

N. The Emsland disciplinary camps
(Strafgefangenenlager im Emsland)

In 1923, in the course of marsh-clearing, disciplinary camps were created in Emsland by the Prussian judiciary administration and classified as "penitentiaries" (Zuchthaus). Prisoners were to work outside the camps in the swamps.

Albeit not under the SS Reich chief's jurisdiction, these camps are nevertheless dealt with in the catalogue for the following reasons :

- some were temporarily used as concentration camps (... als KL, see p. 1,3, 187) and others, after the outbreak of the war, as prisoner-of-war camps.
- after 1933, prisoners in these camps, which were actually under the control of the judiciary administration, were treated in a manner in no way comparable to the treatment of prisoners in other penal institutions of the time.

The only sources available to the International Tracing Service on this camp complex are the records of ^{the} post-war proceedings taken by ^{the} British and German authorities against the camp personnel, and the orders and decrees quoted in them.

GUARD

The first distinctive feature of this camp complex is that its guard and administration were taken over by the Emsland SA Standarte (protection force of the storm sections) in 1934.

The Einsatzdisciplinary camps
(Einsatzdisciplinarylager in England)

In 1937, in the course of war-classes, disciplinary camps were created in England by the Prussian Ministry of Administration and classified as "penitentiaries" (Zuchthaus). Prisoners were to work outside the camps in the summer.

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GUARD

The first distinctive feature of this camp complex is that its guard and administration were taken over by the Einsatzgruppen (protection force of the secret sections) in 1934.

The commander (Kommandeur) of the disciplinary camps, who took up his duties in 1934, was at the same time appointed leader of this SA unit. The guard of the camps was in the hands of the Emsland SA-Standarte until the end of the war.

PLACE OF THE EMSLAND CAMPS IN THE HIERARCHY

The disciplinary camps, which came, as was usually the case under the jurisdiction of the competent prosecutor general (Generalstaatsanwalt) were placed under the direct control of the Reich minister of justice in 1934. This fact stands alone in the annals of the judicial authorities of the time.

It has just been mentioned that a commander was placed at the head of these camps in 1934. For reasons that will be explained subsequently, a delegate (Beauftragter) of the Reich minister of justice was also assigned to the camp complex in 1938. His office was in Berlin and his position was maintained until the end of the war. He appointed deputies who worked at the central administration of the camps in Papenburg.

THE COMMANDER'S (KOMMANDEUR) NEW METHODS

The commander (Kommandeur) appointed in 1934 was the former "major" of the first SA concentration camp of the SA-Standarte (unit of the storm section ; see footnote on p...) 208 Berlin-Niederbarnim" (Kommandant des ersten SA-Konzentrationslager der SA-Standarte, 208 Berlin-Niederbarnim) in Orianienburg. This concentration camp had been closed shortly before because of its deplorable condition.

Six further "old storm-section leaders" ("alte SA-Führer") were placed at the head of the camps together with the commander ; like him, they had not been trained as officials of law ground of their political opinions. They saw that the prisoners were virtually in their hands, deprived of any rights..."

The commander (Kommandant) of the disciplinary camps, who took up his duties in 1934, was at the same time appointed to the SA unit. The guard of the camps was in the hands of the Reich SA-Standarte until the end of the war.

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THE METHODS OF THE COMMANDANT'S METHOD

The commander (Kommandant) appointed in 1934 was the former "commandant of the first SA concentration camp of the SA-Standarte (unit of the storm section; see footnote on p. 111). 308 Berlin-Wiederparthei" (Kommandant des ersten SA-Konzentrationslager der SA-Standarte, 308 Berlin-Wiederparthei) in Oranienburg. This concentration camp had been closed shortly before because of its deplorable condition.

Six further "old storm-section leaders" ("alte SA-Kämpfer") were placed at the head of the camps together with the commander; like him, they had not been trained as officials of law

enforcement agencies. The commander's attitude is characterized in the following indictment drawn up against him :

"...as the defendant had, from the very beginning, been relieved of any purely administrative work requiring some knowledge of penal law, after the camps were established, his task consisted mainly in directing the telling-off of prisoners for the clearing work, controlling the guard troops in their work and especially in their watch over and treatment of the prisoners, and inflicting punishments for severe violations of camp regulations..."

The following is reported in the same document, about the former commander's responsibility for the maltreatment of prisoners :

"...but implies that from the very beginning, his aim was to introduce a system which deviated from all the principles of penal law and could only be compared to concentration camp methods..."

The following statement is taken from an assize court decision :

"...the fact that by their acts, they (the defendants) aggravated the severity of the already cruel sentences served in the Emsland camps and, in so doing, brought discredit upon the juridical system in terms of the execution of sentences, was a reason for an increase of penalty. If to-day, the Emsland camps are mentioned right after concentration camps, this throws light upon the deplorable conditions that prevailed there and which the defendants contributed to. Every day, they could see the awful fate of the prisoners, many of whom were condemned on the sole ground of their political opinions. They knew that the prisoners were virtually in their hands, deprived of any rights..."

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The commander's (Kommandeur) fundamental attitude is characterized in the deposition of a government councillor (Regierungsrat), once subordinate to him : according to this witness, when the commander's attention was drawn to the regulations concerning his duty as well as the execution of sentences and/^{which}regulated the treatment of the prisoners, he replied that he had not studied them and had no intention of doing so. His actual words are reported to have been : "...the only legislator in Emsland is me."

This attitude led to measures against the commander, who was suspended in January 1938 on the basis of a report on the arbitrary conditions in the "marsh camps" (Moorlager) addressed by an assistant judge (Gerichtsassessor) to the Reich minister of justice ; formal proceedings were then taken against the commander.

He was charged with having used money contrary to instructions and with improper use of official cars ; he was also accused of having

- modified on his own authority prescriptions issued by the Reich minister of justice,
- failed to supervise the camps to the required extent, so that it was impossible to undertake immediate investigations and take action on offences committed in the camps, namely the maltreatment of prisoners, large-scale deprivations of food etc...

Owing to political pressure, the commander got off with a small summary punishment and recovered his position at the end of November 1938. During his suspension, his position was held by the delegate of the Reich minister of justice, who appointed a deputy on the spot. Hierarchically, the latter

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was subordinate to the commander (Kommandeur) (a senior government councillor (Oberregierungsrat), then a government executive (Reigierungsdirektor)) and had little latitude of action against him, since his ~~title~~ and sphere of responsibility were not clearly defined. The local deputy of the Reich minister of justice replaced the commander when he was called into the army for unknown reasons on February 25, 1942.

ORGANIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL CAMPS

The disciplinary camps were put under the control of the commander as soon as he was appointed ; as an official and a storm section leader (SA-Führer), he was in charge of the execution of all ^{the} sentences and Standartenführer (SA-colonel) of the Emsland SA-Standarte, entrusted with the guard and supervision. Barrack officers (Barackenschäftlinge), responsible in particular for cleanliness and order in the barracks, as well as the individual camps were run by so-called "wardens" ("Vorsteher"), who controlled prison officials and especially the local chiefs (Platzmeister), responsible for the discipline of the prisoners.

From 1934 to 1938, the individual camps were run by guard detail leaders (Einheitsführer des Wachkommandos) i.e. "old storm section leaders" ("alte SA-Führer"). In 1938, when the commander was suspended, the Reich Minister of justice ordered the highest officials in charge of the execution of sentences to take over the position of warden (Lagervorsteher) in each camp. At the same time, professional prison warders were again commissioned with the camp administration.

These various tasks are called "duty prisoners" : "Funktionstragende". They are called "prisoners in charge" in this text and this term will be followed by the German expression put between brackets.

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 prison wardens were again commissioned with the camp disci-
 plination.

But these measures had little effect, for the commander (Kommandeur) managed to have the judicial administration take on storm section members without the required training as prison warders. Thus both the guard of the camps and the guard of the prisoners working outside the camps remained within the province of storm sections.

INTERNAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRISONERS

When he took up his duties, the commander (Kommandeur) introduced the system of ^{the} prisoners' self-administration into the Emsland camps, a system he had seen at work in concentration camps ; this is another unprecedented case in penal justice.

Here are some of the duties allotted to the prisoners : first came the barrack elders (Barackenälteste), responsible in particular for cleanliness and order in the barracks, as well as for waking up the prisoners and distributing food. Then came the barrack-room elders, the hall and table elders (Stuben-Saal-, Tischälteste) and the prisoners commissioned with the telling off for fatigues.

The "prisoners in charge" (Funktionsgefangene) were led to impose an iron discipline out of sheer fear of being replaced and sent back to the swamps. According to an investigation report, the local chiefs (Platzmeister) preferred choosing prisoners known for their brutality. Theoretically, they had no disciplinary power, but they exerted real terror on their fellow-prisoners.

+ Prisoners responsible/ ^{for} these various tasks are called "duty prisoners" : "Funktionsgefangene". They are called "prisoners in charge" in this text and this term will be followed by the German expression put between brackets.

But these measures had little effect, for the commander (Kommandant) managed to have the judicial administration take on escort sections members without the required training as prison wardens. They held the guard of the camps and the guard of the prisoners working outside the camps remained within the province of escort sections.

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4 Prisoners in charge of these various duties are called "daily prisoners": "Tagesfunktionärgefangene". They are called "prisoners in charge" in this text and this title will be followed by the German expression put between brackets.

The following text concerning barrack elders is taken from a court decision :

"When the different groups of prisoners were formed, it appeared that these positions were often held by despicable elements which ruthlessly took advantage of their position and, through violence and vexations, made life harder to the prisoners than it already was at the Börgermoor camp."

We know from a camp leader's deposition that the central administration had forbidden to give any responsibility to political prisoners ; consequently, only common law criminals were available for these positions.

EXTENT OF THE CAMPS

There were four camps in 1934 ; their number increased after 1935 and there were fifteen of them at the time they were broken up. Convicts were however not the only prisoners incarcerated in these camps. In 1939, the Reich minister of justice planned to have a total number of 12,000 prisoners.

CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS

Until 1940, only civil German convicts were sent to the Emsland camps , classified as penitentiaries (Zuchthaus) in 1923.

The decree of the Reich Minister of justice of July 5, 1937 "concerning the handing-over of prison inmates (Gefängnisgefangene) to the disciplinary camp of Papenburg (Ems)" suggests the way the prisoners were selected.

They should be from 21 to 50 years of age, 55 if thoroughly physically fit. Prisoners with certain diseases or physical disabilities were excluded, as well as the following categories of persons :

The following text concerning various aspects is taken from a court decision :

"When the different groups of prisoners were formed, it appeared that their positions were often held by persons elements which naturally took advantage of their position and, through violence and chicanery, made it harder for the prisoners than it already was at the Westmoreland camp."

We know from a court decision that the central administration had forbidden to give any responsibility to political prisoners ; consequently, only common law criminals were available for these positions.

EXTENT OF THE CAMP

There were four camps in 1934 ; their number increased after 1932 and there were fifteen at that time but they were abolished. Convicts were however not the only prisoners incarcerated in these camps. In 1934, the Dutch minister of Justice planned to have a total number of 18,000 prisoners.

CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS

Until 1940, only civil German convicts were sent to the Enkhuizen camp, classified as political prisoners (Zwaangenoemen) in 1937.

The decision of the Dutch Minister of Justice of July 2, 1937 "concerning the handing-over of prison inmates (Zwaangenoemen) to the disciplinary camp of IJzendoorn (Zwaangenoemen)" suggests the way the prisoners were selected.

They should be from 21 to 50 years of age, 5' 11" through 6' 4" physically fit. Prisoners with certain diseases or physical disabilities were excluded, as well as the following categories of persons :

- Persons sentenced for high treason (Landesverrat) and betrayal of military secrets, or persons previously convicted on the same ground.
- Persons sentenced for high treason (Hochverrat) or premeditation of high treason, with the exception of their "mere accomplices" ("blosse Mitläufer").
- Condemned persons subject to a subsequent security detention.
- Security prisoners
- Persons particularly suspected of intending to escape
- Foreigners
- Jews.

The subject of the decree specifies that it concerned exclusively prison inmates (Gefängnisgefangene); the only mention about penitentiary prisoners (Zuchthausgefangene) is that monthly reports could be ordered about them. No such text is known.

SECURITY PRISONERS (Sicherungsverwahrte)⁺

In pursuance of the Reich minister of Justice's decree of March 21, 1939, a section was opened for "security prisoners," a category of prisoners which had been excluded from these

+ cf. footnote on p...

It seems appropriate to create a word to distinguish "Sicherungsverwahrte" from "Schutzhäftlinge". The term "security prisoner" as opposed to "prisoner in protective custody" (Schutzhäftling) has been coined for this purpose.

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- Persons sentenced for high treason (Hochverrat) or gratification of high treason, with the exception of their "very accomplices" ("Nebenbeteiligte").

- Condemned persons subject to a subsequent security detention.

- Persons particularly suspected of intending to escape.

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camps in 1937. On the 1st of October 1940, however, the Reich minister decided "to have all security prisoners ("Sicherungsverwahrte) evacuated from Emsland and replaced by other prisoners".

In a letter to his delegate, the Reich minister of justice specifies the number and categories of prisoners to be incarcerated in these camps ; he repeats that foreigners and Jews should be excluded :

- Security prisoners (Sicherungsverwahrte) 2,200 (excluded again until later, mainly after 1.10.1940)
- Penitentiary inmates (Zuchthausgefangene) 6,800
- Prison inmates (Gefängnisgefangene) 3,000

12,000

From 1940 on, former members of the Wehrmacht were transferred to the camps in constantly increasing numbers, and made up to 60 % of the camp inmates ; they were sentenced by German military courts and generally declared unworthy of serving in the armed forces. The actual execution of sentence was meant to begin only after the end of the war.

The comparison between the different categories of camp inmates in January 1941 and January 1944 clearly shows the changes which occurred during that period :

	January 1941	January 44
1) Offences of political nature:		
listening to enemy broadcasting		
sabotage, undermining of troops,		
violation of racial laws, pæmeditation of high treason, activi-		
ty as a Jehova's witness	6 %	12.3 %

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In a letter to his delegate, the Reich minister of Justice
specified the number and categories of prisoners to be in-
cluded in the evacuation; he stated that foreigners and Jews
should be excluded:

2,500 (excluded again after 1.10.1940)	- Security prisoners (Sicherungsverwehrt)
5,000	- Penitentiary inmates (Zuchthausgefangene)
3,000	- Prison inmates (Gefängnisgefangene)
11,000	

From 1940 on, former members of the Wehrmacht were trans-
ferred to the camps in constantly increasing numbers, and made
up to 80% of the camp inmates; they were sentenced by Ger-
man military courts and generally declared unworthy of serving
in the armed forces. The actual execution of sentence was
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The comparison between the different categories of camp
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- (1) Offences of political nature: January 1941 January 44
- increasing to enemy propagandizing
- espionage, undermining of troops,
- violation of racial laws, promul-
- gation of high treason, activi-

- Disciplinary: 2) Desertion, refusal of military service, absence without official leave, guard duty offence, non-compliance with orders, self-mutilation 2.4 % 51.3 %
- Reformatory: 3) General offences of civil nature 91.6 % 36.4 %

FOREIGNERS

As already stated, foreigners were excluded from the camps until the beginning of the war. Later, mainly Poles were committed there, whether "ethnic Germans" (Volksdeutsche)[†] drafted into the German armed forces and declared missing, or prisoners from Polish prisons. Later still, Belgians, French and Dutch sentenced for violations of ^{the} regulations established by the occupation forces were occasionally transferred to these camps.

JEW

The 1937 and 1939 decrees excluding ^{the} Jews from the Emsland camps have already been mentioned. However, the former commander of the Emsland camps stated after the war, that approximately 30 Jews were incarcerated in the camps and that the last four were transferred to prisons or concentration camps in 1944.

PUNISHMENTS IN THE EMSLAND CAMPS

The documentary evidence shows a large range of minutely graded punishments, listed below according to their severity ;

- Warning
- Special roll-calls
- Scouring and mending, occasionally also at night

2) Garrison, refusal of military
service, absence without official
leave, guard duty offense, non-
compliance with orders, anti-
utilization

3) General offense of civil nature

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until the beginning of the war. Later, mainly Poles were
concentrated there, whether "ethnic Germans" (Volksdeutsche)
detained into the German armed forces and declared missing, or
prisoners from Polish prisons. Later still, Belgians, French
and Dutch sentenced for violations of regulations established
by the occupation forces were occasionally transferred to these
camps.

Jews

The 1937 and 1939 decrees excluding Jews from the German
camps have already been mentioned. However, the former commander
of the Silesian camps stated after the war, that approximately
70 Jews were incarcerated in the camps and that the last four
were transferred to prisoner of concentration camps in 1941.

PRISONERS IN THE ENGLAND CAMPS

The documentary evidence shows a large range of prisoner
categorized prisoners, listed below according to their severity:

- Warning
- Special toll-calls
- Scouring and mending, occasionally also at night

- Disciplinary drill or sport up to 60 minutes
- Reformatory barrack (Erziehungsbaracke) up to 14 days ; this was a kind of mitigated confinement : the prisoner was under solitary confinement and had to perform additional work. It is certain that a "reformatory barrack" (Erziehungsbaracke) of this kind existed in camp I (Börgermoor camp), but no decisive evidence is available for the other camps.
- Confinement from 1 to 28 days with food allotment of water and bread to be alternated normally with regular food rations; deprivation of mattress and prohibition of reading and corresponding.
- Harsh confinement from 7 to 14 days with uninterrupted food curtailment.
- Dark confinement up to 28 days : confinement in dark cells to be interrupted every third day ; complete food curtailment until the 14th day, then normal rations every third day.
- Punishment company (Strafkompanie) : in pursuance of the commander's order of 13.10.1939, the most severe punishment, to be applied up to three months : deprivation of mattress, hard work, occasionally beyond normal working hours. Loss of all advantages, but no food curtailment.

Prisoners were usually sent to punishment companies after a confinement sentence. Those who had attempted to escape were thus transferred to a punishment company after having served a 28-day dark confinement sentence.

Punishment companies existed in all the camps, but by the end of the war, because of the lack of personnel, the only punishment company left was in Commando X - West (Kommando X - West) (p. 522)

- Disciplinary drill or sport up to 30 minutes

- Refractory barracks (Kriegsbarracken) up to 12 days; this was a kind of military confinement; the prisoner was under solitary confinement and had to perform additional work. It is certain that a "refractory barracks" (Kriegsbarracken) of this kind existed in camp I (Büchsenor camp), but no decisive evidence is available for the other camps.

- Confinement from 1 to 15 days with food allowance of water and bread to be administered normally with regular food rations; deprivation of mattress and provision of bedding and coverings.

- Water confinement from 1 to 15 days with uninterrupted food deprivation.

- 15-day confinement up to 15 days; confinement in dark cells to be interrupted every third day; complete food deprivation until the 15th day, then normal rations every third day.

- Punishment company (Strafbattalion): In pursuance of the commander's order of 1.10.1939, the most severe punishment to be applied up to three months; deprivation of mattress, hard work, occasionally beyond normal working hours, loss of all advantages, food no food deprivation.

Prisoners were usually sent to punishment companies after a confinement sentence. Those who had received no sentence were transferred to a punishment company after having served a 15-day dark confinement sentence.

- Punishment companies existed in all the camps, but by the end of the war, because of the lack of personnel, the only punishment company left was in Camp 1 - West (Kamp 1 + West (p. 522))

Among all these punishments, the penal code mentioned only confinement and harsh confinement ; the other measures, as well as the system of the "prisoners in charge" (Funktionsgefangene) were brought in by the commander (Kommandeur), when he took up his duties in 1934.

The Regulations concerning the medical control of the prisoners before and during their confinement sentences and the power of inflicting punishments will not be handled here, since they were obviously not observed. Furthermore, the commander's prescriptions seem to have been formulated in such a manner that all kinds of interpretations were possible.

The terror exerted by some of the "prisoners in charge" (Funktionsgefangene) over their fellow-prisoners seems to have had particularly disastrous effects in the reformatory barrack (Erziehungsbaracke) of camp I.

In addition to the usual punishments, prisoners were continuously beaten with rubber truncheons particularly by storm section (SA) guards. These rubber truncheons were no longer distributed after 1934, but substitutes were soon found.

Furthermore, by his decree of May 8, 1940 the commander (Kommandeur) sanctioned the beating of prisoners as a means of "breaking passive resistance through immediate coercion" ("auch das Brechen des passiven Widerstandes durch unmittelbaren Zwang"). He justified this on the grounds that the distance between the camps and the work places made it impossible to send the prisoners back to the camps during work in order to apply them this "immediate coercion" ("unmittelbarer Zwang").

The Reich Ministry of justice knew about the commander's arbitrary decisions at the latest in 1934, when proceedings were taken against him. The Reich ministry

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In addition to the usual punishments, prisoners were sometimes beaten with rubber truncheons, particularly by their section (BA) guard. These rubber truncheons were no longer distributed after 1934, but such blows were soon found.

Furthermore, by his decree of May 8, 1940 the commander (Kommandeur) sanctioned the beating of prisoners as a means of "breaking passive resistance through lack of coercion" ("such das Brechen des passiven Widerstandes durch ungewaltigen Zwang"). He justified this on the grounds that the resistance between the camps and the work places made it impossible to send the prisoners back to the camps during work in order to supply them with "immediate coercion" ("unmittelbarer Zwang").

The Police Ministry of Justice knew about the commander's arbitrary decisions at the latest in 1934, when disciplinary proceedings were taken against the latter. The Police Ministry

probably received further complaints, for its officials gave the commander special instructions in their report of March 8, 1943 and in a smooth tone called his attention to the abuses in the camps. The commander was advised to resort only "sparingly" ("sparsam") to dark confinement, a punishment officially unknown to the justice, but tolerated as an exception only in the Emsland camps. Finally, it was hoped that these instructions would make it possible to avoid further "infringing and arbitrary acts by individuals" (Übergriffe und Willkürakten Einzelner).

The following judgement of a German court discloses the actual conditions in the camps :

"...Cases of acts of violence by the guard personnel against the prisoners were more and more frequent, whether the guards had real or alleged difficulties in dealing with the prisoners. The guards also allowed themselves arbitrary or violent acts, being either stupefied by the dull work in the marshes and acting so out of natural propensity or simply following their superiors' example".

It has already been mentioned that the commander (Kommandeur) was called into the army in 1942 and replaced by the local representative of the Reich Ministry of Justice. This change, however, does not seem to have improved the prisoners' condition, as a report from a camp physician addressed to the Reich Minister of Justice at the beginning of 1944 indicates :
the following
the physician reports/about prisoners whom he had to examine before their transfer to "Kommando Nord" in Norway :

2) Kommando North (Kommando Nord)

This commando was set up in 1942 by the operations group Wiking from the Todt organization (OT) in Northern Norway. At first, the commando administration was in the hands of

probably received a letter explaining, for his officials gave
 the commander special instructions in their report of March 1945
 and in a month later called his attention to the abuse
 in the camp. The commander was advised to restrict only "special
 cases" ("Ausnahmen") to such confinement, a punishment entirely
 unknown to the Justiz, but tolerated as an exception only in
 the island camps. Finally, it was hoped that these instructions
 would make it possible to avoid further "infiltration and
 arbitrary acts by individuals" (Unbefugte und Willkürakte
 Einzelner).

The following judgment of a German court discloses the
 actual conditions in the camps:

"... Cases of acts of violence by the camp personnel against
 the prisoners were more and more frequent, whether the
 guards had real or alleged difficulties in dealing with
 the prisoners. The guards also allowed themselves to be
 provoked or violent acts, being either instigated by the delin-
 quents in the camps and acting as a result of disposition
 or simply following their superior's example."

It has already been mentioned that the commander (Kornmann-
 born) was called into the army in 1942 and replaced by the
 local representative of the Reich Ministry of Justice. This
 change, however, does not seem to have brought about any
 condition, as a report from a camp physician addressed to the
 Reich Minister of Justice at the end of 1944 reported:
 "The following
 the physician reports that conditions were not so serious
 before their transfer to 'Kornmannborn' in Norway, that

- approximately one fourth of the examined prisoners bore the marks of maltreatment and in particular of blows on the back.
- prisoners were ill-treated by barrack-elders (Barackenälteste) as well as by group leaders (Gruppenführer).
- the summoned barrack-elders gave to / ^{understand that} they were covered by officials
- the usual punishments were not carried out in accordance with the regulations. Harsh confinement punishments were inflicted three times consecutively, with an interruption of 2 or 3 days only. Prisoners who got only bread and water were put to hard labour for periods of six weeks. They became so weak that they were no longer able to work.

COMMANDOS OUTSIDE GERMANY

- 1) Commando X (Kommando X) also called Special Operation Group (Sondereinsatz) or Group West (Gruppe West)

After October 1943, the Todt organization (OT) sent this commando to hard labour in France and in the British Channel Islands. The number and situation of the camps, as well as their sizes is unknown. In September 1944, the commando was sent back to Germany; it was in Lendringsen, Westphalia, at the end of September-beginning of October 1944, and was transformed into an independant disciplinary camp on the 1st of February 1945.

2) Commando North (Kommando Nord)

This commando was set up in 1942 by the operation group Wiking from the Todt organization (OT) in Northern Norway. At first, the commando administration was in Alta, Province

- approximately one fourth of the examined prisoners bore the
 marks of maltreatment and in particular of blows on the face.
 - prisoners were identified by barracks-aliases (Arbeitsnummern)
 as well as by group leaders (Gruppenleiter).

- the examined barracks-aliases indicated they were covered by
 officials

- the usual punishments were not carried out in accordance with
 the regulations. Harsh confinement punishments were inflicted
 three times consecutively, with an interruption of 2 or 3
 days only. Prisoners who got only bread and water were
 assigned to hard labor for periods of six weeks. They became
 so weak that they were no longer able to work.

COMMANDO OPERATIONS

- 1) Commando X (Kommando X) also called Special Operation
Group (Spezialgruppe) or Group West (Gruppe West)

After October 1943, the 1st of the 1st (1st) and this
 commando to hard labor in France and in the British Channel
 Islands. The number and situation of the commandos, as well as
 their size is unknown. In September 1944, the commando was
 sent back to Germany; it was in Lachowen, Westphalia, at
 the end of September-beginning of October 1944, and was
 transferred into an independent detachment camp in the fall
 of February 1945.

- 2) Commando North (Kommando Nord)

This commando was set up in 1943 by the operation group
 within from the 1st of the 1st (1st) in Eastern Norway.
 At first, the commando was in Altdal, Province

Finmarken, Norway. These island groups, the number and exact geographical location of which are unknown, were all situated north of the Arctic circle. The only available figures are the following:

Area of the command on 27.4.1945 : 1,404
9.7.1945 : 1,179

All the prisoners were transferred to Germany before the end of the war, and the first 500 left the British Islands on March 2, 1945.

In his letter of March 7, 1945, to the High Command of the German Armed Forces - Legal Department (U. Kommando der Wehrmacht - Wehrmachtliche Gefege), the Reich Minister of Justice reported the return of the command and wrote the following about its work:

"The prisoners were assigned to construction work of military importance for the Food Organization (N) and to other work under circumstances and against a background that these in particular of the 'German territory'."

EVACUATION AND LIBERATION OF THE ISLAND GROUPS

From March 1945 until the liberation of the camps by the allied troops on April 25, 1945, the prisoners of German camps were transferred from place to place for security reasons in order to prevent their liberation.

CONCLUSION

The only available information consists of a few letters and instructions, as well as some legal proceedings against the command (Kammandt) and some of its figures and

ordinates. No information about the prisoners' physical condition, mortality, food supply etc. can be found in these documents. There is, for example, only one incidental mention of bad medical treatment and care. It is therefore not possible to give as detailed a picture of the conditions of detention in these camps, as that of the concentration camps, which is largely known.

It is however clear that when the Reich minister placed the commander at the head of the camps, he knew his background perfectly well and was thus aware of the way the camps would be administered. Their deplorable condition and the arbitrary acts which took place there were known already in Berlin by 1938, and brought about the action against the commander (Kommandeur). The special instructions of 8.3.1941 from the responsible advisor of the Reich minister were briefly mentioned here and show that the Ministry was perfectly informed of the development of abuses in the camps. It is also clear from the physician's report addressed to the Reich ministry at the beginning of 1944 that the commander's departure brought no improvement. It should be emphasized that ^{the} criminals committed to these camps made up 91.6 % of the inmates in January 1941 and only 36.4 % in January 1944. It can therefore be assumed that a transfer to the Emsland camps meant a deliberate worsening of the detention conditions and for this reason, the International Tracing Service believes that the Emsland camps should be included in the present catalogue (vol. I p. 512 to 522).

