

## CHAPTER 18

### Transfers between camps etc. in Australia.

1. The Directorate was responsible for the issue of general authorities for all movements of internees within Australia. These authorities or directions were supplemented where necessary by "Q: Movement instructions, "F" Finance instructions and Ordinance instructions for provision of clothing etc.

2. Regulation 25 of National Security (Internment Camps) regulations set out the following statutory requirements :-

- "(1) Internees who are sick shall not be transferred from one internment camp to another if their recovery might be prejudiced by the journey, except in cases where such transfer is necessary for military reasons.
- (2) In the event of transfer, internee shall be officially informed in advance of their new destination, and shall be allowed to take with them their personal effects, their correspondence and parcels which have arrived for them.
- (3) All necessary arrangements shall be made so that correspondence and parcels addressed to their former camp shall be sent on to them without delay, and sums credited to their cash accounts or bank accounts shall be transmitted to the Camp Paymaster at their new camp so that they may be credited to the corresponding account at that camp."

3. In practise it was found that a particularly large number of inter-camp transfers were necessary, the main classes being :-

- (a) Transfers between staging camps and permanent camps.
- (b) Transfers between permanent camps for the purpose of segregation.
- (c) Transfers on closure of individual permanent camps.
- (d) Transfers of incompatibles.
- (e) Transfers after marriage or to bring members of families together.
- (f) Transfers of internees to permit hearing of their appeals against internment.
- (g) Transfers of individual internees for special purposes such as sickness of family, appearance at court or to sit for examinations etc.
- (h) Transfers of internees after their release.

5. Permanent transfers between Command Areas : These were made only with the prior approval of Army Headquarters, appropriate recommendations being submitted by Commands. As a general rule internees were not recommended for transfer before the hearing of their appeals. Transfers of members of a family and of close relatives to bring them together in one camp were considered desirable and recommendations for any such transfer between Command Areas were usually approved. However, single males of 18 years and over were not usually accommodated with female members of their families at family internment camps.

6. Arrangements for permanent transfers : The following arrangements were observed when making permanent transfers: -

- (a) Internees were accompanied by their baggage, nominal rolls and other documents (if any) in respect of Aliens as required by Aliens Control Regulations. Receipts for the internees' baggage were given and taken when accepting and relinquishing responsibility.
- (b) Any available security information relating to the internees was forwarded by mail to HQ Commands accepting the internees.
- (c) Transfers of internees' funds, valuables etc. were effected with the least possible delay.
- (d) All internees were given at least 24 hours notice of their intended transfer.

- (e) Appropriate medical arrangements were made in respect of the transfer of any sick internee certified by a Medical Officer as fit to travel.
- (f) One or more wardresses, as appropriate, were included in escorts of parties containing female internees and children.

7. Temporary transfers between Command Areas :

Temporary transfers between Areas for the purpose of the hearing of appeals, or to give internees the opportunity to visit dying members of their families (vide Part I Chapter 17) could be arranged direct between Commands concerned provided that internees were returned to their permanent camps as soon as possible.

8. Movements between Command Areas :

In order that appropriate movement arrangements could be made for parties of internees exceeding 20, no such party coming within the approval of para 7 above or authorised by Army Headquarters under para 5, could be moved between Command Areas without proper approval from Movements at Army Headquarters. It was the responsibility of Commands initiating such movements to obtain the necessary approval and to provide appropriate escorts.

9. Inter-camp transfers within Command Area :

HQ Commands were given discretion in arranging transfers of internees between camps within their own areas, for the purpose of effecting harmonious segregation or to correct errors in segregation. It was expressly provided however, that the bona-fides of representations for such transfers should be thoroughly investigated before approval and that no large scale inter-camp transfers were to be effected without the prior approval of Army Headquarters.

10. Advice to Deputy Directors of Security :

In order that Security Service could maintain proper records, HQ Commands informed local Deputy Directors of Security of all transfers of internees into and out of their areas. Advance information was supplied regarding proposed outward transfers in order to avoid dislocation of arrangements for the hearing of appeals.

11. Comments

While the standing instructions to Commands were satisfactory they could not be treated as complete in respect of any particular transfer, as the circumstances of movements varied and some required much detailed attention. Approvals issued were sometimes involved to ensure security or to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, but in each case reference to the standing orders avoided some unnecessary reiteration of routine procedure. In general, the many transfers effected within Australia were free from any difficulties except the problem of losses of property during movements and this problem was overcome to some extent by the amendments of Regulation 25, vide Part I Chapter 4 (para 7(b)).

Transfers of internees overseas

12. No standard instructions could be issued in respect of movements of internees to overseas destinations as much depended upon the reason for transfer, the composition of parties, the provision of escorts, and the destination to which they were to be transferred. The following paragraphs give only a general guide to the usual precautions taken in respect of such transfers.

13. The main problem was the proper recording and care of baggage and personal effects. In respect of early transfers of United Kingdom internees for return to the United Kingdom or for transfer to other destinations overseas, provision was made for the internees to be accompanied by their baggage, valuables, list of valuables and nominal rolls, and for receipts and clearances to be obtained for these before embarkation. However, when internees were transferred to reception camps overseas with a view to repatriation it was considered necessary to make full provision for more adequate recording of property. Impounded personal effects were addressed to the Commandant of the Receiving Camp and were placed in packages marked with internees' numbers names and inventories of contents and strict precautions were taken for the care and custody of property during all stages of transfers.

14. Provision was also necessary in each instruction issued for disposal of internees funds and for amounts to be taken with them for use on the voyage in accordance with Treasury approvals. Accountancy Instructions give procedures for the disposal of the funds of internees on transfer overseas, vide Appendix 9.

15. Other matters covered in instructions issued for movements of internees overseas were: -

- (a) Clothing –  
Internees were permitted to take with them their own clothing and those entitled to free issues were given such further issues as would ensure that they each possessed at least one complete outfit of clothing.
- (b) Searching –  
Internees included in drafts were thoroughly searched and all baggage searched prior to embarkation.
- (c) Mail –  
Every effort was made to have all mail matters for internees delivered to them before embarkation. Where this was not practicable the mail was forwarded to the Prisoners of War Information Bureau for disposal.
- (d) Hospital and Stretcher Cases –  
Appropriate arrangements were made for the care and attention of hospital and mental cases embarked.
- (e) Detention Cases –  
Internees undergoing disciplinary detention could be included in drafts for embarkation and such detention would then be terminated 24 hours before their transfer from camps.
- (f) Blankets and Messing Gear –  
Internees were usually issued with two blankets in good condition and appropriate messing gear for use on the voyage.
- (g) Escorts –  
Commands were asked to nominate escorts where these were considered necessary, and were asked to give reasons for selection. Final approval by Army Headquarters was essential.
- (h) Documents –  
Provision was made for identity documents, statements of accounts, nominal rolls of internees, impounded currencies and personal effects and of baggage not carried by the internees themselves.

16. As it was imperative that no publicity should be given to impending transfers overseas, no dates of movements were given to internees until immediately prior to movements and each transfer was treated as secret.

17. Experience with the receipt in Australia of parties of internees accompanied by faulty nominal rolls, incomplete lists of property etc. demonstrated the importance of careful organisation for these transfers and Commands were directed to take all possible action to ensure that transfer arrangements proceed smoothly and that internees were not given any justifiable grounds for subsequent complaint.