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Kozuma, Ernest

Country Club

1944

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1805 - B, TuleLake Center
Newell, California
August 20, 1944

Attorney Wayne Collins
Mills Tower
San Francisco, California

Dear Sir:

Mr. Hiroyoshi Tsuda of Block 30, TuleLake Center, showed me a letter of recent date sent by Mr. Ernest Besig, Counselor of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. Mr. Besig requested that Mr. Tsuda write to you ^{and} to explain in detail the conditions of the Stockade of this Center. Mr. Tsuda in turn asked me to do the same.

I was an inmate of the Stockade myself. Having spent a few months with Mr. Tsuda, I was requested by him to write to you, describing the conditions in the Stockade, covering the period since his release in April up to the time of my release, which was July 22nd, 1944, Saturday. I presume Mr. Besig has a detailed report of the Stockade during Mr. Tsuda's confinement; therefore, I will circumscribe my report from April to July 22nd of this year. I might also add that I was arrested on January 6, 1944 and imprisoned for 199 days.

Size of Stockade and Barracks

The size of the Stockade was about 220' x 350'. There were six barracks and one mess hall and kitchen building. Barracks were of the same size as those occupied by the evacuees in the Colony, 20 x 100, but without partitions. Each barrack was one large dormitory with two coal stoves for heating purposes and 12 windows to each side. These barracks were numbered A to F. One-half of Barrack F was used for latrine and shower, the other half, living quarters. Barbed wire fence was approximately 10 feet from the building on both ends.

Lighting of Barracks

Barrack A had one row of lights in the center, which was poor. Barracks B, C, D, and E had two rows of lights; hence, better than Barrack A.

Sleeping Accommodations

At one time, there were over 260 inmates in the Stockade, distributed among all barracks; however, that was when the Army was in charge of the Stockade. On May 23, 1944, the WRA took charge of the Stockade officially and formally. Lt. Schaner with his staff, accompanied by Mr. Marht, Internal Security Officer, and his staff entered the Stockade at roll call time, which was 1:00 p.m. daily, and formally announced the change of supervision as of that date. There were about 180 in the Stockade. Barrack F had been vacated previous to May 23rd, the men having taken their beds to other barracks according to the choice of each. Army cots with four blankets were provided to each. ~~were~~ ^{were} were released from time to time, which gave us more space. Although the number occupying the barracks were not even, Lt. Schaner kept a complete record of occupants of each barrack and redistributed the population nicely. By July 18, 1944, there were 18 of us left. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th, eight or more men accompanied by Mr. Marht came into the Stockade and ordered all of us to move into Barrack A, nailing up all the barracks. The next morning, July 19th, the only two Issei or first-generation Japanese were released, about 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon ~~and~~ another was released, a Nisei; that left only 15. I was still there.

Reason for Arrest and Confinement: Trial and Sentence

No reason was ever given to me for my arrest. There were two or three occasions when I was given what was known as a 'Hearing' at which time, WRA officials asked me all sorts of questions. The reason for my arrest was never made known. I was kept in the Stockade under these circumstances without trial and sentence. Date of release was never certain at any time which kept us guessing.

Precaution against Escape

There were four towers located on each corner of the Stockade just outside of the fence and armed guards were stationed on each 24 hours a day. The fence was about 8' high with barbed wire extension, facing in the stockade. There were three strands of barbed wire on this extension. There was only one gate and each time, any of us were taken out to go for our food or to the office for various business, there was a guard standing at the gate and several Internal Security officers attending.

Food

Food was not any too good up to May 23rd; however, it was enough and of such quality as to sustain us. On May 23 when the WRA took over, we noticed a sudden change for betterment of our daily food supply. Unlike the time when the Army was in charge, WRA supplied us food for few days in advance and in number of cases, for instance, coffee and flour, we were given a sack each, which was sufficient for a week or more. As far as food was concerned, we believe they gave the same quality as given to the colonists.

Letters and Packages

As far as I am concerned, cigarettes were rationed up to May 23rd because the Army was in charge of the Stockade up to that date. WRA, however, told us that they saw no reason why our cigarettes and tobaccos should be restricted inasmuch as we bought them with our own money.

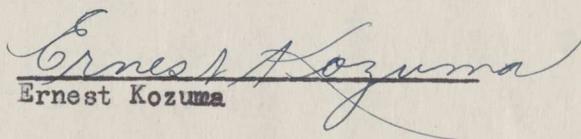
Mail and Letters

All mail, both incoming and outgoing, were censored by the Army while they were in charge, and by the WRA when they took charge of the Stockade.

All in all, all of us behaved very nicely and obeyed all orders whatever they were. Our mess hall and kitchen were kept in good sanitary condition. We took turns in keeping the latrines and shower room immaculately clean. Our barracks were swept and mopped each morning. For recreation our friends in the Center sent us balls, volley balls, and gloves. These were the only means of outdoor recreation.

To the best of ^{my} ~~our~~ knowledge and belief, I have given a fair account of the living conditions, etc., during the time of my confinement in the Stockade.

Very truly yours,


Ernest Kozuma

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August 23, 1944

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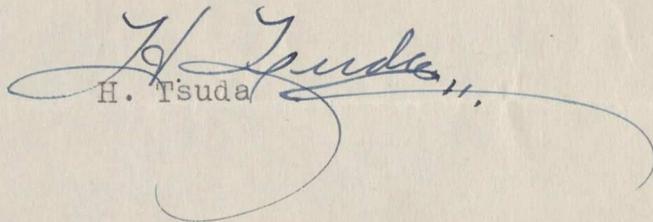
Dear Sir:

In replying to Mr. E. Besig's letter dated August 4, 1944, I am enclosing Mr. E. Kozuma's statement which undoubtedly can give you a better view about the stockade rather than mine, because my period of incarceration was under the supervision of the army.

As to whether Mr. Best, project director, made the statement to the effect that some of the stockade people will never be released, I have no recollection except the enclosed copy of the proclamation issued by Lt. Col. Verne Austin on December 4, 1943.

Hoping these will satisfactorily answer your questions.

Yours truly,


H. Tsuda