

SECURITY INFORMATION

SECRET

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE DIRECTOR OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

2337

May 12, 1953

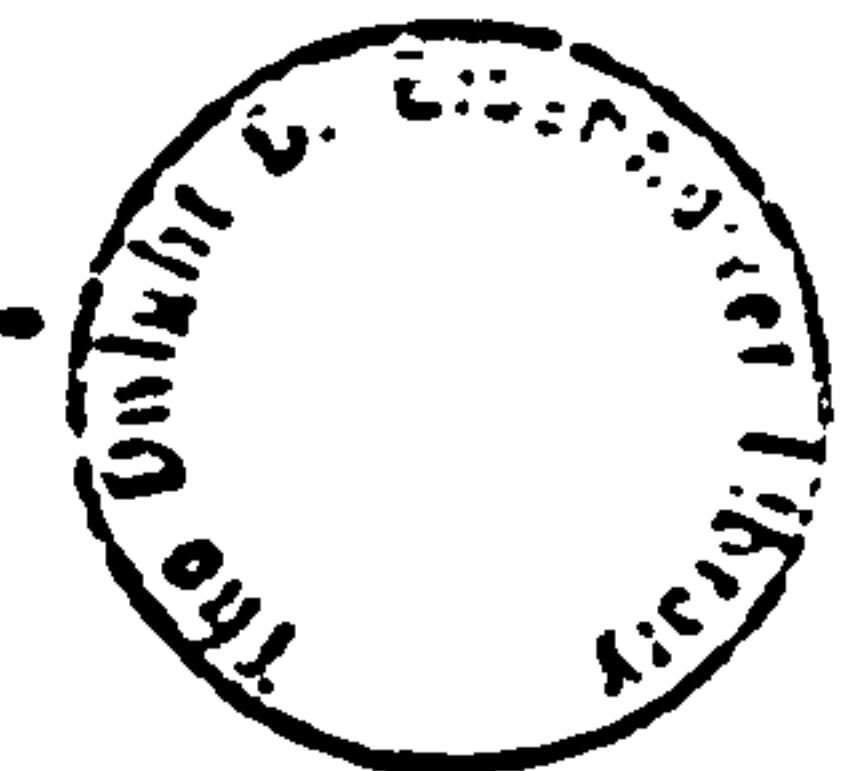
MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Returned POWs at Valley Forge General Hospital

On 5 and 6 May, I visited Valley Forge General Hospital as a result of conversations with Ambassador Lodge, C. D. Jackson and George Morgan the week before on the subject of the whole returnee program.

My first conversations upon arrival at the Hospital were with Colonel Brewer, Commanding Officer of Valley Forge General Hospital, and Colonel Rogers, Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Department of Defense to process the returned prisoners. Both of these gentlemen outlined in detail the indecision and confusion in the program as a result of their having been recipients for several days of contradictory orders from the Office of the Surgeon General, Army G-1, Army Public Relations Office, Army Public Information Office, and Army G-4. The soldiers returning to the United States were alternately under deep cover and then in the open for the most glaring and unfair publicity. The result was that except for those few who are known to be hard-core communists, all the returned soldiers were extremely bitter and bewildered--and, in some instances, literally frightened. Some of them were worrying about whether they could ever obtain work in their home communities or elsewhere in the United States now that the press had insinuated that they had accepted communist indoctrination.

The enemy told the departing US prisoners of war that upon return to the United States they would be segregated and isolated from normal contact with the US people because they would be accused of betraying their country in attending communist indoctrination schools in order truly to learn why the US imperialists had sent them to fight in a remote foreign country. By the time our prisoners were put aboard an airplane with barred windows and by the time they arrived at Travis Field, California, forbidden to leave this airplane which was surrounded by MPs armed with tommy guns, they naturally came to believe what the enemy had prognosticated concerning their arrival in the States. Then the Valley Forge exercise more than corroborated what the enemy had told them. The hard-core communists among them aggravated the problem in the Ward to such a point that the Valley Forge Hospital doctors were afraid for the first two or three days that serious emotional upsets would ensue. By the time I left Valley Forge, the Hospital staff felt that



JACKSON, C.D.: Records, 1953-56

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By DTK NLE Date 11/7/87

they had this problem well in hand. Those soldiers who were physically able left Valley Forge General Friday, 8 May for thirty days' leave with their families. The few who were really sick and injured had the pleasure of reunion with their families at the hospital. The Department of Defense is footing the bills for those relatives staying at the guest house on the hospital grounds.

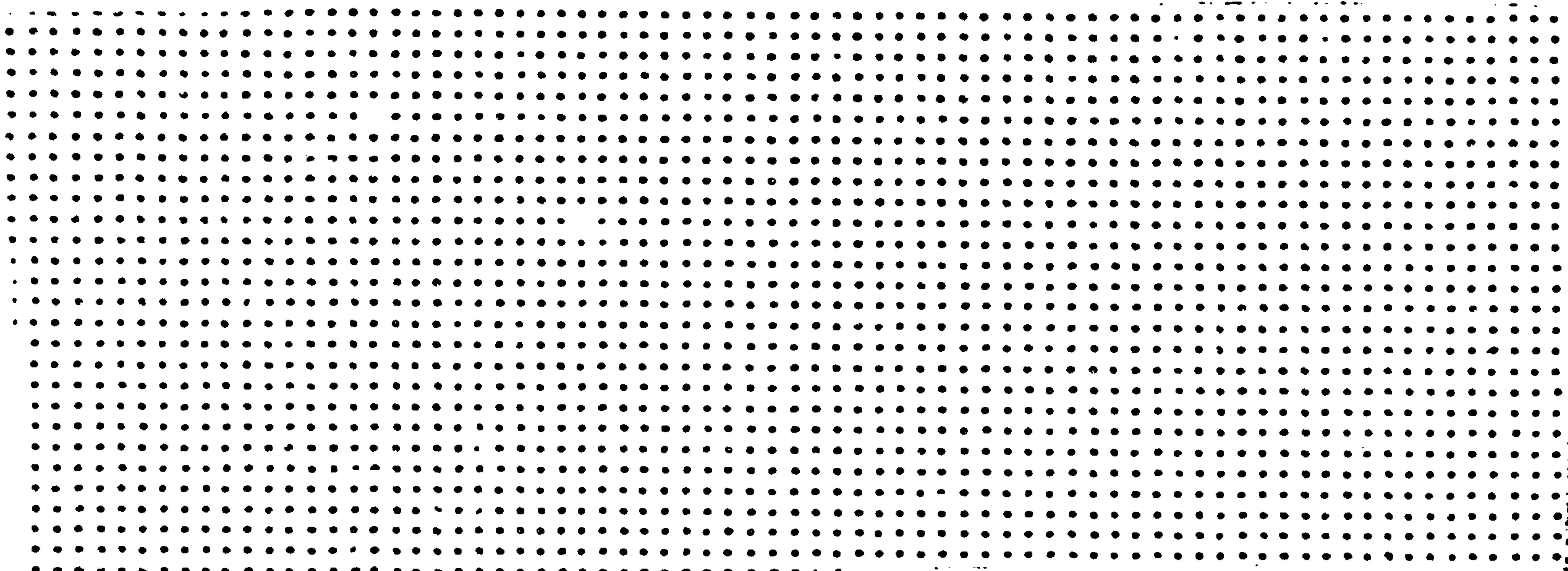
Where all of the confusion in the repatriation program really started is most difficult to determine. Various elements of the Department of Defense have blamed each other and also the Far East Command. It is my belief that there was a need for this program in order to find out what we have found out concerning this particular group. Things went awry because there was no one part of Defense in complete command of the project. It is still a worry in the minds of top officials in the Department of Defense what the enemy may do in the selecting of further soldiers and officers for return from prison camps. They are asking, "Is it possible that the enemy forced us to cry 'wolf' concerning the first group which had merely received political indoctrination and then in a second exercise of this nature may send back soldiers and officers who have been given the extreme treatment, such as that undergone by Missionary Hayes?" However, I do not believe that segregation in one hospital was necessary. This program could just as well have been handled in General Hospitals near the home area of each soldier.

It is interesting to note the sampling of returned POWs decided upon by the enemy. Aside from a sampling of wide geographical distribution, the soldiers were selected by selections by race, religion, degrees of intelligence, personality types and the extent of political schooling received (ranging from 30 days to two years).

Part of the Hospital program was a normal G-2 interrogation procedure. Certain facts have come to light that are interesting:

1. The hard-core communists stated that they were told by the enemy eighteen months' ago that repatriation would occur at this time.
2. We now know that the headquarters of the North Korean Army is located in POW Camp 5, which is on an island in the Yalu River. 5,000 UN POWs are there, thus rendering it impossible for us to bomb or strafe the enemy headquarters without killing and seriously wounding numbers of UN prisoners.
3. All the prisoners, except those who are communists, stated that they have seen Soviets in uniform flying MIGs. One prisoner lived for a while in POW barracks that were only two or three hundred yards from an airfield containing a wing of MIGs. This POW stated that he saw Soviet flyers taking off for air combat daily from that field. He described these individuals as being slavish in appearance and speech (some visited the barracks),

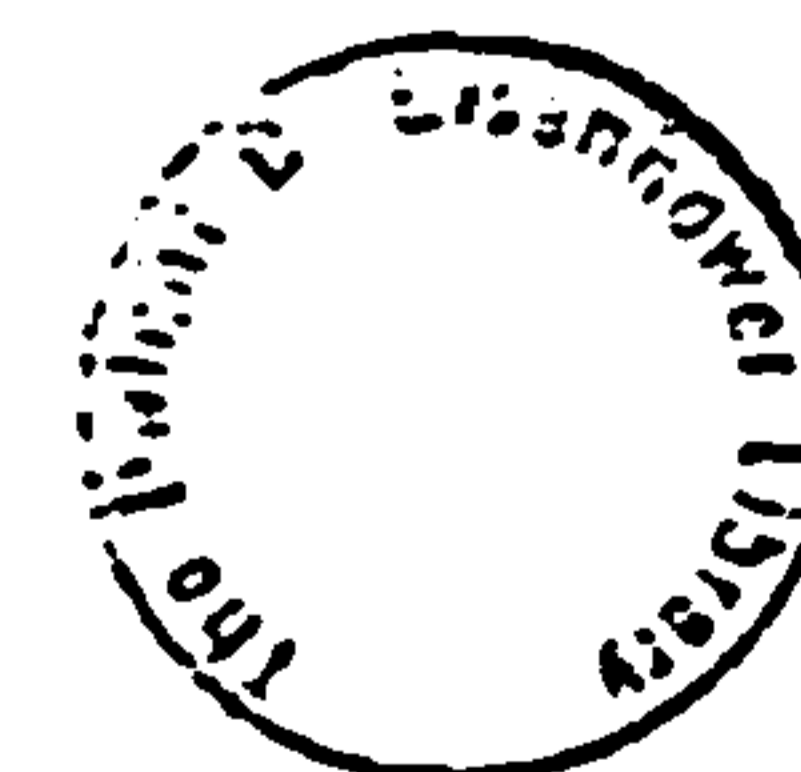
and described with a great deal of exactitude insignia of rank and other characteristics of the Russian uniform.



Treatment varied considerably in different camps and under different commanding officers and guards. The South Korean soldiers received the most inhumane treatment of all the POWs in any camp. There was only one US soldier tortured out of the group of 25 who arrived at Valley Forge General Hospital. He is an outstandingly courageous individual who steadfastly refused not only political indoctrination but refused even to attend classes and discussion groups. One night he was suspended from a rafter with his arms strapped behind him, hanging by his wrists with his toes barely touching the floor. After some hours he was cut down and put in solitary confinement for a few days. After that the enemy ignored him completely.

Medical treatment in enemy camps was either meager or non-existent. One soldier signed a camp peace petition in order to receive proper medical care and surgery for a badly wounded arm which had become gangrenous through neglect. Another soldier who was seriously ill with pneumonia signed a piece of paper stating this or that in order to receive medical attention. Others signed peace petitions under physical coercion, such as pistol slapping and beating with rubber hoses. I separate these cases from the one instance of physical torture because the boys who underwent pistol whipping, etc. said that there was more shouting and gesticulating in the process than there was actual physical injury.

H. S. Craig
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H.S. Craig reports on meeting at Valley Forge General Hospital with returned POWs. White House, 12 May 1953. U.S. Declassified Documents Online, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CK2349256040/USDD?u=nash87800&sid=bookmark-USDD&xid=a7c963e7&pg=3. Accessed 7 Oct. 2021.