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GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

PRESS NOTICE



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BEFORE 3 30 pm 29 NOVEMBER 1971

RED CROSS REPORTS ON PLACES OF DETENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Copies of the Reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its visits to Long Kesh internment centre and Belfast Prison have been received by the Northern Ireland Government and are being placed in the Library of the Houses of Parliament at Westminster and Stormont.

The reports do not find fundamental fault with the accommodation and facilities available in the two establishments but they contain a number of recommendations for improving them. Action has already been taken to implement certain of the recommendations and others are under consideration.

It is a feature of the present system that a Board of Visitors is appointed for places in which persons are kept in custody and it has been decided to appoint a similar body at the Long Kesh internment centre.

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross propose to pay a further visit to Northern Ireland during the course of next month.

29 November 1971

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COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

R E P O R T

ON THE VISITS CARRIED OUT BY DELEGATES FROM THE

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

TO PLACES OF DETENTION IN

NORTHERN IRELAND

October 1971

LONG KESH INTERNMENT CAMP,
LISBURN, NORTHERN IRELAND

Report on the visit by Mr. Philippe Grand d'Hauteville, ICRC delegate, and Dr. François Leu, ICRC doctor-delegate, both of Swiss nationality.

Date of visit : 6 October 1971

Previous visit : None

Official in charge : Mr. W.R. Truesdale, Governor of the camp.

Location : Near the small town of Lisburn, some ten miles to the south-west of Belfast. The internment camp is in the centre of a military camp and is guarded and managed by prison personnel.

The camp, a rectangle 350 metres long and 160 metres wide, had been erected at the beginning of 1971 on the main runway of a disused aerodrome. The surface was broken and uneven and the delegates were disagreeably impressed by the pools of water which considerably reduced the space for the internees' exercise.

Long Kesh was surrounded by fences and barbed wire, with an observation post at each of the four corners. There were several meal huts (administration, "hospital", kitchens, visit hut, stores, etc.) and two enclosed compounds, each with metal huts used as dormitories, mess-rooms and ablutions rooms.

The Governor informed the delegates that the camp arrangements were not complete. Three new internment compounds, a playing ground and a number of technical changes were under way.

Capacity : According to the Governor's estimate 110.

Number of Internees : 180 (60 in compound No. 1 and 120 in compound No 2)

Accommodation:

The two internment compounds should be considered as two miniature camps within the Long Kesh internment camp which was itself at the centre of a military camp of the same name.

1. a) The area within the iron fence surrounding compound No. 1 was about 1,500 square metres (30 x 50 metres). Within it there were :
 - a metal hut 20 m x 8 m in which there were 40 internees
 - a metal hut 20 m x 8 m divided into two parts, one occupied by 20 internees, the other being used as a mess. The total number of inmates in the compound therefore was 60.
 - a smaller hut for ablutions, with 9 WCs, 12 washhand basins and 9 showers.
- b) The area within the iron fence surrounding compound No. 2 was similar. It contained :
 - 3 metal huts, each 20 m x 8 m and occupied by 40 internees, i.e. 120 men in all.
 - 1 hut of the same size used as a mess-room.
 - 1 smaller metal hut used for ablutions: 9 WCs, 12 wash-hand basins and 9 showers.
2. Four dormitory huts were occupied by 40 internees and one (in compound No. 1) by 20 internees. Furniture consisted of army beds in tiers, a small cupboard for each internee, several small tables, chairs and armchairs.

Each hut had 10 windows measuring about 1.20 m x 0.80 m, only the central pane (0.40 x 0.25) of which could be opened. In the delegates' opinion the ventilation was insufficient for the number of occupants. Each hut had four electric heaters. The main being overloaded, only half of the heaters could be used.

The internees pointed out that the joints of some huts were not waterproof and that during the frequent heavy showers, rain leaked into the huts. The complaint was passed on to the Governor.