MEMORANDUM NO. 2: CONCENTRATION CAMP AT GUSSEN, AUSTRIA.

TO: Executive, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5.

1. GENERAL COMMENTS.

The Commanding Officer of the GUSSEN Concentration Camp is Lt. Colonel A. C. Keach of the 11 Armored Division of the Third U.S. Army. Lt. Colonel Keach had no previous experience in operating an installation of this character, but judging from the appearance of the Camp he has demonstrated considerable initiative and diligence in its operation.

The information given here was obtained on the afternoon of 3 June 1945 by interview from Lt. Colonel Keach, supplemented by inspection of the premises. Camp residents were not interrogated, but inspection verified the statements made by Colonel Keach. Free access was allowed to all parts of the Camp, and it is believed that the following report represents a true statement of present and former conditions.

It was stated that the War Crimes Commission conducted a full investigation of the GUSSEN Concentration Camp during the first two weeks of its liberation. Fully documented reports based on the interrogation of Camp residents and captured SS guards have been prepared by the Commission.

Lt. Colonel Keach stated that the 11 Armored Division had no preliminary warning of the existence of the GUSSEN Concentration Camp.

2. STAFF.

Lt. Colonel A. C. Keach is assisted by 3 enlisted men, 30 medical officers and 40 officer nurses of the 131 Evacuation Hospital Unit, 5 medical officers and 2 officer dentists of the 4 Medical Clearance Company, and 15 doctors from among the resident population. This considerable number of medical personnel is required, since the more difficult medical cases of both this camp and the NAUTHAUSEN Concentration Camp are being cared for in this place. In addition, 600 'volunteer' Wehrmacht prisoners of war are used to perform all menial work in the Camp.

3. CONDITIONS WHEN UNCOVERED.

The GUSSEN Concentration Camp was uncovered on 5 May 1945, and Lt. Colonel Keach was assigned to supervise the Camp on the evening of 6 May 1945. The Camp when uncovered was in a chaotic condition. Of the some 8,000 former residents, only 1,000 sick and disabled were on the premises. The remainder were roaming throughout the vicinity, pillaging and looting. A Mr. Carter of the British Intelligence Service had taken charge in the Camp and was attempting to keep some semblance of order. The SS food warehouse on the premises had been entered and damage had been done to most of the buildings. Troops of the 11 Armored Division began rounding up the residents scattered in the vicinity; within a few days the population of the Camp again totalled 8,000 persons.

Conditions at the time of uncovering were indescribably bad. When the armed forces arrived they found the bodies of two to three hundred former residents littering the premises of the GUSSEN Concentration Camp.
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Conditions at the time of uncovering were indescribably bad. When the armed forces arrived they found the bodies of two to three hundred former residents littering the premises of the GusEn Concentration Camp.
This may be described as having been primarily a work camp, although all the standard equipment for punishing residents was available. On the premises there is a stone quarry, a small arms factory and an aircraft assembly plant. These latter two installations were located within extensive tunnels in the hillside north of the living quarters.

The following kinds of punishment were enumerated. The equipment used was inspected where such remained:

a. Sex alteration - male and female.


c. Water Treatment - of two types:

(1) Hot showers, followed by exposure to winter weather, a hose being turned on those so exposed.

(2) Drowning in barrels.

d. Electric Fence. Inmates were driven against this fence. Some found it an easy way to commit suicide.

e. Killing by Dogs. Large man-killing dogs were kennelled at the Camp. These were shot by the American Forces when they arrived. The unsanitary kennels have been burned.


g. Cool Room and Crematorium - for disposal of bodies.

h. Shooting by Guards. Infractions of the rules frequently resulted in shooting by guards.

i. Hanging and Flogging.

j. Surgery. Practised before and after death in a well-equipped surgical room. An adjacent pathological room contained cross-sections of various human organs, said to be fine specimens by doctors who had inspected the premises.

k. Hefflingers. Persons designated 'Hefflingers' were required to carry 20- to 40-lb. stones on their backs and continue to engage in strenuous work. This treatment usually led to death in a very short period of time.

l. Underground Factory. Preparations were discovered in the tunnels of the underground factories for gassing and dynamiting. It was stated that the SS guards intended to herd the inmates into these tunnels for mass extermination prior to the arrival of the American Forces. Fortunately, they were unable to carry out this intention.

m. Stoning. Residents were frequently stoned while working in the quarry.

The Gusen Concentration Camp was a subsidiary of that at Mauthausen, approximately two kilometers to the East. The Camp was commanded by a Colonel Bachmeeger. Attempts were made to capture Colonel Bachmeeger and his family, but they all committed suicide in a nearby farmhouse. The Colonel's remains were exhumed by CIC and identified by residents of the Camp.
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The US Commander requested the Burgomeister of Mauthausen to furnish several hundred civilians to clean up the Camp. These civilian work details dug graves for the bodies that littered the premises, cleaned up refuse and generally improved sanitary conditions. The use of civilians was shortly discontinued; they were replaced by Wehrmacht prisoners of war. At first, residents of the Camp molested the civilians, and later some of the prisoners of war; this was prohibited, and clean-up work now proceeds in an orderly fashion. Among the first groups of civilian workers several former SS guards were identified each day, and there were some instances of brutal murder by the residents before preventive action could be taken. Most of the SS guards identified were turned over to the custody of CIC.

The SS guards of the GUSEN Concentration Camp were of the same "sub-human, sadistic" type as found at Mauthausen. They were mentally unbalanced, being selected for their size, strength and brutality. It should be noted that there were several SS guards who - according to the testimony of the residents - tried to be less cruel, and in some instances even protected the residents. Usually their humane activities were soon discovered and they were removed.

The GUSEN Concentration Camp was surrounded by a high barbed wire fence with guard look-out towers at regular intervals. A small office building sufficed for the administration of the Camp. The SS guards were billeted at Mauthausen.

4. CONDITIONS AT PRESENT.

a. Resident Population. There are at present 3,762 residents at the GUSEN Concentration Camp. Of this total 1,432 are hospitalized. A detailed breakdown by nationality is given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Healthy Residents (all males)</th>
<th>Total Hospitalized Residents</th>
<th>Hospitalized Female Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavs</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarians</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumanians</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrians</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,228</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,732</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

b. Feeding and Supply. Food stocks have been and are requisitioned from Austrian sources in LINZ and the immediate countryside, supplemented as necessary by Army rations. The GUSEN Concentration Camp, for purposes of supply, is operated as a subsidiary of the Camp at Mauthausen. Milk, eggs, butter, flour, vegetables and other foods obtained locally are fed under medical supervision to the hospitalized residents. Feeding of the well residents is on the cafeteria principle, and dishes and cooking utensils are carefully washed with soap and water.
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<td>-</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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c. **Accommodations.** The residents of the Camp are housed in barracks used for this purpose under the SS regime. Sleeping arrangements are one to a bunk in triple-deck units. Straw mattresses and blankets have been provided. The beds, floors and walls of the premises have been scrubbed, and are now maintained in a satisfactory sanitary condition. Latrines are in working order, and electricity and running water are available throughout the Camp. As the resident population is reduced by repatriation or other disposal, barracks no longer required are burned to the ground.

d. **Health.** Five Army doctors of the 4 Clearance Company were assigned to work in the Camp within two days after its liberation. Approximately 10 additional doctors were identified among the residents, and those that were able were promptly put to work administering to the needs of the sick. At present, the 131 US Army Evacuation Unit, consisting of 30 medical officers and 40 officer nurses, is in full control of all medical and sanitary work in the Camp. Some medicine, surgical instruments and operating tables were located on the premises, and have been supplemented by portable Army equipment.

Diseases were of the usual types induced by advanced conditions of malnutrition resulting from feeding of thin soup and bread, representing a daily total of from 200 to 500 calories. Diseases being treated are typhus, tuberculosis, infections of the bone and of tissue. Neglected old sores and wounds which have never been properly treated have required a number of operations and extensive medical attention. There are at present from 10 to 30 deaths daily. This number is not considered high, in view of the fact that most of the serious cases of illness from the Mauthausen Concentration Camp have been transferred to the care of the hospital unit at this Camp.

The health of the residents not confined to the hospitals appeared to be good. They obviously had gained considerable weight during the month of Army administration. The medical personnel of this Camp take a serious view of the mental condition of the residents. They believe many have warped minds as a result of long exposure to brutality, constant threats of imminent death, and continual resource to cheating and to all manner of deception in order to stay alive. The opinion was expressed that many would never fully recover, but would remain public charges for their home countries after repatriation.

Full medical case histories have been prepared covering all resident patients treated by the medical personnel of the Camp. These records are in the custody of the Chief Medical Officer of the 12 Army Group, and are available for examination. Each resident is given a health certificate when he leaves the Camp.

A cemetery has been established there (as well as at the Camp at Mauthausen). In this cemetery decent burial is now given.

e. **Welfare.** Little or no welfare activities were noted at this Camp. A few games were being played by some of the residents. There seemed to be a complete lack of any reading matter or means of amusement, other than short walks in the neighborhood allowed on pass to small groups.

5. **Repatriation.**

Repatriation from the Gusen Concentration Camp has proceeded at a rapid rate. Of the original 8,000 residents, a total of 4,236 have been repatriated, 4,000 of them having been transported to the Russian Zone. (It is interesting to note that, when groups of Russians were repatriated, a few of them would remain behind claiming to be sick, or hiding themselves on the premises until the convoy departed). Virtually all Western Europeans, and all but a small number of Czechs and Yugoslavs (excluding those confined to hospital) have been repatriated. A few former residents of the Camp continue to ask admission. These are accommodated until they can be repatriated. This explains the presence of the one able-bodied Frenchman listed in the table of resident population. This man arrived on 1 June 1945. Nominal rolls of residents have been prepared and forwarded to Corps Headquarters, but, in view of the rapid rate at which repatriation has been effected, these rolls are mainly of historical value.
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The principal problem at the GUSEN Concentration Camp is the repatriation or alternative disposal of a substantial number of Poles who do not wish to return to Poland, and of Germans, Austrians and other stateless residents. In addition, there is the question of the continuing care of long-term hospital cases.

7. CONCLUSIONS.

In view of the exceedingly difficult problem which confronted the military personnel, who had no previous experience in operating an installation of this type, it is felt that the work done justifies high praise. Firm but humane treatment and medical care undoubtedly have saved the lives of hundreds of political prisoners at this Camp. Most meritorious is the work done in expeditiously repatriating the majority of the residents in the short space of four weeks.

[Signature]
M. J. [Signature]
Lt. Colonel, AUS.
Chief, Operational Analysis Section.
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M. J. Troudefoot,
Lt. Colonel, AUE;
Chief, Operational Analysis Section.
It is reported that Germans released from Concentration camps are being left to their own resources and must beg assistance from German authorities.

Such victims of persecution, whether of German or other origin, are entitled to equality of treatment with United Nations displaced persons ref admin memo 39 revised para 30.

Anyone of whatever nationality carrying an official release from a concentration camp will be admitted to any assembly center for United Nations Displaced Persons.

Anyone officially released from a concentration camp will be given all necessary aid including accommodation in assembly centers for United Nations displaced persons pending establishment of special centers for this group.

ORIGINATOR : G-5
INFORMATION : SGS

AUTHENTICATION : G C PALMER
Captain
SUMMARY
AG RECORDS

FS OUT 6618 6 June 1945 1909B JOB/ghp Ref No: FWD-23780
TOO: 061645B

47 573

THE MAKING OF AN EXACT COPY OF THIS MESSAGE IS FORBIDDEN
Mauthausen Camp.

1. Displaced Persons Health June
   Br., G-5 Br. 1945
   FWD G-5
   FWD

Hereewith attached copy of a memorandum from the U.S. Political Adviser for your information and any action you consider necessary. No action is being taken by this Branch pending the return of Major Proufoot, who is now in this area and will be visiting the camp.

For the Chief, Displaced Persons Branch:

Incl. As stated.

A. H. Moffitt, Jr.
Colonel, G. S. C.
Executive Officer.