

charge of the post office at Cusen I.

Q In which manner were these instructions brought to the knowledge of the prisoners?

A These instructions were imprinted on each letterhead. And, furthermore, these instructions were brought to the knowledge of each new prisoner through interpreters and block clerks.

Q Did you hear already at that time that there was a hostile attitude among the prisoners in camp against you?

A No.

Q When did this hostile attitude appear, if you heard about it?

A I assumed that this hostile attitude started with the censoring of parcels and the taking out of food out of these packages.

PRESIDENT: The court will take a recess for 30 minutes.

(Whereupon the court recessed at 1030 hours.)

(GRILL-Direct)

(Whereupon the court reconvened at 1100 hours.)

PRESIDENT: The court will come to order.

PROSECUTION: Let the record show that all the members of the court, the prosecution, the defense, the accused, the court reporter, and the court interpreter that were present in the previous session are present now. The accused Grill is on the stand.

WILHELM GRILL, an accused, voluntarily took the stand in his own behalf and continued to make the following statement through an interpreter:

DEFENSE COUNSEL: If it please the court, with the court's permission I would like to clear up what I believe is a misunderstanding as to the two exhibits which the defense offered. It was my idea that these were not to be offered as exhibits and were not to go into evidence but solely to be used by the court for their own information, and as the testimony of this witness came out, they could follow these two sketches and get a better idea of just what the set-up was as far as the post office is concerned, and with the court's permission I would like to withdraw these exhibits as to evidence.

PROSECUTION: I have no objection.

LAW MEMBER: It will be granted. The exhibits will be withdrawn. Let the record show that the exhibits D-2 and D-3 will be withdrawn.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

QUESTIONS BY DR. KLUGE:

Q Mr. Grill, will you tell the court once more in general what kind of postal installations existed in camp?

A Outside the camp were the SS post offices, with a general censoring office for prisoners' mail, with a place to sort the parcel post, whereas inside the camp in Block 2 was solely the censoring office for parcel post for prisoners. This was one single room in this block.

Q Please continue with your story about the personnel employed in the post office inside the protective custody camp.

(Grill-Direct)

A Inside the camp in the parcel censoring office there were two prisoners who were there in order to keep the post office clean.

Q Please, would you tell us now something about the procedure which took place with each package until the time it got in the hands of a prisoner?

A The parcel came from the mail car to the SS post office. After the parcel was checked against the parcel post card, it was brought into the camp through the parcel censoring office, then it was censored, and then it came in a special drawer for sorting purposes. After the evening roll call the parcel was handed out to the prisoner through the SS man on duty in the protective custody camp.

Q In the average, through whose hands did a package go?

A The parcel went through the hands of the man who was responsible for it at the post office, who at the same time was a censor.

Q That means he was the one who opened it first?

A In the parcel censoring office the parcel was opened by this censor and censored.

Q In between, did you participate in the censoring of parcels in the same manner, and on and off as you did participate in the censoring of letters?

A At the beginning I trained the men at the post office for about 2, 3 months after the sending of parcels had been permitted in cooperation with the man who was in charge of the post office in Mauthausen. Later on only when a great work load had accumulated; that happened once a month or perhaps two or three times. For the censoring of parcels there were three SS men who relieved each other.

Q Where did the largest part of the parcels come from?

A The greatest part of the parcels came from Poland.

Q Can you estimate perhaps the percentage?

A Approximately up to 80 percent.

Q And when for the first time did Red Cross packages arrive?

A During the time I was at the post office until 1943 there was only one man who received constantly Red Cross packages from Switzerland. This was a prisoner Guyer, and I know about this so exactly because the list of contents of these packages came in triplicate, had to be signed in triplicate, and then had to be returned to the consulate in Prague.

Q And when did Red Cross packages start to arrive regularly?

A Until the time when I left the post office in August 1944, Red Cross packages did not arrive regularly at all in camp.

Q Were they censored, too?

A All Red Cross packages, if there came any at all, for Frenchmen and Spaniards were censored at the main post office at Mauthausen because all foreign mail was censored through the main post office at Mauthausen.

Q That means they arrived already opened?

A Parcels as well as letters which came for foreign prisoners from foreign countries arrived already opened, and only so I can explain that prisoners had seen individual packages carried into camp in the evening open because this mail arrived in the afternoon at 4:30 and was handed out together with the other mail in the evening after roll call.

Q Of what did the largest part of the Polish packages consist?

A The largest part was butter, bread, bacon, here and there cigarettes and sausages.

Q Probably because Poland is known as an agricultural nation?

A I don't know that; I wasn't in Poland.

Q Did you ever see oranges and chocolate in such packages?

A As long as I did take care of censoring it never happened, and if some other censors would have seen it, certainly at least they would have shown it to me. That happened only in German packages because the relatives of German prisoners had saved these foodstuffs at least for three months before they were able to send a package to their relatives.

Q Do you know from your own observations whether in the third, fourth, or even in the second year of the war in Germany there existed any quantities of chocolate or oranges?

A No, that isn't true because all these things were rationed in Germany at that time.

Q And not in Poland which was occupied by Germany?

A No, I don't know that.

Q Were there any camp instructions in regard to the maximum amount of food which was allowed in any single package?

A Until the time when it was allowed in general to send packages, that means in October 1942, in accordance with camp instructions, only once a year at Christmas time the sending of packages was allowed, with a total weight of four pounds. Starting October 1942 in accordance with the general post office instructions packages up to 40 pounds were permitted.

Q Did ever instructions come out about taking out of foodstuff for heavy workers?

A When the sending of parcels started during an evening roll call the camp commander, SS Colonel Ziemeis published instructions according to which prisoners could receive only as much food as they could eat during one or two meals, everything else beyond this quantity had to be handed out to prisoners who had not received packages, to prisoners who worked very hard and to juveniles.

Q What was the procedure to do that?

A In the evening after roll call when packages were handed out the prisoners were lined up in front of the post office. In front of one of the doors of the post office a prisoner was standing who called out the name of the prisoner addressee. On the long parcel table another prisoner was sitting who got from the prisoner his signature for the

receipt of the package; next to this prisoner the employee of the post office was standing who checked the prisoner as to number and name in accordance with the address on the parcel; next to this man the SS man on duty in the protective custody camp was standing with a package, and he showed him this parcel and then in accordance with his orders he took out the food. These orders had been brought to the knowledge of the SS man on duty through the protective custody camp and the camp commander.

Q All this happened in your presence?

A Yes.

Q Did you hear that certain circles of the prisoners or even all prisoners for this reason had a certain anger or hate against you?

A Perhaps some of the prisoners who came and had not heard about this order saw that this order had come from me.

Q What happened with the things which had been taken out of the package?

A These things were put right away on a large table which was standing right behind the man who took the stuff out of the parcels. After the last package had been handed out, certain work details and certain individuals who had slips from the protective custody camp leader came and picked up the food. Only the SS man on duty in the protective custody camp, and never the man on duty in the post office took care of this handing out of food.

Q What do you say now in comparison to your own testimony about the statement of the witness Krause that it was quite possible for other SS men to come to the mail room and to take things from the table out of packages?

A I can't imagine only that; as long as I was the man in charge of the post office there, nobody came in there, not even a block leader, but later on when on account of the large work load which I had to take

care of, I came into the camp only once or twice a month, and the other three censors only were SS corporals, then some block leaders with higher rank took some liberty, otherwise, I can't imagine that.

Q Was this ever done in your presence or with your approval?

A No, if I would have known about it, I would have stopped it right away. I personally had signed the order of the Reichs Fuehrer SS Himmler in 1942 that the theft of parcels would be punished by death through hanging. Anybody who knows what these orders meant for us in those years will realize that out of fear we wouldn't have taken the least thing out of these packages.

Q How can you explain the fact that the depression was created among prisoners that quite large quantities of food were used for the SS members?

A I had testified before that all parcels which did not belong to the camp for men who had been transferred, for men who had died, and so on, were taken out in the evening in mail bags in order to really turn the next day to the post office Mauthausen or the post office St. Georgen. The post office at St. Georgen can testify about the fact that every day up to two mail bags full of mail which didn't belong to Camp Gusen I were returned there.

Q Who was responsible that the food stuff which was taken out of the parcels in accordance with instructions of the commander Ziereis was properly distributed?

A For the proper distribution of these foodstuffs, the SS man of the protective custody camp who was on duty was responsible. It was the order that this distribution and the taking out of foodstuff should be taken care of through the protective custody camp leaders personally, but it seems this work was too much for them, and they had passed on this work to the roll call leader, the labor service leader, and other higher ranking non-commissioned officers of the SS.

Q Did it happen with your knowledge, and if Yes, with your approval that from time to time food was handed out to the prisoners working in the post office in order to prevent them from stealing?

A Yes. From time to time I asked the SS man in charge to give food to the prisoners working in my post office in order to prevent any thefts of packages through them.

Q That means, out of the same consideration as one allows a man working in a kitchen to eat as much as he likes to?

A Yes, because if he had enough to eat, he wouldn't steal.

Q Mr. Grill, you heard about complaints of witnesses here that you were well-known as a beater, what do you have to say about that?

A I have to say the following, that I punished the prisoners who had violated certain mail regulations myself in order to prevent much heavier punishment to camp commanders or authorities.

Q Was it the same with Krause, for instance?

A Yes.

Q What happened there?

A Krause took into camp to a prisoner a letter uncensored which I had seen already in the forenoon and for which I was looking in the afternoon and couldn't find any more. I told him right away that he had done it, and he admitted it. I told him that I would not make a report but that he would have to be punished in order to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Q Is it correct that you left it up to him whether he preferred punishment through you or a report?

A Yes.

Q And what did he decide?

A He preferred to be punished by me because a report would have meant much more severe punishment, and I handed it out to him.

(Grill-Direct)

Q Mr. Grill, it is brought to attention once more that for your testimony which you made after the recess you still are under oath?

A Yes.

Q The testimony you have given so far is to be considered as to be given under your oath?

A Yes.

Q About what other cases of beatings, if any beatings happened at all, can you testify about?

A When letters went out, it happened quite often that prisoners by means of code words, bible citations, and so on, gave information about camp regulations, conditions at camp, food rations, and so on; when it would happen for the first time I warned the prisoners and returned the letters to them, but when it happened twice, three times, or four times, even to the same prisoner, then I called the prisoner and I personally have punished him with a few slaps in the face or a few blows with a stick.

Q What was in general the reason for the beatings which you handed out?

A If I would have had to report each month all violations of mail instructions, I would have had to make at least a hundred reports or more, and these men would have been punished very severely. One picked out of these many violations of mail instructions only the ones where the prisoners had been warned already several times, and they were punished, through punishment reports, transferred to the punishment company, 25 blows with a stick, entry in the personal records of the prisoner involved, which could have meant a longer term in the concentration camp, because in 1941 and 1942 many prisoners were released from Gusen.

Q Were beatings given also for other reasons?

A Yes, when parcels were handed out.

Q Why?

A I myself can remember two cases of burglary in the post office, where several packages had been stolen, and furthermore during the receipt of packages at the time when all the parcels were handed out that prisoners took the parcels addressed to other prisoners by faking the number of the other prisoner on their arm as well as on their chest and put the number on their own shirt, and in this manner they were able to receive the parcel of the other prisoner who was on night duty. For the employees of the post office and the SS man in charge of handing out the parcels, of course, it was impossible to remember the face of the man who was supposed to have received the package among the many hundreds of prisoners; and furthermore, prisoners who had received their package and had left the place where the packages were handed out were assaulted about 10, 15 meters from this place by other prisoners and the packages were taken away from them. Whenever such robbers of parcel post were caught they were punished in order to prevent any recurrences in the future. One has to visualize that among the prisoners in camp. There were also criminals among the Germans as well as among the Poles, and if such incidents would not have been punished right away, such incidents would have occurred very, very often.

Q Did you have during your duties anything to do with the living quarters--the living blocks of the prisoners?

A I was never a block leader, never a detail leader; I was solely responsible for the post office.

Q With how many prisoners did you get in contact daily in an average day when taking care of the post office matters?

A First, my prisoners working in the post office; secondly, in accordance with the number of parcels which arrived during the time I was censoring parcels. In the beginning, 100, 200, later on, up to 800 or even a thousand.