail of prisoners of war and civilian internees in Germany. The note from the German Government suggested the adoption of identical procedure in the United States.

There are attached mimeographed copies of the note from the Legation of Switzerland and the plan which Germany wishes the United States to adopt in order that there might be identical procedure in the disposition of mail between the two countries.

We have made, for convenient reference, a comparative digest of United States Censorship Prisoner of War Regulations Governing the Censorship and Disposition of Prisoner of War and Interned and Detained Civilian Mail as related to the proposal from Germany, copy attached.

The proposal from Germany is one which should be considered and acted upon by the Censorship Advisory Committee, and with such action in view, it is hoped that you can attend a meeting of the Committee in the Office of Censorship, Room 588, Apex Building, 6th & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. on Thursday, July 29, 1943 at 1:30 p.m.

An answer is requested, by telephone if you prefer, to Executive 3800 - branch 152.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh E. Alford,
Lt. Col., AUS,
Acting Chief Postal Censor.

Attachments:
As stated

(COPY:EM:SD)
(COMPARED:LV)

LEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF
GERMAN INTERESTS

Reference:
VIII-P-1

The Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Switzerland in charge of German Interests presents his compliments to the Honorable, the Secretary of State, and has the honor to submit below the text in its translation of a German note received through the intermediary of the Swiss authorities in Bern, giving a complete outline of the handling of the mail of prisoners of war and civilian internees by the German authorities, supported by the enclosure, and suggesting at the same time the application of identical procedure in the United States and the British Empire for German prisoners of war and civilian internees.

"From reports of the Protecting Powers in the British Empire as well as in the United States, it appears that the British and American authorities respectively do not handle uniformly the mail of prisoners of war and civilian internees in their custody. On several occasions there could also be observed a dissimilar treatment of the mail in the various camps of one and the same detaining power. From this practice there often results considerable impairment of the mailing facilities but also, especially, undesirable delays in dispatch.

"The German Legation therefore has the honor to submit in the enclosure, as requested, the mail regulations issued by the German authorities which will be applied to British and North American prisoners of war and civilian internees in German custody, with the request that they be brought to the attention of the British and American Governments, respectively. The Legation has been asked to point out that the German Government expects there to originate from the British Government and the Governments of the British Empire, as well as from the United States Government, identical, uniform regulations on exchange of mail for the German prisoners of war and civilian internees in their custody.

"The German Government deems it advisable that the regulations transmitted in the enclosure also be made accessible to the Speakers of the prisoners of war and civilian internee camps.

"The German Government declares itself prepared to permit the consecutive numbering of letters, which was heretofore prohibited, provided reciprocity will be assured. It is furthermore prepared to accept and examine proposals which may lead to a further amelioration of the mail situation. In this

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connection reference is made to the now-permitted transmittal, in packages, of tricot suits for men (Trainingsanzuege), wine, and fruit juices.

"On this occasion it is pointed out that it appears expedient if relatives of prisoners of war and civilian internees could again be asked not to make the task of the censor more difficult by writing too often and too long letters (for instance, in single cases, up to 100 letters for one prisoner of war and letters up to the length of 16 and 20 pages have been noted).

"Finally, the German Legation has been requested to ask that the Protecting Power in Washington endeavor once more to bring about the abolition of dual censorship, thereby achieving a more rapid expedition of mail."

WASHINGTON, D. C.

JUNE 21, 1943

WCB:rl
1 enclosure

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(TRANSLATION)

Enclosure to note
from Swiss Legation
at Washington, dated
June 21, 1943.

Copy.

Regulations
On Correspondence for Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees
in Germany and Occupied Territories.

A. Correspondence of Prisoners of War.

I. Letter Mail.

Number of pieces allowed.

The number of pieces of mail allowed to be sent amounts to,
monthly:

- for generals: five letters and five postcards;
- for other officers: three letters and four postcards;
- for enlisted men: two letters and four postcards;
- for medical personnel and chaplains: twice the number for
their rank.

No.
Permit to
stay (2 letters
1 card per week)
With idea of
cutting down later
to 1 letter / 1 or 2 cards

Additional mail can be permitted, particularly under special
circumstances.

Scope of Letter Mail

The outgoing letters and postcards may only be written on
paper that has been furnished by the camp, (upon payment). The text
of the postcards and letters is not printed in advance.

Should furnish
per.

Incoming mail is unrestricted and can be written on any
paper.

Special Mail.

Under Article 42 of the Prisoners of War Agreement individual
prisoners of war can write to the Protective Power and also in special
cases (for example in matters connected with their profession),
to the International Red Cross Committee or to the National Red Cross
Society. These letters are to be sent through the hands of the

Confidential Agent* of the camp and are not counted among the letter mail that is permitted. Direct correspondence of the prisoners of war with their national offices and vice versa is not permitted; it is to be directed via the Protective Power or the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Confidential Agent of the camp is allowed ^{of the following content} unrestricted correspondence with the German military authorities and with the Protective Power. The correspondence of the Agent with the International Committee of the Red Cross is restricted to matters regarding gifts, tracing of missing articles, letters and parcel post for the prisoners of war, and the handling of personal affairs of individual prisoners of war in their own areas. Correspondence with the International Red Cross Societies and Aid Societies of the allied, neutral, and hostile foreign countries must extend only to the kind as described in Article 78 of the Prisoners of War Agreement. Correspondence with the Y.M.C.A. is to be limited to questions of use of spare time and spiritual care.

Counting of Letter Mail.

Air mail letters are to be counted in the number of letters going out.

The following are not to be counted: urgent messages, telegraphic messages or other brief messages not containing more than twenty-five words; all letters not used for personal correspondence, as for example, letters of the Confidential Agents or of individual prisoners of war through the intermediation of the Confidential Agents to the Protective Power or to Aid Societies; the first information card to members of the family and the National Committee of the Red Cross, as well as the printed cards for acknowledging receipt of parcels; one letter or one post card a month to the next-of-kin who are in German military prisons or are interned.

Air Mail Letters

Prisoners of war are allowed to send the permitted number of letters by air mail upon payment of the usual charges.

Registered Mail.

Registered mail may neither be sent by prisoners of war nor sent to them.

* Geo. Vertranensmann. Because of his functions as representative of the prisoners, the title might also be translated as Speaker, or as Camp Representative.-tr.

Language.

The letters and post cards to be sent must as a rule be written in the mother tongue of the prisoner of war or in the German or English language. For the sake of more rapid censorship, it is recommended that they be written in German or English. Otherwise a delay in censorship must be counted on and consequently a longer period in transmission.

} ok

Persons Receiving Correspondence.

A prisoner of war can engage in letter correspondence with any individual in allied, neutral or hostile foreign countries. Letter correspondence within the territory of the Reich is permitted only with the next-of-kin.

} See American records

Post card communication is also permitted with all persons in the field in foreign countries, with the use of field post office numbers or other military designations.

} ok

The next-of-kin in the sense of these regulations are: parents, children, brothers and sisters and spouses.

Contents of Correspondence

Giving of the date is permissible in all cases. Numbering of letters or post cards is prohibited. Detailed designation of the place or camp is determined by the military authorities.

} ok

Picture post cards or cards printed in any other way are not allowed. Photographs may not be sent, with the exception of official camp group photographs of the prisoners of war.

} ok

In addition, a prisoner of war may draft the correspondence without restriction, within the framework of the censorship. Communications regarding members of the family or other persons and their health are permissible.

} ok

Charges.

The transmission of letter mail is made without charge. This carriage without charge extends to the transmission of air mail letters on the route between Germany and Lisbon in both directions. In particular also, correspondence of the prisoners of war with their next-of-kin living in the German Reich or in the occupied territories and vice versa is free of charge.

} left in original

Censorship.

Incoming and outgoing letter mail is ^{normally} subjected to censorship only a single time. ^{for the U.S.}

} ok

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The censoring is done by blotting out with ink or some similar fluid. Cutting out of censored parts must not be done. } ok

To make censorship easier and therefore for the sake of faster carriage of the mail, it is recommended that the relatives of prisoners of war be strongly urged not to write too often and not to write too long letters. } ok

Urgent Communications.

Any prisoner of war who has not received any news from his relatives for at least three months can, in so far as reciprocity is assured, make use of the "urgent mail service". Twenty-five words can be written on a special letter sheet drawn up and printed by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Transmission is accomplished through the International Committee of the Red Cross by utilization of the best possible means of transmittal, particularly by air mail in all countries. The additional charge for air mail is to be paid by the sender. } ok

A calculation of the urgent messages with regard to the monthly number of letters and post cards permitted to be sent is not to be made. } ok

II. Parcel Post.

Prisoners of war may receive parcels from private individuals and relief associations from the allied, neutral and hostile foreign countries. } ok

Within the territory of the Reich the sending of packages to prisoners of war is permitted only to the next-of-kin. } ok

Prisoners of war on their side may send packages in accordance with Article 38 of the Prisoners of War Agreement. } ok

Weight of Packages.

As a rule the weight of a package may not be more than 5 kg. If articles are sent that cannot be divided (for example parts of a uniform), a parcel may have a weight of 10 kg. } ok

Unless our article shows weight more than 11 lbs. the limitation of the size of the
Freedom from Charges. *Package remain the same*

The carrying of all permitted parcels will be done free of charges and fees, including those sent as freight.

Prohibited Contents.

The following articles may not be sent to prisoners of war:

Money of any kind and value

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 873041

Civilian clothing for prisoners of war.
Underwear that can be used as outside civilian clothing. Pullovers, sweat shirts, heavy trousers, and special work clothing is permitted.
Medical service arm bands for persons not entitled to them.
Arms and implements representing arms, table knives and shears of large sizes.
Ammunition and explosives.
Tools that are suitable for attempts at escape and for sabotage.
Copying material, carbon paper and blue print papers.
Compasses, knapsacks, maps of the country, cameras, telescopes and microscopes.
Electric lamps, lighters, slow matches, fuses, and illuminating candles (except Christmas candles and holders for celebrating Christmas in Red Cross packages). Spirit and spirituous (alcoholic) liquors, except wine.
Solid alcohol, matches and other inflammable substances, fuel.
Telephonic, wave sending and receiving apparatus and single parts thereof.
Medicines in any form, vasoline tubes and sal ammonica, solid or dissolved. The following are permitted: strengthening substances of all kinds, in particular dextroenergen and similar upbuilding substances. Aid Societies may send medicines to the camps through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Chemicals and acids.

Books and printed matter of suspicious or offensive content.

Foreign newspapers and books with map supplements.

Cigarette mouth pieces and cigarette paper.

Paper not written on, notebooks letter paper and post cards or picture postal cards.

Potatoes.

If packages, in addition to prohibited articles, contain those that are permitted the latter will nevertheless be distributed to the prisoners.

Packages of books.

Books in packages may be sent by relatives not together with other articles (mixed shipments).

The Relief Associations are permitted to make mixed shipments. It is recommended that the list of the titles of the books be submitted beforehand to the central authorities.

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Besides, shipments which contain books only are permitted from relatives and Relief Associations.

Packing.

For avoiding theft and losses, the packages should be packed firmly and tightly and well tied.

The use of tubes, jars or other closed containers is permitted.

Censorship of Packages.

The packages are subjected to censorship only once in the camp or the working parts. The packages are examined in the presence of the prisoner (recipient) or an agent of the prisoner.

The examination of jars, tubes or containers in packages of the Aid Associations is conducted by sticking rods into them.

As a rule the examination must be conducted in a way that no foodstuffs are mixed or otherwise made unfit for consumption. Closed containers are to be opened only successively and handed out in such numbers as the prisoner of war wishes.

B. Correspondence of Internees.

For handling the mail of civilian internees the above provisions for prisoners of war apply with the following variations:

The number of letters and postcards allowed civilian internees corresponds to at least that of officer prisoners of war, even if such correspondence is addressed overseas. The raising of the number by the camp commandants is permissible in single cases or for whole camps.

Correspondence of civilian internees within the territory of the Reich is not restricted to the next-of-kin.

Packages for civilian internees may also contain civilian clothing and underwear of all kinds.

Tr: JWP:PHH:IS:SS