THE AGENCY'S GAZE

1870-2020

150 YEARS FIGHTING FOR MORE HUMANITY IN WAR

20 April 1942, the first time in the...

United States

irst-ish, anyway | Officially, the ICRC's first visit to prisoners on American soil took place on 20 April 1942, when the head of the ICRC's delegation in the United States, Marc Peter, visited civilian internees at Fort Meade, in Maryland. Unofficially, however, Peter had already inspected the Ellis Island immigration station, near New York City, in March. Ellis Island held so-called enemy aliens who had been arrested by federal law enforcement.



List of Japanese civilian Interne

Because stays on the island were generally brief, Peter didn't see the use in writing a report on his visit, although he did send a telegram to the ICRC. On 6 April Peter visited the East Boston immigration station, in Massachusetts, where he encountered a couple dozen German, Italian and Japanese citizens

who would later be either released or transferred to an official internment camp. Peter said nothing of that visit.



he **Germans** keep out the rain, the Italians complain | And so, because the first report is

Delegate Marc Peter from Fort Meade, it is there that marks the start of the ICRC's work on behalf of detainees in the United States. The camp housed a few hundred civilian internees in tents, mostly Germans but also Italians and Japanese. While the Germans and the Italians lived together, the Japanese were held separately. The German internees didn't cause any trouble for the American military personnel in charge - true, some gave the Nazi salute when they first arrived at the camp, but once they were told it was forbidden, they followed orders. The Germans also took charge of fixing up their tents. This was in contrast to the Italian internees, who, as the guards told it, were much less "industrious": they complained that their tents let in the wind and the rain without doing anything about it themselves. They also claimed that Americans interned in Italy (because of reprisals) were much luckier than they were.

■ IME, DPM & DGON

ACICR

Le camp des internés est carré et diade-en un deporte dia da type camp romais, beur grandes allées, avec intercettion contrale, ségarant les quatre sectures A. p. (Aff. Dans de que secture), est est d'abitation sont alignées de «1-suffiguement l'Étime».

Chaque dee secteurs est commandé par un officier suquel sont adjoints deux sous-officiers. Ce sont de ces trois hommes que 4761 -1 JUIN 1945 Etats-Unis d'Amérique

Visite d'un camp d'internés civils aux Etats-Unis, faite par M. Marc Peter, délégué du Comité international Camp "Fort Georges Meade" (Allemands, Italiens, Japonais)

20 avril 1942,

Le camp Georges Meade est une place d'armes dont une partie seule-nent a été transformée en secteur d'internement placé sous la garde du ninistère de la Guerre.

Le terrain sur lequel le camp d'internés a été établi est sablonneux, lanté de bouquets de pins; le sol sèche rapidement et, en été, les internés uront un peu d'ombre. Des emplacements suffisants pour pratiquer es sports et, en tous cas, pour prendre de l'exercice sont mis à leur isnosition.

Asposition.

Le camp des internées est carré et rappelle la disposition d'un camp main. Deux grandes allées, avec intersection centrale, séparent les uatre secteurs A. B. C. et D. Dans chaque secteur, les tentes d'habitation int alignées en files suffissamment éloignées les unes des autres. Le siteur a l'impression d'un village de tentes avec une rue principale, eux bâtiments allongés, et d'un seul étage, construits en briques remnet les deux extrémités de cette une entrale dans chaque secteur, un sert de cuisine et, à l'opposé, le bâtiment jumeau contient les latrines, ouches et buanderie. Actuellement, seuls les secteurs A, C et D sont

Review of the Red Cross

Source: ICRC Archives