

RELIEF FOR AMERICANS IN PHILIPPINES

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NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

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COMMUNICATIONS - IMPORTANT

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The American National Red Cross has now informed all Chapters throughout the United States that they can accept messages on Form 1616 for each United States civilian internee or United States prisoner of war in the Philippines whose camp address is known. Only one message can be accepted from each applicant. Near relatives are urged to contact their local Chapters as soon as possible for information regarding the filling out of these forms. Those living in outlying districts should contact their nearest Red Cross Chapter.

Serious obstacles have prevented anything but greatly delayed communication with civilian internees and prisoners of war in the Philippines. Realizing that recent news from home is almost as important to them upon liberation as food, clothing and medicine, the American Red Cross, in cooperation with the Army and State Department, has developed this service. While, of course, no guarantee can be given that the messages will be delivered, every effort will be made to place them in the hands of civilian internees and prisoners of war upon their liberation. This service must at this time be limited to messages addressed to the civilian internees and prisoners of war with known camp addresses in the Philippines.

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At long last the invasion is under way and the day of liberation at hand for the Philippine Islands. Soon all our people in internment and prison camps should be free. Until it is over relatives and friends everywhere will be living over again the anxious days of December, 1941, but with what a difference! Let us constantly keep before our minds that for those brave and gallant people over there the sound of battle will be music in their ears. After long years of internment fraught with bitterness and dismay together with the deadly monotony of their lives, lack of decent food and clothing, this nearness of freedom will surely transcend all trials and hazards which they must temporarily face until the fight is won.

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The restoration of normal communications after liberation of former enemy occupied territory has been necessarily slow due to military necessity and in the case of the Philippines may possibly be even slower because of the great distance and the Army and Navy priority on all transportation. Therefore the first messages from the Philippines will be entirely in the hands of the United States Military Authorities of Occupation. Because of the very unusual circumstances surrounding the Philippine situation we feel that every effort will be made on the part of the Army to facilitate some form of communication from individuals there to near relatives in this country. The plans for this are now under consideration.

We have finally had the question of relief for the liberated internees clarified by the authorities in Washington. All relief pertaining to civilians as well as military prisoners at the time of liberation is in the hands of the United States Army for such period as military necessity dictates. The average period has been in other countries so far about 6 months, more or less, depending on the military situation. The American Red Cross is not permitted to officially function until the administration is turned over to the Civilian Government, unless the Army makes a request for assistance in the interim. In the case of the Philippines this also holds true except for the fact that all relief can only consist of essential food, medicine and clothing because due to lack of transportation and the Army and Navy priority on shipping it would be impossible to send supplementary relief for a long time after the liberation. During that period there will probably be an evacuation of the liberated civilians and military prisoners. Therefore, the plans we had hoped to put into effect regarding supplementary relief will be impossible under those conditions. It must be understood that we have taken this matter up very thoroughly with the authorities in Washington and find that no agency including ours can do anything for the Americans in the Philippines at the present time.

The evacuation of American nationals from the Philippines after the liberation will probably be in the hands of the Administrative Authorities of Occupation. Just how soon this task will be accomplished and in what manner depends mainly on transportation facilities and war contingencies. Every effort will no doubt be made towards sending them home as soon as possible and those who are sick will naturally come first.

At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Relief for Americans in Philippines it was decided to lend our cooperation to the Philippine War Relief (of the United States) Inc. Although their present activities are limited to the making of garments for Filipinos, the original objective was relief for all nationals affected by the war in the Philippines. Unfortunately, this was rejected by the President's Control Board.

The following resolution, drawn up at our request, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Claude Pepper. It was twice read and referred to the Committee on Claims. Senator Pepper says: "I will do all I possibly can to see that this bill is favorably acted upon":

78th CONGRESS
2nd Session

S. J. RES. 354

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

September 19 (Legislative Day, Sept. 1), 1944.

Mr. Pepper introduced the following joint resolution which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Claims

JOINT RESOLUTION

Providing for paying the expenses of returning certain nationals of the United States from the Philippine Islands to the continental United States.

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, That any national of the United States who was in the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and who heretofore or hereafter shall have been returned to the continental United States during the present war with Japan, shall be entitled to have the cost of his return to the continental United States paid by the United States. In the case of persons to whom this joint resolution applies and who are hereafter returned to the continental United States, such cost shall be paid without any charge to such persons. In the case of persons to whom this joint resolution applies and who have heretofore been returned to the continental United States--

(a) any promissory note or other obligation to pay or reimburse the United States for all or any part of the cost of such return shall be immediately canceled; and

(b) any amount heretofore paid to the United States by such person, or by another on his behalf, in payment of all or any part of such cost shall be repaid by the Secretary of State to the person by whom such payment was made, upon the filing by such person with the Secretary of State of a claim for such repayment within one year after the enactment of this joint resolution. Such claim shall be filed and such repayment made in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of State.

SEC. 2. The appropriation of such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this joint resolution is hereby authorized.

Through the generosity of friends we are now able to have a permanent office. Our new address is:

55 West 42nd Street
Room 712
New York 18, New York

The telephone number is: Longacre 5-1893.

Relief for Americans in Philippines

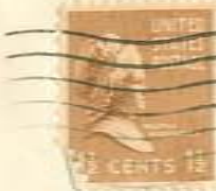
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