

TRANSMISSION OF NAMES AND PARTICULARS  
OF INTERNEES

1. The policy adopted in Australia in relation to the transmission of the names and personal particulars of internees (other than Japanese) to enemy Governments, either direct or through Protecting Power Representatives, and to the International Red Cross, conformed strictly with that adopted in the United Kingdom.

2. Under this policy, the particulars mentioned were communicated only if the internee concerned signified his consent thereto in writing. Further; the particulars of internees in any one of the following categories were not transmitted even though the internees may have signified their consent in writing to such transmission :-

- (a) Naturalised British subjects,
- (b) Persons of enemy alien parentage born within His Majesty's Dominions and Allegiance,
- (c) Non-enemy aliens.

3. Reasons for this policy were obvious and it was quite apparent from the outset that adequate preventative action would need to be taken to avoid victimisation or intimidation of internees who did not desire their particulars communicated. Thus directions were issued in January 1941 that arrangements be made to ensure that each internee completed his consent form out of sight of all other internees and without reference to camp or hut leaders. Internees were informed that their reply would be kept secret and the completed forms were handled accordingly. It was also arranged that necessary action be taken to ensure that each internee understood the form he was asked to sign and for this reason the form could, where necessary, be completed in a language other than English.

4. Carrying this policy to its natural conclusion, direction was given that the Representatives of Protecting Powers should not be permitted to interview any internee without his consent. Such Representatives were requested to refrain from transmitting to the Governments they represented the names of any internees other than those which appeared on lists of internees who had indicated consent to transmission.

5. To avoid possible communication of any incorrect lists to those Representatives it was expressly provided that Camp Commandants would not themselves supply, nor would they permit internees' representatives or leaders to supply, any lists of internees to Representatives of Protecting Powers. Provision was made for the despatch of these lists and consent forms to the Prisoners of War Information Bureau where official lists for transmission were prepared for despatch.

6. Notices were exhibited in all Internment Camps advising internees of the policy adopted by the Commonwealth and setting out details.

7. Certain delays and complaints were noted at times in connection with correspondence between internees and the Protecting Power Representatives etc., and it was found advisable in October 1942 to further amplify instructions by adding the following provisions concerning correspondence :-

- (a) That Army Headquarters should be informed in the event of any breach of policy by a Representative of a Protecting Power being detected,
- (b) While no objection was raised to the transmission of names between internees or their leaders and Representatives ~~of~~ of.

Protecting Powers or of the International Red Cross, in connection with bona fide transactions of an approved character, care should be exercised to prevent unauthorised transmission by them of lists containing the names of internees who had not consented to transmission of their particulars.

- (c) Traffic in lists of internees applying for or having received funds distributed by the IRC Delegate or the Protecting Power Representative on the basis that distribution was confined to internees professing allegiance to an enemy Government, was undesirable and should be permitted only to the extent necessary to allow such Representatives to discharge their legitimate functions.
- (d) No communication stating that an internee did not profess allegiance to an enemy Government, or suggesting that such allegiance is doubtful, should be permitted.
- (e) To avoid becoming officially involved in the preparation or handling of lists of internees professing specified allegiance, Camp Commandants should accept remittances for internees only if the sender of the remittance indicated the names of the internees who were to benefit therefrom and the respective amounts to be placed to the credit of each internee.

8. In 1945, under a reciprocal arrangement with Germany, forms were issued to all overseas and local German Internees (excluding Jewish and refugee types) for completion and transmission through the Protecting Power. These forms required careful handling to avoid conflict with the wishes of internees as regards communication and somewhat similar precautions to those mentioned above were taken to prevent victimisation or intimidation. The forms made provision for a statement of each internee's desire concerning eventual repatriation to Germany. The majority of the internees indicated their desire for repatriation and the duplicate copies of the forms were handed over to the Director-General of Security to enable him to record the wishes of internees.