



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
Op215/11f
Ser 5144F21

Nov 4, 55

Dear Mr. Stein:

Your letter of 27 July 1955 requesting information concerning the leprosarium on Tinian was referred to the Naval Administrator at Saipan, Mariana Islands. The Administrator of the Naval Administration Unit at Saipan has furnished the information you requested in his letter to you of 17 October 1955 which is forwarded herewith.

I trust the information supplied in the enclosure will meet your requirements. Should you find it necessary to make further requests for information, may I suggest that the correspondence be addressed to the Chief of Naval Operations in order to facilitate a prompt reply.

Sincerely yours,

151 Monroe B. Huffell

Mr. Stanley Stein
The Star
Garville, Louisiana

Encl:

- (1) Letter from Naval Administrator, U.S. Naval Administration Unit, Saipan District, Saipan, Mariana Islands serial 1051 dated 17 October 1955

ORIG by Major L. V. SWENSON OP-215B
X-54418 11/3/55 Felker
RS #38671

THE FILE

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1955, 1951

July 17, 1955

Medical Director
Finsen Leprosarium, Marianne
Navy 3245
Box 150, 5/ P. O. Box
San Francisco, California

Dear Sir:

From time to time readers of the Star, as well as visitors, ask the question, "Is this the only hospital of its kind in the United States?" To which we always reply, "Yes, in continental United States." Because of the interest in this subject we are planning to compile a lead article for an early issue of the Star under the caption something like this: "Capital for Hansen's disease under the American flag." The only such compilation I can find in our files is one issued by the Leonard Wood Memorial, "Notes on Leprosaria of the United States and Territories, February, 1950."

In the Leonard Wood Memorial notes we find: "Finsen Leprosarium, Marianne, Trust Territory of the Pacific operated by the Navy. Established in 1948 with 53 patients brought from Y. I. in the Carolines where they had been collected from the Marianas, Marshalla, Eastern and Western Carolines. The staff consists of one Naval Medical officer, one warrant officer, four nurses and five native nurses. Operating cost expected to be about \$100,000 annually."

Could you please bring this information up to date for me as of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1955, and any other pertinent data you wish to include. We should particularly like to know:

1. How many patients were under treatment at this hospital on July 1, 1955.
2. What drugs are employed.
3. How many patients discharged annually.
4. Do you have a rehabilitation program.

We should like to have several pictures (glossy prints, please) of the hospital there as we plan on illustrating the article.

Your cooperation is warmly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Stanley Stein
Stanley Stein,
Editor

CEN:mst
M3-2/1
Ser 1051

17 OCT 1955

Mr. Stanley Stein
The Star
Carville, Louisiana

My dear Mr. Stein:

I have received your letter of 27 July 1955 and will endeavor to provide you with as much information as possible concerning the former leprosarium on Tinian, Marianas Islands.

Subsequent to the establishment of the leprosarium in 1948 by the U.S. Navy, the facility was officially turned over to the Department of the Interior. On 1 January 1953 the Navy resumed the responsibility for the leprosarium.

It is from the latter date that I shall attempt to familiarize you with the leprosarium.

There were, on 1 January 1953, approximately eighty-five (85) active lepers confined in the leprosarium. The village itself was situated about one hundred yards from the shoreline on the side of a hill. The site was typical of a semi-tropical island. The patients were assigned either by families or else four (4) persons to one house.

At one time the medical staff consisted of one Navy Medical Officer, one enlisted hospital corpsman, and five indigenous employees, one of whom was a discharged, arrested leper. Eventually the Naval Officer was relieved with no replacement. Medical support was then furnished by assigning a Saipanese Indigenous Medical Practitioner to the leprosarium on a thirty day basis. At the same time a Navy Medical Officer from Saipan made periodic visits to Tinian to assure that the patients were receiving the best possible care.

To make life as pleasant as possible for these patients a colony store was set up to be operated by one of the leper patients. The store provided an abundance of material including food, soft drinks, toilet articles, tobacco, etc.

In order to allow the patients to have money to make necessary purchases at the store and to reimburse them for assisting in the maintenance and upkeep of the colony and its buildings, money in the form of a gratuity was appropriated. Each patient was paid up to ten (\$10.00) dollars a month. Each patient was given part time employment according to his capabilities. Those unable to work were given the minimum gratuity.

ENCLOSURE (2)

CEM:mst
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With reference to medication, I am informed by our Medical Officer that the greatest success in treating this affliction was obtained by using Sulfone drugs in combination with streptomycin and hydrazid.

From the approximate 85 patients confined on 1 January 1953 there remained only 19 in the colony on 30 June 1955. All others had been returned to their homes as arrested cases, except one patient who died. The arrested cases were to continue taking the Sulfone drug for two (2) years with periodic skin biopsies.

When the patients were sent to their home islands as arrested cases word was sent along to the effect that they were not dangerous to others and it was requested that every effort be made to allow them to resume a normal community life. In our own infirmary we employ one of these arrested cases. There is no stigma to the man and he is allowed to live a normal life.

With reference to diet, the lepers received a well balanced diet but no special diet. All of them seemed to thrive on the food provided. Three (3) items were requested and consumed in rather large amount. These were fresh eggs, rice and sugar.

During the past summer, official orders were received from higher authority that provisions had been made in the home districts of the patients to receive them and that the leprosarium was to be closed.

During the first two weeks in August 1955 all the patients were transferred to their home districts and the leprosarium was officially closed. The leprosarium was then burned in its entirety. I regret that we are without available photographs to send you.

Many of the lepers had a feeling of mixed emotions when it was time to leave Tinian. They wanted to return home but on the other hand they did not want to leave the leprosarium.

I sincerely hope that this information will be of assistance to you and your publication.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. MILLER
Commander, USNR
Naval Administrator

CEM:ccc
A6-5/M3-1/Leprosy
Ser: 1053
17 Oct 1955

MR. STANLEY STEIN
Editor, The Star
Garville, Louisiana

Dear Mr. Stein:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter to the Medical Director, Tinian Leprosarium, Marianas dated July 27, 1955, which was received from the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery by me on October 4, 1955.

The information you requested is being compiled and will be forwarded to you as soon as possible by the Navy Department.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. MILLER
Commander, USNR
Naval Administrator

ENCLOSURE (3)