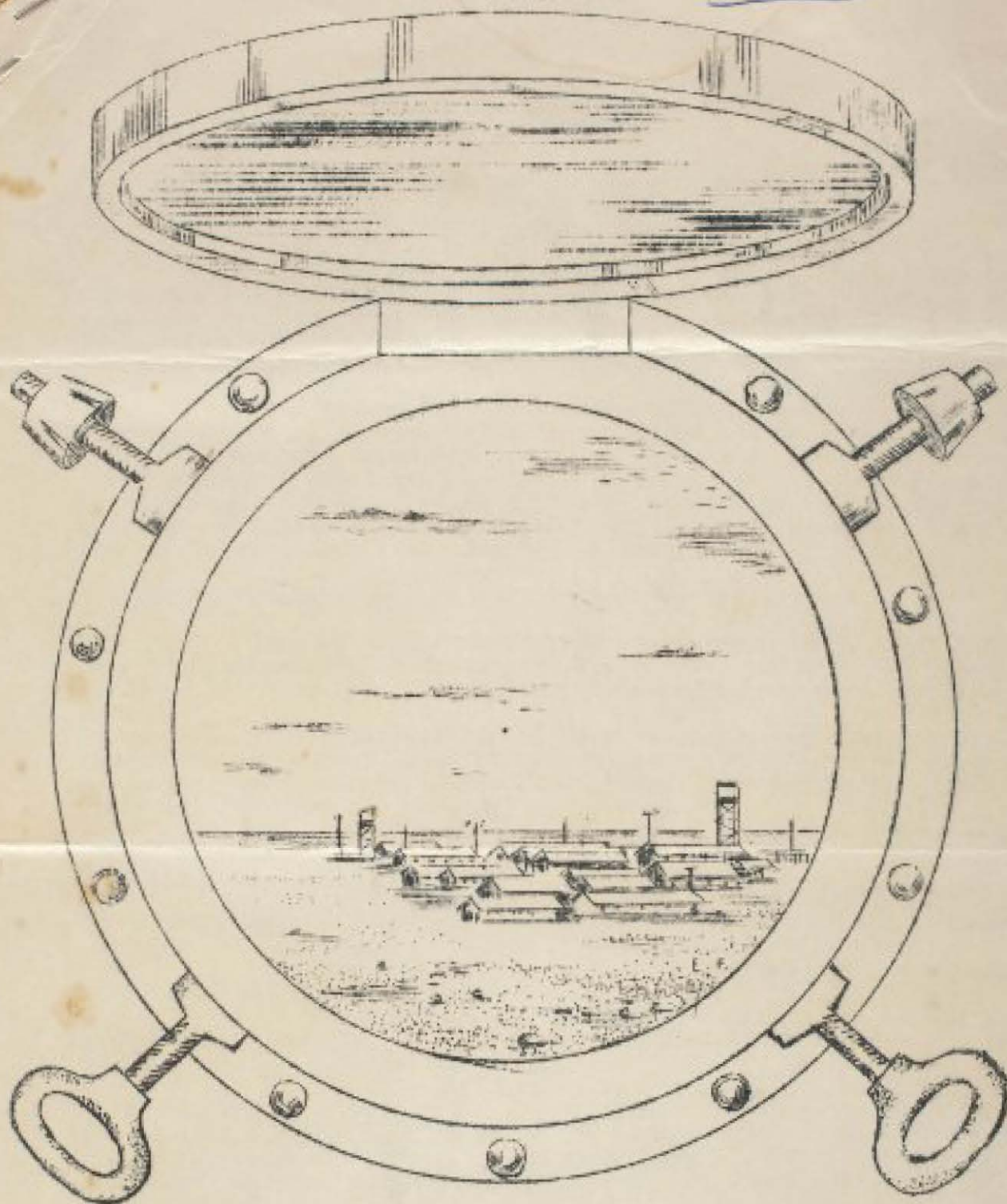




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BILL HERR



DUNERA STATEMENT



MEMORANDUM

Submitted to His Excellency The High Commissioner Of
The United Kingdom in Australia by the Internees From
England, at No. 7 Camp, Eastern Command, Hay, N.S.W.

The following gives a short account of the treatment which the 962 internees now in No. 7 Camp, Eastern Command, Australia, experienced during their voyage to Australia on board H.M.T. "DUNERA". The full complement of internees arriving on the "DUNERA" is made up by those in No. 8 Camp to whom all conditions of treatment as set out below apply automatically.

All persons here were interned between May and July 1940 in consequence of general internment orders, and are practically all refugees from Nazi oppression, on account of their Jewish descent, their political conviction or their religious faith. Nearly all are classified as "C" class cases by Special Aliens Tribunals set up in England, declaring them officially to be refugees from Nazi oppression and freeing them from most restrictions.

Conditions determining internees to go overseas

Before their transportation overseas these internees were in various English Camps and were either sent overseas voluntarily on the strength of certain promises made, or were compelled to do so.

(a) The internees coming from the temporary camp Lingfield (about 350 on board H.M.T. "DUNERA") were informed that they were going to a more permanent camp in England. They were accordingly in no way prepared for a long journey overseas.

(b) The internees coming from the internment camp Huyton, near Liverpool (about 1000 on board H.M.T. "DUNERA") were promised by their Camp Commandant that

- (1) going overseas meant more personal freedom, subject to certain restrictions, and possibilities for work in one's sphere
- (2) their wives and children would follow shortly
- (3) any prospective transmigrants would not be placed in a worse position as regards their migration plans.

On being personally consulted, the officers in charge of the camp persuaded all inquirers to volunteer as there was a great future overseas in store for them.

It was officially announced that 80 lbs. luggage could be taken, and in parts of the camps kitbags were provided to take necessities for the first days of the voyage. Nearly all the internees coming from Huyton were volunteers, only a limited group were compelled to join, ostensibly to make up the requisite number for the transport.

(c) The internees from the Central Camp and Onchan Camp, Douglas, Isle of Man, were promised that

- (1) they were going to Canada
- (2) their wives and children would be in the same convoy.

In the Onchan Camp the future Canadian postal address was officially announced. The married men from these Camps volunteered, the unmarried ones were compelled to go. They were allowed to take up to 80 lbs. luggage.

(d) The internees coming from the internment camp Ramsey, Isle of Man, were mostly members of the former Kitchener Camp, Richborough, Kent, i.e. refugees from Germany who had found asylum in England pending their further transmigration overseas. They were promised by their Camp Commandant

- (1) that they would most probably go to Canada
- (2) that as regards the transmigration they would in no way be placed in a worse condition by joining the transport
- (3) that the transmigrants to the USA (appr. 200) could do nothing better than to volunteer for this transport especially as they would save their sea passage money in that way.
- (4) that overseas they would regain freedom of movement.

They were allowed to take 80 lbs. luggage with them, and the luggage was examined by an officer before it was forwarded.

It will clearly be observed from the above that the internees arriving on board H.M.T. "DUNERA" were in the great majority men who had volunteered for this transport and had done so on the strength of promises which appeared to give an infinitely greater chance of helping in the fight against Nazi Germany than sitting behind barbed wire in England. They were men with great hopes and bright spirits who arrived at Liverpool for their embarkation overseas on July 10, 1940.

Embarkation

(A) As far as is known the first transport to arrive were about 500 men from Huyton. They were kept waiting on the embarkation pier for the boat to make fast and had then to proceed through a narrow doorway on to the landing stage. Behind this door soldiers were posted who subjected everybody to an exceedingly rough search. Everything carried in hand or loose in the pockets was taken off the internees. All less valuable effects like gloves, toilet utensils, eatables, pipes, etc., were thrown disorderly on the ground. Valuables were stuffed into sacks or disappeared openly into the pockets of the searching soldiers. Soon rows of emptied wallets were lying on the floor, the contents of emptied attache cases were roughly thrown about, and the officially provided kitbags could be seen all over the place. Valuable documents, identity and emigration papers, testimonials of all kinds, were taken away, thrown on the ground or even ostentively torn up before the eyes of their very owners.

No receipts were given, except by one single searching group. Appeals to the officers standing by were fruitless. Attempts of protest were roughly suppressed.

A dazed crowd of men found themselves herded together in the Lower and Upper No. 2 Mess Decks on board H.M.T. "DUNERA". Of all the articles taken away on the landing stage, only a very few were ever seen again.

(B) The members of the second transport from Huyton arriving a few hours later were each ordered to pick up two suitcases standing on the railway platform.

(1) Part were ordered into the Upper No. 2 Mess Deck and, on entering, all attache cases and the provided kitbags were taken away. The suitcases were opened (sometimes by force) in spite of the fact that they did not belong to the person carrying them. Articles of value and interest were taken out. This procedure was stopped after a time, and the internees were ordered to place the suitcases in heaps on one of the decks. The internees were then ordered to gather on one side of the deck and to move to the other through a row of soldiers. Here they were closely searched with results similar to that of the first group. Everything loose which was found was taken away.

(2) The rest was sent into Lower No. 3 Mess Deck. Here they were ordered to sit down and to empty everything out of their pockets on the mess tables. A body search and a thorough examination of the articles lying on the table ensued, in which anything of value was taken away. There did not appear to be any system as regards the other articles taken. In some cases even toothbrushes, soap, notebooks, were removed. Some time later it was declared that a mistake had been made and some sacks containing articles impounded on this, the Upper No. 3 and Upper No. 2 Deck, were emptied out on the floor and on one of the tables. It was found that only very few articles of value had remained in the sacks.

The internees commenced the following day to take steps to trace the rightful owners of these articles, but before this could have been carried to a conclusion, the remaining articles were again collected by soldiers and taken away.

(C) The group from the internment camp Lingfield arrived next. They were also asked to take suitcases with them from the station, but were ordered to leave them on the top deck. Here all attache cases and bags of all kinds were taken off them. On arrival in the Upper No. 3 Mess Deck they were treated similar to the before mentioned group.

(D) The first part of the group arriving from the various camps on the Isle of Man were quartered on the Sergeants' Deck on the forepart of the ship. The remainder in the aftpart, together with non-refugee internees and Italians, later disembarked at Melbourne.

(1) Of those placed in the forepart all cases, bags, and other portables, were taken away on their entering the ship, and a body search was commenced, but not completely carried out, while they were seated at their mess tables. Some of the articles taken off them were placed in large bowls and were later returned. Most articles of value were missing.

(2) Those moved on to the aftpart of the ship were searched when they entered the Upper Mess Deck. Everything found in the pockets was taken away, including handkerchiefs, etc. All articles were thrown on the ground, except most of the valuables which were pocketed by the soldiers. Suddenly the soldiers disappeared, leaving a great pivot of the impounded articles lying about, which the internees then commenced to redistribute.

All these searches were carried out without any discrimination, accompanied by acts of violence and resulted in the loss of an enormous amount of money, valuable articles, toilet necessities and important documents which have never been recovered. As regards the incidents appertaining to the embarkation of the internees, statements have been made by persons who were present.

Treatment during the voyage

(I) Hygienic Conditions.

(1) a. The internees' decks were without exception overcrowded by at least 50 per cent. The Lower No. 2 Deck provided for 228 men; it became accommodation for 354 men. This proportion was true of practically every deck.

b. The congestion was such that people slept at night on mess tables and on the floor during the whole voyage, whereas during the day when no hammocks were allowed, staircases and every available inch of floor space was constantly packed. In the event of any accident the congestion alone would have made an attempt of life-saving impossible.

(2) On the first evening it was forbidden to leave the decks. Buckets for urine were provided. The buckets were soon overflowing and sewage flooded the decks as the ship rode. In the midst of it men were lying on the floor to sleep, for at first there were neither hammocks nor blankets.

(3) a. For weeks the hatches were kept battened down. Neither daylight nor natural air ever reached the decks. For weeks one was dependent on electric light and artificial air supply through ventilators - and that in overcrowded decks on a journey through the tropics. The hatches were opened later periodically. The portholes remained closed the whole time.

b. No inoculation against typhoid and cholera was administered in spite of circumstances obviously favouring an epidemic of this kind. Although the most essential medicines were lacking, vital medicines like insulin were thrown overboard when discovered to be owned by internees. False teeth were removed, destroyed or thrown overboard.

(4) The upper parts of the ship where one would have been in the fresh air were absolutely out of bounds. The ways of access were barred by barbed wire and sentries with bayonets. On many days, however, "exercise" was ordered.

a. "Exercise" lasted 15 - 25 minutes a day on such days as it took place.

b. For the longest part of the voyage the upper parts of the ship could be entered only with bare feet. On one occasion a sergeant threw an empty bottle in among the passing internees. The bottle broke and the internees were driven over the splinters with bare feet. The grinning lascars looked on as the white internees were subjected to that treatment.

c. The order had been issued to run or walk fast during these exercises. Those who did not walk fast were driven along by the sentries with rifle butts or were bruised by blows. At the ends of the decks Lewis guns loaded and completely manned were kept trained on the internees in readiness to shoot. At times officers and sergeants assaulted the passing internees pushed them, beat them and insulted and swore at them whilst hitting them. A Roman Catholic priest was among those pushed and beaten in this manner and a Rabbi.

d. In the beginning it was not permissible to evade these exercises. During the absence of the internees created in this manner the decks were searched by sergeants for valuables.

(5) There were open portholes at the kitchen, in the wash-rooms and in the latrine. Around all these portholes - including those in the latrines - closely packed groups would stand trying to obtain a little fresh air. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon these portholes too were closed. The air in the internees' quarters defies description, especially in the washplaces where the steam from the hot salt water showers mingled with the perspiration of the crowded men.

(6) From the first landing in North West Africa to the first landing in Australia, i.e. during the whole voyage through the tropics, there was freshwater only two or three times a week. During the stops in the African ports where the use of salt water was forbidden because of the danger of contagion, there was no water at all for the cleaning of crockery, washing or bathing - and that in the tropics.

(7) There were approximately two dozen seats in the latrines for 1600 internees. As the constant stream of salt water rinsing them was much too violent, a number of these seats were constantly smeared with a mixture of salt water and excrements, making the use impossible. In front of the remaining seats queues of waiting men would assemble during the rush hours, so that nature had to be relieved in the view of many impatient witnesses. In addition a large part of the internees suffered from violent diarrhoeas - in others seasickness took the form of chronic indigestion. Owing to the motion of the sea, the floor of the latrines was almost always flooded with sewage. On days when the sea was rough the state of the lavatory could hardly be described. There was a constant shortage of lavatory paper, with rarely more than two sheets per person. Other paper was not available, newspapers were forbidden.

(8) Razors and shaving utensils had been taken away. During the first five weeks everyone went about with unkempt beards. The resulting rashes and itches were most painful. Those who had managed to keep their razors and were clean-shaven, were threatened with the bunker. Before the arrival in Australia the order was given to remove the beards immediately. For this purpose 8 razors were distributed among 16000 internees.

(9) Medicaments were short, there was not even a sufficient supply of laxatives. Those who were ill nearly always had to queue for a half or whole hour before being led to a doctor. Not before several weeks had elapsed, the less serious cases were permitted to sit on deck during exercise. Shortly before arrival in Australia men over 54 years of age and cripples were granted about an hour's rest in the fresh air every day.

(10) Being without any luggage the greatest part of the internees had to pass through the tropics as follows.

- (a) without toothbrush and -paste
- (B) without comb and hairbrush
- (c) for weeks without soap, later on one piece of soap was issued to every 20 men once or twice a week.
- (d) for weeks without towels, later every ten men received one towel, mostly originating out of opened suitcases of the internees.
- (e) with only one shirt, one pair of pants, only one pair of stockings, often only one handkerchief. Whenever they washed and dried their laundry (drying took place in the mess decks) the internees went without any laundry at all. Through constant washing- especially in salt water - the laundry was soon reduced to rags.
- (f) with only one suit and therefore often with holes all over.
- (g) with but one pair of shoes, mostly with tattered soles on which one had to step through the sewage covering the floors of the latrines.

(11) Conditions prevailing as regards safety measures were as follows:

- No lifebelts were issued at any time.
- No instructions were given for a case of emergency, and no exercise or boat drills were ever carried out.
- Since the two torpedoes which touched the boat did not explode, a panic was avoided which would have meant complete disaster.

(II) Searches and Confiscations.

During the whole of the voyage searches were made of persons picked out at random or systematically of all persons quartered on particular decks. In many cases these searches appeared to be the indiscriminate acts of guards, in others they were carried out in the presence of or under the supervision of officers.

(1) Several times sergeants appeared in the middle of the night in the troopdecks, accompanied by privates with fixed bayonets, and quietly began to unfasten wrist-watches, tear off wedding rings and search for valuables, forcing the persons affected to keep quiet by the threat of violence. Several internees were beaten up on these occasions.

(2) On the fifth day of the voyage all internees quartered in the No. 2 Troop Deck were ordered to go on exercise, nobody was allowed to remain below. Sergeants then searched the empty messes without witnesses and took away remaining valuables and other articles, even gloves, scarfs, and so on. Even coat-linings were found to have been stripped open, and the stuffing of jackets torn out. On their return from exercise the internees were searched at the entrance to their decks and deprived of what few articles they had still with them.

(3) In view of this search the deck leaders of the Lower No. 3 Deck decided to collect all valuables and to entrust them to an officer for safe keeping. An officer declared himself willing to do this and gave his word of honour as an officer to look after them and to return them at the end of the voyage. Two closed canvass bags filled with articles were thereupon handed to him. Neither the bags nor the articles contained therein have ever been seen again.

Shortly after the articles had been thus voluntarily surrendered, a search while the internees were on exercise was made on this and the Upper No. 3 Deck, similar to that on the No. 2 Decks. On this occasion articles like toothbrushes, toothpaste, personal letters and photos disappeared alongside with what fountain-pens, valuables, pencils, and so on, were left over.

A similar search was also made on the Italian Deck (Upper No. 7 Troop Deck) and the deck below where refugees were quartered on one of the following days.

(4) Persons were deprived of their wrist-watches, wedding rings and other articles while on exercise on deck. They were often searched bodily when they returned from exercise. Others were intercepted by N.C.O.s and soldiers on their way to the hospital, to the washrooms or the lavatories and often forcefully relieved of any personal articles. Internees who had volunteered to assist in the store-galley or in other work were deprived of any articles of value whilst doing their work.

Others were searched when they went to fetch their hammocks on the second day of the voyage. When protests were uttered or officers asked for, threats with weapons were immediately made.

(5) During these searches religious garments, Jewish vestments, prayer books, bibles, phylacteries, were taken away or torn. On application of the interned Chief Rabbi, Lt. Malony returned some of these vestments, but during one of the following nights they were again carried away by sergeants and not seen again. Some of these vestments had been saved from burning synagogues in Nazi Germany.

(6) The internees' representatives repeatedly brought this state of affairs to the notice of officers, asking for intervention. The officers maintained, however, that the sentries were under orders and within their right to search at any time. Col. Scott who was in charge of the military on board ship informed the deck leaders of the internees that he had personally ordered these confiscations acting on War Office instructions and that all property would be restored to the internees.

When a statement to that effect was submitted by the deck leaders, Col Scott had it returned with instructions that he would lock the deck leaders into the ship's prison and hand them over to the Australian authorities in irons, if the representatives should undertake to submit further letters of this kind.

As regards these searches, many statements have been put on record to confirm this.

(III) Handling and Loss of Luggage

(1) The internees had been officially informed in the English camps that they were permitted to take 80 lbs. of luggage with them. For many internees who had fled from the Nazis out of Germany, Holland, Belgium, these 80 lbs. of luggage constituted nearly all their wherewithal.

(2) On boarding H.M.T. "DUNERA" the internees were deprived of their entire luggage for the duration of the voyage. Repeated applications to officers to return them at least small hand luggage or to permit them to take necessities out of their trunks were refused. From the very beginning of the journey the internees saw their trunks thrown into careless piles on the open decks. The trunks had been forced open, most of them had been slashed open with bayonets, the contents ransacked were partly lying about on deck and important documents, e.g. American immigration papers, were blown about the deck and into the sea. The contents of many cases had been tipped out at random and fatigue parties of internees had to clear up the heap which had been exposed to sea spray and rain. Soldiers openly pocketed articles from that heap.

Later the belongings were taken into a luggage room which was, however, neither locked nor sealed. During the entire voyage up to the first Australian port sergeants and privates were again and again seen as they emerged from the luggage room loaded with all kinds of objects. It also attracted attention that sergeants were suddenly writing with expensive fountain pens and that a typewriter, belonging to an internee, was seen in the Orderly Room.

(3) Medicaments and medical instruments were taken from the luggage of internees and, where they were not thrown overboard, officially used in hospital.



(4) Large quantities of personal laundry, including garments and soap, originating from the internees' luggage that had been forced, were brought to the messes in bundles, and internees were ordered to accept and wear garments not belonging to them and obviously taken from their comrades. The internees refused to do this unless the property could be identified beyond doubt by the owner. The entire lack of soap or other cleansing material made it imperative to accept odd pieces of soap taken out of cases.

(5) When the luggage was returned in the Australian camps, it was ascertained and witnessed by Australian officers:

(a) that a large number of trunks had been wantonly damaged and destroyed

(b) that the contents of most cases had been wilfully interfered with

(c) that hardly anything of value had remained in any of the many cases opened

(d) that a great quantity of garments, books, personal laundry, toilet utensils, and quantities of other goods were missing

(e) that a considerable number of important and irreplaceable documents were missing

(f) that a number of trunks and suitcases had disappeared entirely

(g) that some cases contained merely mixed articles in a soiled state not belonging to the owner of the case, the whole of the original contents being lost.

(IV) Treatment of Internees by the Military

From the outset our status aboard the "DUNERA" was ill-defined. The soldiers openly expressed the belief that we were parachutists or, in any case, prisoners of war. The treatment dealt out was accordingly. The internees were addressed with the vilest curses only. For days the officers refused to listen to the internees' representatives about the many threats and bodily punishments dealt out indiscriminately by N.C.O.s and men on every occasion. Orders of every kind were given to the accompaniment of loaded rifles with bayonets fixed. Kicks and hits with rifle butts were a daily occurrence. Any attempt to seek recourse was roughly frustrated. The slightest reason was good enough to provoke punishment on the spot by sentries without any investigation or chance of redress.

The elderly internees and those who had gone through the severe treatment at the hand of Nazi agents in German concentration camps before they had found refuge in England, became so despondent that they hid away whenever a uniform came into sight, particularly in ports of call where drunkenness amongst the guards made it impossible to foresee what the next moment might bring. The brutality of manners and methods displayed was such that talk of suicide was current, and, as is known, one internee chose this way out. The material losses experienced from the beginning, coupled with the hourly threat of severe punishment, produced an atmosphere of fearful apprehension, intensified by the feeling of utter helplessness at the mercy of uniformed representatives of a country which had herself given the internees refuge from the prosecution of the Nazis, and to whom their loyalty had been proved in more than one way. Any protest made to officers and men on the grounds of human dignity and the position as "friendly" enemy aliens, proved to be victims of Nazi oppression by British Tribunals, were ignored.

Suspicion as regards the internees went so far as to accuse them of attempted arson when a piece of rag which had been wrapped around a steel-encased lamp burning all night to protect the sleepers from the continuous glare started smouldering. It was quickly pulled down and water was poured over it by the internee who slept beneath it, but the pungent smell attracted the sentry. An investigation was held and the harmlessness of the case quickly established to the satisfaction of the Commander. Nevertheless, one internee was put into the ship's prison for one night and placed reports in



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Australia later spoke of an attempt to set fire to the ship. We were accused of attempted mutiny almost all the time, although no effort was spared on the part of the deck leaders (i.e. the internees' representatives) to keep people calm and to avoid anything which might have been interpreted as an act of provocation.

As special instances of ill-treatment can be cited the following:

(1) During the exercises the internees were pushed by officers, sergeants, and privates, beaten, driven along with the butts of rifles and otherwise ill-treated.

(2) During searches and confiscations of all kinds internees were beaten and on some occasion stabbed with bayonets.

(3) During negotiations about confiscated valuables the deck leaders were threatened with the bunker and irons.

(4) Chief Rabbi Dr. Ehrentreu who had written to the Commander in a religious matter, was warned by Lt. O'Neill that he would hang him at the mast, swing him by his beard round the mast, throw him overboard and the like.

(5) When a so-called spoon message had been found, the internees were threatened with the curtailment of food and light, unless the person responsible confessed.

(6) Similar steps were announced when it was alleged that some knives had vanished from the kitchen.

(7) Two internees who had been found out of bounds were tied to a post by Lt. O'Neill who was apparently in a state of drunkenness, insulted with words such as "German Jewish swine", "sons of German Jewish dogs", and one of them was beaten until he bled. His screams of pain could be heard from afar.

(8) An internee who was kept in hospital on account of mental disease, and who attempted to leave the ship at Melbourne, in an absurd disguise, was maltreated by some sergeants in the most brutal manner imaginable and beaten unconscious. His blood-stained shirt was shown by Capt. Burton to Col. Scott.

We submit this memorandum by request of His Excellency the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom.

It states to the best of our knowledge a true account of conditions prevailing on H.M.T. "DUNERA" during our transportation to Australia. We have collected material as evidence from fellow internees who are prepared to swear to its accuracy.



General Office, Legal Department, No. 2 Camp, Eastern Command

The internee

appears before me the undersigned

He declared that he was prepared to make statements after having been told that these statements were to be submitted to the Australian or British authorities:

I was deck cleaner on H.M.T. "DUNERA". The cleaning party had their separate daily exercise on deck. On July 23rd - Tuesday - we went on exercise before the other internees as usual. That was on the first day when internees were ordered to turn up bare foot for their quick walks on deck. We had returned and the others had gone up for their exercise at about 10 o'clock when the soldiers came down to our deck (Upper No. 3 Deck). They searched all pockets of the clothing left behind. They took several things from the pockets and threw the clothes on the floor. I had stayed on the Upper No. 3 Deck so that I was witness to these proceedings. The articles taken out of the pockets were put in sacks without being listed.

I also saw that a soldier refrained from putting a nice fountain pen and a propelling pencil into the sack, but put these articles in his own pocket after having examined them carefully. Having seen this I went to a Sergeant who was standing on the staircase and of whom I believed - and still believe - that he was in charge. I said to him in English "You know that your man is stealing" Meanwhile the internees returned from their exercise. A body search was made at which this Sergeant took part as well. Upon my address he turned round and said "Fuck off, filthy pig" or something like that. I have to add that I was indeed dirty, although merely because I had come back from cleaning the deck which he should have noticed particularly as my hands were still wet. There was a quarrel; I declared that I wanted to see an Officer. Upon that he took me up to the space in front of the kitchen - where the stairs led up to the open deck. This space was enclosed by barbed wire. He went away and returned after about 5 minutes; meanwhile the soldiers had done with their search and came up. Having returned the Sergeant told me that I could go. No Officer could see me at the moment. I went back to the Upper No. 3 Deck.

On the same day I was to take an overcoat to the hospital for which purpose I had to pass over the staircase mentioned previously and over the open deck. I waited at the fence isolating the staircase from the living quarters of the internees. The Sergeant came downstairs with two soldiers and said "I am just coming to look for you". I pointed out that I was to take an overcoat to the hospital. He took the overcoat away from me - which has never been seen again as far as I know; it belonged to - and ordered "Come along", taking me in the opposite direction down to the stores. On the way he hit me in the face several times and downstairs in the room in front of our ship's prison cells he handcuffed me tying my hands to my back and sent away the internees present. Then he took me to a cell. There I was hit with hands and fists by him and another soldier, a third soldier with a drawn bayonet being present. While doing so the Sergeant said: "Now you will be fucking sorry for it". When he had gone, the soldier who guarded me hit my feet with the butt of the rifle before he also left me. That was at about 2 p.m., when the hospital party went on deck. At 7 p.m. my handcuffs were taken off, and I received a piece of bread from the Sergeant. Next day I was only given breakfast and supper, neither lunch, nor tea. On Thursday he took me upstairs round about breakfast time, turned me round and inspected me to see if I had any bruises. He declared "You look alright". An hour after that I was led to the shower bath and then released. I had no blankets in the bunker, but lay on the bare wood in my trousers.

On the same day - i.e. July 25 - I put all this down in my diary.

On July 26 - Friday - at about 9.30 after breakfast I was brought before the Lieutenant-Colonel whose name was Scott as I learned later. I was questioned, but when I wanted to defend myself he said to me "Shut up, you have nothing to say here" and "Shut up, only talk when you are asked to".



- 2 -

When asked, witness said:

I was not only asked to wait with my answer, but the Lieut.-Colonel never even listened to me. I was accused of having said in front of the Sergeant (in English !!) "Come on, boys, let's rush at them". No written report of this incident was made.

When asked, witness continued:

I did not see that anything was put to paper in my presence. The Lieut.-Colonel sentenced me to 28 days close confinement, among them to 7 days bread and water. This sentence was never put into practice. The Sergeant gave orders that I was to be given full ration as all the others; and it was done. However, he told me at breakfast "I am giving you what the others are getting; but in case an officer comes down and asks, tell him you are getting bread and water".

While being in close confinement, we were allowed one shower bath a week, but had no chance of washing otherwise. I was given blankets after 4 days. While in the shower bath I succeeded in getting a message to my friends who sent me my overcoat and a few blankets. In Cape Town, however, the Sergeant was so drunk - as in fact he frequently was - that we were not given anything to eat for 24 hours. We called through the gates for the quartermaster who fetched an Officer of the ship's crew (blue uniform), he then made it possible for us to get something to eat.

Our treatment improved from Cape Town onward, we got more to eat, were allowed to go to the room in front of the cells for at least one hour daily and had a chance of washing. Whilst we were in the bunker, I saw through the bars that two boys of the ages between 16 and 20 were beaten up by Lieut. O'Neill. He was completely drunk, and the soldiers accompanying him were in the same state. That was in Cape Town Harbour. He said in German: "Du bist ein swine und dein Vater ist ein swine", a sentence which he repeated several times, probably owing to his drunken condition. Then he challenged one of the boys to box with him. He could scarcely stand. At any rate, he hit one of the boys with his fists so hard that the boy collapsed and had to be lifted up by a soldier. We were bawled at not to look out again.

These statements were put down in the continuous presence of both the witness and ... following up ...'s statement, read through by him, then read out to him, acknowledged and signed by him as follows

...

Statement made by ...

On the 10th of July I was sent together with about 500 others to Liverpool to be embarked on H.M.T. "DUNERA". I was quartered on the Lower No. 3 Troop Deck. I acted during the journey as Deputy Deckleader and as such I was present at most meetings with the officers in charge of us.

From the moment we came on board personal property of ours was indiscriminately confiscated by the soldiers and N.C.O.s guarding us and we were submitted to the most humiliating searches. On July 15th we heard that a general search had been carried out by N.C.O.s and men on the Lower No. 2 Troop Deck while the internees quartered there were on deck for their brief walk. In this search nearly everything of value still remaining had been taken away. We had reason to believe that a similar search would take place on our deck the next day and as we feared that a great deal of the property confiscated in such a search might not be returned to its owners, we decided to take precautionary actions.

Early in the morning of the 16th of July I approached Sgt. Mattinson who had on various occasions shown an apparently helpful disposition towards us and I asked him whether he considered it advisable for us to collect all remaining articles of value such as documents, identification papers, fountain pens, cash, watches, &c., and to entrust them to the care of an officer. Sgt. Mattinson replied that he would speak about this with the officer in charge and would let me know as soon as he had done so.



About a quarter of an hour later Sgt. Mattinson returned and told me that an officer was willing to take charge of the valuables of ours but that it was imperative that all these were collected and handed over before 9 o'clock, the same morning. At the same time he supplied me with 2 canvas bags for that purpose. Mr., the deck leader, and I myself immediately instructed the various mess captains to prepare the articles in question and nearly everybody on the deck took advantage of the offer made. Nearly all mess captains prepared detailed lists of the items to be given up, before handing them over. The bags were then tied up and Mr.'s name, mess and Int. No. were clearly marked with an indelible pencil in each cation them and a wooden label was also tied to each of them.

Sgt. Mattinson came down to our deck at about 9.30 o'clock on the same morning and asked Mr. and myself to take the bags on deck for the purpose of handing them to the officer who had declared himself willing to look after them.

On deck we were met by Lt. Tinning of the A.M.P.C. and we again discussed the whole action with him. He readily agreed to keep the bags in his custody for the duration of the voyage and gave us his word of honour as an officer that he would look after them and return them to us when we arrived at our destination. Mr. and myself then took the 2 bags to Mr. Tinning's cabin where we deposited them.

At a later date while we happened to be on deck Mr. was beckoned by Mr. Tinning to which meeting I was summoned too. He informed us that he had to transfer the bags to the orderly room at the request of the commanding officer. Further inquiries about the bags during the voyage produced no new information.

The bags have up to now not been returned to us and I have been given to understand that the Australian military authorities stated that they were never handed over to them.

I have seen the list of the contents of the 2 bags which has been compiled from the information given by the former mess captains, he and I consider this list to give a fair account of the property contained in the bags.

I am prepared to repeat this statement on oath if required.

Statement made by

I was interned on July 2nd, 1940, and was sent to the Internment Camp at Kempton Park and later I was sent to Huyton near Liverpool. I had with me certain jewels inherited from my late grandmother which I produced to the officer in charge at the general examination on the occasion of my arrival at the first mentioned camp. The officer examined the jewels and returned them into my keeping.

On July 9th I was informed that I had to join a transport for overseas leaving on the following day and was told to prepare all my belongings for this departure. My suitcase was collected and despatched separately. I was supplied with a small bag for my personal belongings.

We left Huyton at about 12 o'clock on July 10th and arrived at the Liverpool pier at about 3 o'clock. Our transport consisted of about 500 men. I had my jewels with me in a little jewel box which I carried in my right inner pocket. After having waited for about half an hour we were ushered on to the embarkation quay through a narrow gangway. On this several sergeants and N.C.C.'s were stationed who submitted all of us to a rigid body search. All personal belongings were taken off us and thrown on heaps on the quay.

I was among the first to be submitted to this search and the sergeant who was dealing with me found the jewel box in my coat. He wanted to place this in his pocket, but I objected and asked him to call his officer.

Hearing our discussion an officer arrived from the direction of the ship. He wore a blank black beret with a silver badge, I suppose of the Royal Tank Corps. I informed this officer in a great hurry that the jewels were representing my whole fortune and that I had taken them with me to start a new life overseas.

The officer opened the box, looked at the jewels and said "I'll keep it for you". I thanked him for this. In this moment I was pushed from behind on to the gangway. While the talk with the officer was lasting, the small bag containing my personal belongings, e.g. pair of slippers, toothbrush, a pair of pyjamas, and toilet utensils, was torn out of my hand and I have never seen it again.

During one of the quick walks which we were allowed to take on deck of H.M.T. "DUNERA" under guard I recognised a few days later the same mentioned officer among the officers on duty. I tried to speak to him, but he ordered me to get back into line and to get away. When I passed him again on the next round of the same walk, the Sergeant was standing beside him and beckoned me to come forward. He asked me: "What were you talking about to this officer?" I replied that I wanted to give him my name and accommodation on the ship as he was keeping some valuable jewels for me. He inquired: "What jewels?" I gave him a short description. He then asked "Which officer?", and I informed him that I thought it was the gentleman standing beside him who was at that time wearing a helmet, but who had at the time of our embarkation worn a beret which I presumed to be of the Royal Tank Corps.

The Sergeant Major turned to me and said: "You cocker! Don't talk so bloody much or you will go in the bunker. Get away now!"

I informed the deck leaders of my case and they mentioned it to the Sergeant who was presumed to have been a person connected with the police of the Secret Service. I had no further chance to mention the case to the officer concerned and the jewels have never been returned to me. The jewels consisted of:

A pair of earrings with big diamonds and
 1 old fashioned brooch in the shape of a crescent with
 diamonds

They were valued in Switzerland at about 4500 sfrs. and in England an offer was made to me to sell them for £ 85, but on my refusal a higher offer was promised. I suppose that the real value of the jewels lies between £ 120 and £ 150.

I have since been told that the name of the officer in question presumably was Captain Colle, B.E.F.

After we had been on board H.M.T. "DUNERA" for about a fortnight, I was asked to see the Medical Officer. He produced to me my suitcase which he wished me to open as in view of my title as "Doctor" he presumed it to contain medical supplies. Of these an extreme shortage existed. When I informed him that I was not a medical doctor, he was disappointed but allowed me to open my suitcase and take a few personal belongings out of it. I closed my suitcase again and left it in his charge. The suitcase was returned to me after my arrival in Hay and on opening I discovered that certain small valuables had been taken out which were still in it when I returned it into the charge of the Medical Officer. These valuables consisted of, i.e., 1 leather wallet and 1 amber cigars holder.

I am prepared to make this statement on oath if required.