

FOREIGN OFFICE

(CLAIMS)

FILE NO. HNP 1195.

Name of File :—

W.H. LAINE.

[illegible]

Previous File No.:.....



COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES

3548 Arolsen (Waldeck) Allemagne

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

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3548 Arolsen (Waldeck) Deutschland

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HNP/1195. (A)
Arolsen, 4th December 1964

Our Ref.: TD-932 252

Your Ref.: HNP/763 (HG 11811/18)

The Foreign Office

L O N D O N, S.W. 1
England

Re: W.H. LAIME

Dear Sirs,

With reference to your letter dated 4th November 1964, please be advised that the following information is contained in our records:

LAINE, Walter, born 27 April 1918 in St. Peter Port, Nationality: British or French, - was in the "Strafanstalt Frankfurt/Main-Preungesheim" in the year 1943 (exact date unknown). Document 1303/43 issued by the "Strafanstalt Frankfurt/M.-Preungesheim". Prisoner's Register Book No. 1363/43 of the "Strafanstalt Frankfurt/Main-Preungesheim". He was imprisoned in the "Polizeigefängnis Frankfurt/Main" since 11 November 1944. (Reference No.: 10209 IV 1c2).

Documents consulted: Nominal list established by the "Strafanstalt Frankfurt/Main-Preungesheim"; Nominal list established by the "Oberstaatsanwalt Frankfurt/Main"; "Gefangenenliste" established by the "Polizeigefängnis" in Frankfurt/Main.

Yours sincerely,

N. Burckhardt

N. Burckhardt
Director of the I.T.S.

Go

Walter Henry LAINE, "Carolina", Houmtel, Vale, Guernsey, C.I.
October 1964.

At the beginning of June 1943 I was arrested by the Gestapo in Guernsey and charged with retaining my wireless-set contrary to German orders, listening to the B.B.C. and conveying the news to others. I was put into the Guernsey prison on June 24, 1943 and when tried by the German Tribunal in the Royal Court was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. I did about four weeks of this in the local jail before being taken to an annexe of Dijon, a place called Hauteville. Here we had French guards and a German chief and this was the beginning of my period on starvation diet. We were not permitted to receive either Red Cross messages or letters, and no parcels ever got through to us.

Then on December 19, 1943 I was taken to Saarbrücken prison where I stayed just over three weeks before being transferred to the Strafgefängnis F.F.M., Frankfurt-on-Main where I served most of my sentence under S.S. guards. I was in solitary confinement, except when working in a shed in one of the prison yards and here I worked on nuts and bolts which were used for the construction and repair of German tanks. I don't think International Law permits a prisoner of the Germans doing this work, but I had no choice but to do it, along with two other Guernseymen, Norman Dexter and Gerald Domaille.

On completing my sentence, on October 25, 1944 I was taken to another prison in Frankfurt and given my own clothes and so little food that I could not live on it.

Fortunately the Allies' advance into Germany forced the Nazis to take all of us out of prison on a forced march into the interior of Germany and it was while on this that I met up with my two friends from Frankfurt, Dexter and Domaille. When we reached Straubing I was put in prison again and there I met another young Guernseyman, Sydney Ashcroft, to whom I refer in the enclosed letter.

In all the time I was in prison I was never given a number. Finally I was released on April 30, 1945 by the advancing American Army. All the time I was in prison I, along with the others, was subjected to the most appalling treatment, mainly by being starved and at the slightest provocation, beaten. I was denied every human right such as Red Cross letters and parcels and medical attention. On our forced march across Germany many of those on it died through starvation, malnutrition or utter exhaustion, and if they fell by the wayside they were just left there to die. Fortunately, I survived, though I was in very poor shape.

I must stress that when I had completed my sentence the Nazis were supposed to send me on to the internment camp at Laufen, but, obviously, though they had time to do this before the Americans reached Frankfurt, they had no intention of doing so and in all they detained me about six months over my sentence. I did, therefore, 22 months instead of 15.

When I was taken to prison in Frankfurt I was accompanied by another wireless-set offender from Guernsey, Mr. Percy Miller, who was driven mad by the Nazis and died, raving mad, in his cell. While I was at Frankfurt-on-Main prison other Guernseymen there included Norman Dexter, Gerald Domaille, Frank Falla, Cyril Duquemin and Ernest Legg; while the bunch of Jersey men there included the late Canon Clifford Cohu and Joseph Tierney. Other Jersey men died at Naumburg and I saw no more of Joseph Gillingham after he left Frankfurt.

Note: I would refer you to the copy enclosed of a letter three of us sent to the War Office towards the end of 1945.

Guernsey, October 1964.

(signed).....

(Walter Henry Laine)

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HNP./1195.

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A BRITISH
VICTIM OF NAZI PERSECUTION

- N.B.—1. Before completing this form it is important to read carefully the attached Notes for Guidance and then to answer all questions fully.
2. Please attach all documentary evidence to the form. All documents sent will be returned.
 3. All applications must be received before the 31st of July, 1965.
 4. Acceptance of an application for registration does not constitute a right to participate in the distribution.

SECTION ONE—IDENTITY

Surname

Laine

Other names

Walter Henry.

Address

Caroline

Houmtel Vale.

Guernsey C.I.

SECTION TWO—NATIONALITY

1. How did you acquire British nationality?

(Please write YES opposite the method that applies and delete the others)

(a) By birth?

Yes.

(If so, please attach birth certificate)

(b) By marriage?

(If so, please attach marriage certificate and birth or naturalisation certificate of husband)

(c) By naturalisation?

(If so, please attach certificate)

(d) By some other method?

(If so, please give full details)

2. If you are not British by birth what was your previous nationality?

Do you still retain that nationality?

If not, when and how did you lose it?

(Please attach all documentary evidence)

3. If you are a dual-national—

(a) Where were you ordinarily resident on the 9th of June, 1964?.....

(Please attach all available evidence, e.g., receipts for rent or rates, &c.)

(b) Have you been in Crown Service under Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom?
(If so, please give full details and dates)

(c) Are you the holder of a British passport? (If so, please give number and full details)

SECTION THREE—PERSECUTION

1. Please give, on a separate sheet, the following details of your imprisonment:

- (a) Name of camp or other place of detention, its situation, its general conditions and régime;
- (b) Dates of imprisonment and of release; prison number; reasons for imprisonment and circumstances in which it arose;
- (c) If you are suffering permanent disability as a result of treatment received during your imprisonment please give full details of its nature and cause;
- (d) Any other information you consider useful and relevant.
(Please attach all documentary evidence)

2. Have you at any time received any payment in respect of this persecution?..... *None*
(If YES please give full details)

I HEREBY DECLARE that all the above statements are to the best of my knowledge and recollection true in all particulars.

Signature..... *M. H. Laine*

Date..... *24 / 10 / 64*

COPY.

W. H. Lainé,
4 Park Street,
St. Peter Port,
Guernsey, C.I.
23/10/45.

To Whom it may Concern, War Office.

Sirs, ---- We the undersigned are writing on these three following subjects: Firstly we feel sure the anxiety and suspense of the undersigned Mrs. Ashcroft is something you will understand regarding her son, Sydney Ashcroft, who was imprisoned by the enemy three years ago for the offence of returning a blow to a German soldier and stealing food from a German kitchen. Such acts the enemy drove the civilian population to do. The young man was 24 years of age, height 6ft. 3in. had blue eyes, fair hair, when last seen was scantily clothed in torn dark-grey flannels and a sports coat with 2 or 3 buttons, colour unknown.

I the undersigned Walter Lainé was the last known person to see him when we were at prison in Straubing in Germany where we had arrived after rail transport from Frankfurt. The exact address I don't know, but it is a very big prison, either in or so close to a railway as to have trains run to some of the entrances. I'm sure the authorities concerned will know it. On the morning of 24th April 1945 about 4,800 civil political and criminal prisoners were lined up in the prison yard and the director of the prison picked out the worst cases of illness, weak, or most wretched-looking persons. Sydney Ashcroft was put with them. Although his condition was poor, had he been given the same food as we had to eat what little he could have eaten as his throat was troubling him, as far as I can judge he would have lived at least a week. Hoping some of the prison staff, especially the chiefs have been rounded up. I am sure the right authorities could have them answer as to what was done with the group of sick men on the morning of 24th April. Should he be dead then it is possible he was murdered in some brutal manner such as being gassed or shot. Finally we would like to point out we, Sydney Ashcroft, Norman Dexter and Walter Lainé had all finished our sentences and were being kept in prison, treated as though we were criminals.

The second matter is about 15 to 20 Anglo-American parachutists who were imprisoned in Strafgefängnis Prengesheim, Frankfurt-on-Main from about July 8th to September 1st, 1944. These dates are not exact but it was during that period. Only three of the men did we see. Their names were impossible to get, but should the matter be of interest to your esteemed department I could describe the three men, two of whom were American and 1 an Englishman. After being about 11 weeks on half rations, the paratroopers (they were dressed in civilian clothing) were taken from the prison we don't know where. Should they be lost we are willing I may say eager to answer any question we can.

Finally we, Norman Dexter and Walter Lainé were imprisoned for having a wireless receiving set and accused of spreading propaganda. Dexter 18 months, Lainé 15 months, same offence. On finishing the 15 months on the 25th October, 1944, I, Walter Lainé was again imprisoned in solitary confinement in the Police-Gefängnis in the town of Frankfurt-on-Main. Although not told so, I believe the reason was as I did not volunteer to work in the factories as a worker of liberty I am sure, Sirs, the injustice done to prisoners was inhuman and outside all international law. Norman Dexter was treated likewise having finished his sentence about two weeks before the evacuation of Frankfurt-on-Main prisons the whole story of our endurance is too long to tell as I know, Sirs, briefness is necessary. We the undersigned would like information if there is any possibility of the enemy having to pay compensation through the British Government to such people as ourselves as I'm sure if international law doesn't cover such acts as committed by the enemy. On all three questions we will do our utmost to help should this correspondence be accepted for inquiry. Meanwhile, Sirs, we remain in anticipation, your sincere and obedient servants (signed) W. H. Lainé, Norman Dexter, Mrs. H. Ashcroft.