

Relief for Americans in Philippines

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NEWS LETTER #22

GRIPSHOLM PARCELS

Word has reached the American Red Cross that food parcels and supplies, which were sent on the Gripsholm by the Red Cross last September and delivered in Manila on November 8th, 1943, have been distributed in the civilian internment camps in the Philippines. These supplies consist of 24,000 food packages, 685 cases of medical supplies, 1535 sets of men's clothing, 4270 sets of women's and children's clothing, 4270 sets women's and children's toilet articles, 1560 pairs men's shoes, as well as shoe repair materials, tobacco assortments, bed sheets and recreational supplies. The stock will tide over the lack of essential foods and help to relieve somewhat the clothing shortage for the next few months. There were enough food parcels sent to furnish at least several packages apiece to the internees.

The next-of-kin parcels addressed to the military prisoners in the Philippines have now been received in some of the camps. No word, however, has yet come through concerning civilian next-of-kin parcels. But as some of the military prison camps have received theirs, there is every reason to believe that all parcels will be delivered in due course not only to all the military camps but to the civilian camps as well if the Japanese authorities have not already done so. We realize, of course, that these supplies will only temporarily alleviate the situation in all the camps and that the need for a continuous flow of relief supplies is of vital necessity.

The American Red Cross is still continuing efforts along these lines and has given a very comprehensive outline of its efforts towards aiding all American prisoners of war and civilian internees in a recent issue of its Prisoner of War Bulletin which we quote in part for the information of many of our readers who are not immediate next-of-kin:

"The American Red Cross has striven for over two years to achieve channels of continuous supply and communication to the Far East. We have with the support of our Government offered to turn over to the Japanese Red Cross in mid-Pacific a ship to be taken over by a Japanese crew in order to get food and medicines to our prisoners in Far Eastern Camps. Although this proposal is without precedent in history this far it has not been accepted. Today about 25,000 of our citizens are still in Japanese prison camps. Until our own forces penetrate the heart of Japan and reach the Americans held in these camps there is no way of imposing upon the Japanese Government our will to effect the appropriate care and protection of these American citizens. Swiss delegates of the International Red Cross have worked unceasingly in Japan, Shanghai and HongKong under the provisions of the Geneva Convention to bring about certain alleviations of the conditions of our prisoners. They have not, however, been allowed to penetrate the Philippines. Besides relief shipments sent on diplomatic exchange ships in 1942, and 1943, and cash transfers for the local purchase of supplies, the American Red Cross since the attack on Pearl Harbor has:

1. Sent to Geneva 167 cables in two years covering negotiations and steps on relief and pressing the necessity of constant communications between our country and our prisoners in the Far East.
2. Loaded a neutral ship in San Francisco, in 1942, for which the Japanese Government refused to give safe conduct.
3. Laid down with the cooperation of the Russian Government substantial amounts of relief supplies at Vladivostok. These goods have been laying in warehouses for 5 months because the Japanese indicate no cooperation of their transfer to Japan and Japanese controlled territories.

"The Japanese have constantly refused to approve the appointment of delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Philippines and other South Pacific Areas. They have also ignored or refused all efforts with reference to the establishment of channels through which relief could regularly be sent to the Prisoners of War in the Far East."

Y. M. C. A.

An International arrangement dating back to 1929 provides that only two service organizations may be admitted to war prisoners camps; The International Red Cross and the World's Committee of the Y. M. C. A. The Japanese Government has now granted permission to the War Prisoners Aid of the Y. M. C. A. to extend its services to the Philippine Islands and a Swedish resident of Manila was appointed last December to serve as a delegate. According to a Bulletin just issued by the War Prisoners Aid of the Y. M. C. A. Christmas parcels were sent to all the camps in the Philippines. By admitting some representation of the Y. M. C. A., even though the scope of operations is limited, shows at least some intention on the part of the Japanese to recognize organizations that are striving to alleviate the conditions of prisoners.

REPATRIATION

Efforts are still being made by our Government to persuade the Japanese to resume further exchange negotiations, but so far there are no new developments in this situation. It is understood that the British Government likewise has been pressing repatriation negotiations.

FUNDS

Funds still continue to be sent regularly by our Department of State to the Philippine Islands Internment Camps by an arrangement with a neutral power. This monthly sum of \$25,000 which is the limit the Japanese will permit at this time is being distributed to all the civilian camps. Although the military prison camps do not share in this, negotiations are still being conducted for this purpose.

MAIL

We find that some of the local or branch post offices are confusing the new postal regulations for prisoners of war mail to Germany and are including the Far Eastern prisoners of war mail as well in this new ruling. Send all mail as previously directed.

The Postal authorities urgently request that in addressing prisoner of war and internee mail, the name and address be placed as near the lower edge of the envelope as possible. In many cases senders of letters place the name and address too near the top of the envelope which results often in their partial obliteration by post-marks, thereby making it difficult to decipher the name of the person addressed.

NEWS OF OLD RESIDENTS STILL IN MANILA AND BAGUIO

Fred. Berry is in Santo Tomas, is feeling quite fit and has regained his former youthful figure. Mrs. Berry is living outside with Gladys Savary in a small cottage near the Polo Club at 769 Zamora, Pasay.

Mr. Charles Cotterman who was living in his own home in Pasay until May of 1943, is now interned at Santo Tomas together with the rest of the members of his family. They are reported to be very well.

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Day are in Santo Tomas and are apparently getting along very well. They are both very active in camp affairs. Mr. Day is a member of the Executive Committee and for a long time was active as co-manager of food distribution and chief of the information bureau.

Clyde DeWitt is a very cheerful and optimistic internee. He gives courses in Spanish Law and re-catalogued the Santo Tomas University Library. He serves on the internees Executive Committee and is a member of the "Shanty Town Community" which is the Park Avenue section of the camp.

Mr. George Fairchild, who lived at home until May of 1943, is now interned at Santo Tomas together with the other members of his family and always keeps very cheerful. The Japanese have taken over his home.

Mr. & Mrs. Simon Feldstein are both well but because of their age are interned at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Sam. Gaches is interned at Santo Tomas and is monitor for the large men's dormitory. He is getting along splendidly. Mrs. Gaches has never been interned.

Judge Allison Gibbs is in Baguio and supposedly interned at Camp Holmes but this has not been officially confirmed.

Mr. & Mrs. H. B. Pond are both interned at Santo Tomas and are getting along as well as can be expected. Due to the shortage of clothing and material, Mrs. Pond has set the fashion for wearing a "Mother Hubbard" around the camp.

Mr. & Mrs. Jake Rosenthal are getting along as well as possible and are interned at the Philippine General Hospital.

Mr. & Mrs. C. Rosholm are not interned as they are Danish. They are living in their own home in Pasay. They have been most helpful to the internees in many practical ways.

Dr. & Mrs. Stafford are in Baguio and are supposedly interned at Camp Holmes but this has also not been officially confirmed. They are, however, reported to be doing very well.

Mr. & Mrs. E. T. Westley are safe and in good health. Because of their Norwegian nationality they are not interned and have been of great assistance to the internees in both the military and civilian camps in Manila. Mr. Westley has several times interferred on their behalf and demanded better treatment for them from the Japanese authorities.

SHORTWAVE BROADCAST.

We are giving the text of Commander Melvin McCoy's broadcast made to the Philippines through the facilities of the Office of War Information on the anniversary of his escape from a Japanese prison camp in the Philippine Islands.

"I was the Communications Officer on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay when it was captured by the Japanese forces on May 6, 1942. I was also one of the men who walked the death march from Bataan to the Japanese prison camp. I witnessed the brutal treatment meted out to the Fil-American prisoners by their Japanese captor. These are the things that I will never forget. Toward the latter part of 1942, I was transferred to the Japanese prison camp near Davao City on the Island of Mindanao. And it was from there that I, in company with nine other members of the United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps, made my way to freedom.

"To the loyal and brave Filipinos who helped us along the road to freedom, I want to express a heartfelt thanks. To this I add the solemn pledge that we of the United States will work and fight no matter the cost until the Philippines are once more free.

"To my comrade-in-arms still prisoners of the Japanese, I say be of good cheer. Your hour of deliverance will not be long delayed. Meanwhile, I have reason to believe your stay in prison camps is to be made more bearable.

"Again I want to say to my friends in the Philippines and to the American

"Again I want to say to my friends in the Philippines and to the American and Filipino soldiers who are in Japanese prison camps--your hour of deliverance is not far off. Since coming home to the United States I have been tremendously impressed by the forces that are gathering here and in the Pacific. These fighting men and their superb equipment are pointed to but one objective--the utter, crushing defeat of the Japanese.

"We pray God that General MacArthur will soon be able to redeem the pledge he made on his arrival in Australia from Bataan. At that time and since, General MacArthur has said; 'The deliverance of the Philippines from the Japanese yoke is the most important thing in my life'.

"Admiral Chester Nimitz and other American Army, Navy and Marine Corps Commanders are also pledged to this crusade. They cannot fail. They will not fail!"

SANTO TOMAS SHACKS

The following description of shacks in Santo Tomas Internment Camp was given us by a former internee.

"The shacks and shanties in Santo Tomas were made of many types of material and the variation in style of architecture was something to behold. Tin and iron and wood, scraps mostly were used in the beginning. In fact one pathway was named 'Tobacco Road'. Later some enterprising internees became contractors and brought in nipa shacks which were fabricated outside the camp and assembled after they were brought in. The average of these was composed of a bamboo frame work, sawali sides and nipa roof. The usual floor size was 8 by 10 feet and there was a peak roof with considerable slope so as to shed the rain better. Windows and doors were generally sawali.

"Under the rules doors and windows had to be open so the inside could be seen from the nearest path. Many people elaborated with porches, small cooking shelves which extended out behind or on the side of the shanty. The average lot on which the shanties were erected was about 20 by 20 feet. Many enthusiastic gardeners grew canna lilies, hibiscus, bouganvillea, creeping vines and some vegetables. Some decorated their shanties with hanging plants of various kinds. Some had little patches of grass and had tables in the yard during good weather. Some who were handy with tools had built in cabinets and shelves. Many had little ice boxes which were useful when and if you could get ice. Most had charcoal stoves. Several hundred had beds. About 400 men slept in these shelters but no women were allowed in the shanty area after curfew which was generally about 7:30 p.m."

The sawali mentioned is a lattice of closely woven strips of bamboo which is used in Filipino houses.

A nipa roof is a thatched roof made of dried nipa palm leaves and is water-proof.

NEWS ITEMS

We are requested by Mr. Victor E. McAdam to state that word through the International Red Cross reports that his parents Mr. & Mrs. V. E. McAdam, former residents of Cebu, are both well. They are now interned at Santo Tomas.

R. A. P.

There are R. A. P., (Relief for Americans in Philippines) pins available at this office at the nominal cost of \$2.00 apiece. These pins are sterling silver and blue enamel. They have been very popular with our volunteer workers and as many as desired can be ordered upon request by any of our supporters.