

## CHAPTER 7

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE ESTATES OF INTERNEES

1. Regulation 16(3) of National Security (Internment Camps) Regulations provided for the completion by internees, whenever required to do by their Camp Commandants or persons authorised by the latter, of a statement in writing showing all real and personal property owned by them and of the arrangements made, or desired to be made, for its administration and control. Provision was made in subsequent regulations for: -

- (a) Requests by internees (in writing) to Camp Commandants that arrangements be made for the administration of their estates during internment by persons appointed for the purpose in the particular State concerned.
- (b) Reference of any such requests to the appropriate authorities and for the appointment of persons to administer the estates concerned.
- (c) The appointment of a person to administer an internee's estate although no request had been made by the internee concerned.

2. To ensure that all internees would be aware of these regulations a direction was issued from the Directorate that copies of Regulation 16 be exhibited in all Internment Camps containing local internees. To provide ready means of administration the following instructions were given to Commands concerned :-

- (i) Any local internee who desired to submit a request in writing in accordance with Regulation 16(4) should do so on a form of which a specimen was provided.
- (ii) Request forms were to be noted by Camp Commandants on the internees' A.114 (Property) Form and forwarded through HQ Commands concerned to Deputy Directors of Security in the various States, for necessary attention. (To eliminate any unnecessary correspondence, it was suggested the Deputy Directors of Security should address any further correspondence on the matter direct to the Camp Commandants concerned.)

3. The above action was taken at the time that Security Service took over responsibility for property of internees which was not held at their camp (vide Part I, Chapter 6), and it was accordingly necessary to arrange for Commands to inform their local Deputy Directors of Security of all negotiations completed or partly completed for any such administration of the property of internees held in the respective areas. Directions were also given for any partly completed negotiations to be taken over by the Deputy Director of Security in the area command.

4. Concerted action was taken to clear up all difficulties in this matter as allegations had been made by the Protecting Power Representative in Australia that in some instances persons had been apprehended for internment in circumstances which had resulted in stock-in-trade of shops, livestock, growing crops and personal property being left unattended and presumably open to theft and-or misappropriation. Similar representations were made also to the Official Visitors to Internment Camps. It was of course realised that some occurrences of this nature would be difficult to avoid, owing to the actual apprehension of persons being made by police, but at the same time the urgency of appropriate remedial action was appreciated.

5. Enquiries instituted to clarify the position were of considerable assistance in speedily clearing up the undesirable situation. The names of officials appointed in all Commands (at that time Lines of Communication Areas) were ascertained to be the following: -

Queensland	The Public Curator, Brisbane.
New South Wales	The Public Trustee, Sydney.
Victoria	do. , Melbourne.
South Australia	do. , Adelaide.
Western Australia	The Curator of Intestate Estates and Official Trustee, Perth.
Northern Territory	Enquiries were to be made through HQ NT Force.
Tasmania	The Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, Hobart

6. Form A.114, which was required to be completed in triplicate by each internee, provided a ready means for dealing with most of the problems arising in this matter, but in the early stages of the war these had not been completed satisfactorily and directions were issued to ensure their completion as soon as possible after apprehension and in all cases in the area of apprehension. These were to be completed in the presence of an Officer who was to be responsible for ensuring that all necessary information was recorded before presentation to the Camp Commandant.

7. Action taken to comply with any request by an internee for administration of his property was noted on the relevant A.114 form by HQ Command concerned, and State Police Departments were informed of the desirability of avoiding undesirable situations.

8. For some time there appeared to be a lack of desire on the part of Deputy Directors of Security to properly assume responsibility for property of internees which was not held at their camps, and the Directorate made representations to the Director General of Security on this matter. As a result, the latter issued appropriate instructions to his Deputies and further difficulties were thus avoided.

9. It should be noted that the Department of the Army was responsible at all times for property held by the internee at his camp or taken from him on arrival and held on his behalf. This aspect is dealt with fully in Part 1 Chapter 15.