

**INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT**

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

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COUNTRY	USSR/China/Germany (Soviet Zone)	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Repatriation of German Members of the French Foreign Legion Captured in Vietnam to the GDR	DATE DISTR.	24 August 1955
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This is UNEVALUATED Information

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

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1. In early April 1955, 350 German members of the French Foreign Legion who were taken prisoner in Vietnam were repatriated to the Soviet Zone of Germany through Communist China and the USSR. Some of these Legionnaires had fought with the Vietnamese forces against the French and one individual had been personally decorated for bravery by Ho Chi Minh. The repatriated Legionnaires were brought in stages to an unidentified point north of the Chinese border. They covered approximately 1,000 kilometers on foot at an average of 20 kilometers per day. The group moved to the Soviet - Manchurian border by rail. On 25 March 1955, the Legionnaires were turned over to GDR representatives at Otpor, USSR.
2. The Legionnaires moved through the USSR in a single-engine eight-car train over the following route: Otpor, Chita, Ulan Ude, Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Sverdlovsk, Kirov, Yaroslavl, and Velikiye Luki to Brest. They then passed through Warsaw, Kutno, Poznan, to Frankfurt an der Oder and finally to a quarantine camp at Bischofswerda, East Germany.
3. The quarantine camp at Bischofswerda was located 500 to 600 meters from the railroad station. The Legionnaires were met by civilians from the camp and three members of the Volkspolizei and were split into three groups. The Legionnaires were to be confined to the quarantine camp for a period of four to six weeks.
4. While in China, the Legionnaires stated, they were attended by Chinese medical personnel and received good food in unrestricted amounts. However, while traveling through the USSR, they were restricted to a daily rate of 35 rubles per individual.
5. Almost all of the Legionnaires were ill and 90 percent of them had scabies. Typhoid, malaria, amoebic and bacillic dysentery, etc., were rife. The Legionnaires ranged in age between 16 and 43 or 44 years.

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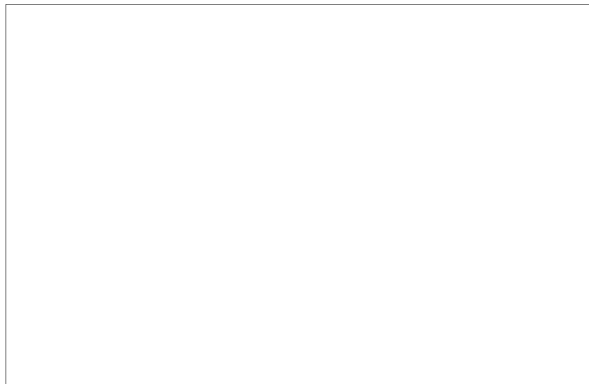
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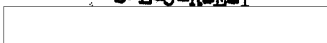
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6. Several East German officials connected with the repatriation estimated that only 50 of the 350 repatriated Legionnaires would be acceptable and adaptable for normal society; another 100 to 150 men, although looking for an easy way of life without any effort, may be able to settle down to civilian life; while the rest were confirmed soldiers and many of these were morally depraved. Prior experience has shown that about twenty to forty percent of the Legionnaires previously repatriated to East Germany eventually returned to the Foreign Legion.



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