

From Samoa to Somes and back.
The Internment of Father Albert Merten sm and Brother Joseph (Julius) Krieger sm
during World War II

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The internment of Father Albert Merten sm (1905-1991) and Brother Joseph Krieger sm (1900-1972) during World War II (1939-1945)¹ is just one aspect of the complex web of war stories of the German Marists in the Pacific and of the broader historical context. After first safety measures in Samoa they were transferred to Somes Island,² New Zealand. This article tries to reconstruct the events of their internment based on related archival documents,³ and so to illustrate one fate of Marist missionaries during war times.

The many different state and church institutions involved

The story of Merten and Krieger leads through different countries, continents, and various political and ecclesiastical institutions creating a complexity of documents the authorities had to deal with regarding internment of so-called enemy aliens.⁴

Merten and Krieger were missionaries on Western Samoa. The New Zealand Acting Administrator, Alfred Clarke Turnbull, ordered internment. He had consulted his colleagues on American Samoa. Bishop Joseph Darnand (1879-1962), a French Marist, Apostolic Vicar, intervened on behalf of his men with the Marist provincial in New Zealand and Thomas O'Shea (1870-1954), archbishop of Wellington, also a Marist. The Samoan chiefs are not mentioned in the files. To refer to the Marist mission we use 'Samoa' only.

Many New Zealand departments had to collect information, prepare and make decisions during those war years. The prime minister was approached by the Marists twice. Michael Joseph Savage (1872-1940) had been prime minister when the New Zealand government declared war on the axis powers together with Great Britain. His successor was Peter Fraser (1884-1950), in office from 27 March 1940 until 13 December 1949.⁵ Staff of his office, A.G. Osborne, under-secretary, and Foss Shanahan, secretary to the war cabinet answered letters.⁶ The Department for Island Territories, esp. C. McKay, secretary,⁷ who had knowledge of Samoa, communicated with the Administrator in Samoa and respective offices in New Zealand like the Department of External

¹ For a first narrative: Bronwyn Chapman, *German Marist Experiences in New Zealand and Samoa*, thesis, University of Auckland, 2013, on Merten and Krieger, and Fathers Peter and Louis Schwehr. For Merten and Krieger, she quotes from their letters to Bishop Darnand about life in the two camps. Accessed 30 October 2017: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/eld3vngg3znj9ji/Chapman.pdf?dl=0>.

² The island's indigenous and English-language name is Matiu/Somes Island. I follow the historical documents which use 'Somes Island' only. Already during World War I an internment camp was on the island. In 1947, the World War II camp was torn down. Chronology on the camps based on David McGill, David, *Island of Secrets. Matiu/Somes Island in Wellington Harbour*, Wellington, Steele Roberts, 2001, p. 89: www.oocities.org/somesprisonersnz/chronologyww.2.html. Accessed online on 29 October 2017.

³ See the appendix for the references to archival material and the use of IMG in the footnotes.

⁴ Some background information from Nancy M. Taylor, *The Home Front*, Volume II, Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, 1986 (The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945), accessed online on 30 September 2017, chapter 18 'Aliens'. Cf. chapter 19, 'Censorship'. My small contribution cannot cover the context of Samoa, New Zealand, Somes Island, and so on.

⁵ Wikipedia, accessed 11 August 2017. Fraser was partly also involved in his other roles as minister for external affairs and for Island Territories.

⁶ Foss Shanahan (1910-1964), committed Catholic, anti-Communist attitude, Prime minister's department, war cabinet, coordinating war efforts, secretary chiefs of staff committee; Ian McGibbon in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 2000, here online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Te Ara*, accessed 16 May 2018.

⁷ The Department of Island Territories (1919-1975) was tasked with administrating New Zealand's three Pacific Islands territories: the [Cook Islands](#) (until 1965), [Niue](#), and [Tokelau](#), and the country's [League of Nations mandate Samoa](#) (until 1962). Since 1975 its work is done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ministers of Island Territories: Peter Fraser, First Labour Government (1944-1949), [Frederick Doidge](#), [First National Government](#) (1950). Wikipedia, accessed 16 May 2018.

Affairs⁸ and the Department of Justice. Interned and released in the country Merten and Krieger became subjects to the New Zealand justice system. Henry Greathead Rex Mason (1885-1975), Minister of Justice for the Dominion of New Zealand, had to decide about internment, release or other measures. His under-secretary, B. L. Dallard looked after the correspondence. Involved was the Minister in Charge of Aliens, W. Perry (since September 1943) with his under-secretary Frank Findlay (1883-1945). Other ministers were involved like the minister of transport who was approached to speak in favor of Merten. The Customs Department came in action for people entering and leaving and for temporary permits. Various police departments (Wellington, Napier, Taradale) had to supervise internees on parole. The censor, Doctor R. A. Lochore,⁹ a linguist employed in postal censorship had interviews with the internees and his reports were important for or against a release. Intelligence intervened on behalf of internal security. The secretaries handled the correspondence and drafted recommendations or decisions by their respective minister.

The Aliens Appeal Tribunal was appointed on 8 July 1940 and began work in August.¹⁰ Mr. Justice J.B. Callan, was the chairman,¹¹ and Claude H. Weston¹² and James Henry Collins,¹³ were members. They complained about the amount of work – about 2300 cases. They had to examine and classify the enemy aliens. The regulations were amended on 8 August 1940. Reasons for internment or release were in many ways left to the tribunal. Enemy aliens were classified according to five categories, A to E with later subdivisions and changes. Class A were to be interned immediately as supporters of Nazism or Fascism. Classes B and C were persons to be interned if an invasion threatened. Class D were to be surveyed but not interned as not dangerous because of age or illness. Class E were those regarded as loyal and there were no restrictions for them. In practice, classification was not so clear cut.

Besides the camp on Somes Island, we have the commander of Camp Pahiatua, near Masterton, R.H. Perrett, Major N.Z.S.C. Gerd von Zeddelmann was the speaker for the German internees on Somes Island. The number of internees varied. By June 1940, there were 16 plus 15 from Samoa. Italy entered the war that month and so 30 Italians arrived. In December 1943, it had 133 internees, in 1944 about 61, and in September 1945 still 47. After Italy became an ally, the Italians were released. Others left as the war in the Pacific moved away from the south. Five Germans returned to Samoa in June 1944.¹⁴

Merten and Krieger were asked about their adherence to the German Reich “as it is today”. Merten denied adherence and refused financial aid from Germany. Krieger accepted this money. Their correspondence was read by the censor. Father Valentin Antczak sm (1904-1978), Germany, received letters from the Marists dispersed through the war and published excerpts as circulars to keep the confreres informed. This circular letter was called *Unifra*, Latin for *unio fraterna*, fraternal unity. The censor was not sure if Antczak is a relative or friend and whether the correspondence contains secret code words or not.

An institution both Marists accepted to work with was the International Red Cross. Merten mentioned that he received parcels from the German Red Cross.

Church authorities got involved in various countries. In New Zealand, the archbishop of Wellington, the Marist provincial, local Marist superiors, the mission procurator, and other confreres helped as did their lawyer. Friends and supporters of the Marists intervened. The

⁸ Ministers: [Michael Joseph Savage](#), [First Labour Government](#) (1936-1940), [Frank Langstone](#) (First Labour Government (1941-1942), [Peter Fraser](#), First Labour Government (1943). Wikipedia, accessed 16 May 2018.

⁹ See R. A. Lochore, *From Europe to New Zealand; an Account of our Continental European Settlers*, [Wellington](#).

¹⁰ Taylor, *Home Front*.

¹¹ R17961882 (IMG 3147), McKay, Island Territories, 19 September 1944, to Administrator Samoa, points out that Callan, a Roman Catholic, thinks there is no suitable work for Merten in New Zealand.

¹² Weston (1879-1946), crown prosecutor New Plymouth, Auckland, and Wellington.

¹³ Collins (1897-1970), born in England, soldier in WW I, to New Zealand in the early 1920s, trade unionist.

¹⁴ Figures from Taylor, *Home Front*, chapter 18.

apostolic delegate for New Zealand and Australia¹⁵ was approached. The general house in Rome was informed by the provincial of Oceania. Father Dr. Victor Humphrey Geaney SM (1885-1959) was the provincial, residing in Boulcott Street, Wellington.¹⁶ His successor was Father Thomas Matthew Heffernan (1887-1969). Father Michael Andrew Murphy (1884-1955)¹⁷ was procurator, responsible for finances. Bernard Chapman was rector at the Marist Seminary in Greenmeadows, Hawkes Bay, from 1942-1946. Both Germans will eventually stay there after they left the Marist community in Highden near Palmerston North. The police stations next to those communities were kept busy writing reports about the aliens!

Not only Catholic authorities but also the Anglicans tried to find church help for their internees. The Anglican Bishop of Polynesia, L.S. Kempthorne, was asked to help.¹⁸

All the officials involved faced a complex bureaucratic process.¹⁹ They carefully followed the legislation, drew on consultations and experts, asked for more information, organized meetings, and tried to come to responsible decisions in a time of war. Merten and Krieger finally could leave the internment, stay with confreres in New Zealand, and eventually returned to their beloved mission field.

The Marist Mission on Western Samoa and World War II

In 1845, the Marists established the first permanent Roman Catholic mission in Samoa. By 1939, Marist Darnand was the bishop, assisted by Fathers, lay Brothers, and Marist Teaching Brother and Sisters. Albert Merten was born in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on 6 January 1905. He was professed a Marist in 1926 and ordained a priest on 28 April 1929. Merten died in Samoa on 25 October 1991. He had left Germany in June 1933.²⁰ For about eight weeks he stayed in England and Ireland to learn English. Next he spent six weeks in Rome. In Naples he got on a boat for Sydney where he stayed three weeks. On board the S.S. *Monterrey* he came to Apia on 24 January 1934. His passport with the respective stamps is still held by Archives New Zealand.²¹ Merten was then stationed in Falealupo, Savai'i Island.

Julius Krieger was born in Deggendorf, on 27 July 1900.²² On 10 May 1923 he was professed as a lay brother and received the name Joseph. He was a cook in different houses (Niederachdorf,

¹⁵ Giovanni *Panico* (1895-1962), apostolic delegate to Australia and New Zealand from 17 October 1935 to 1948, then in Peru, Canada, and finally Portugal. Wikipedia, accessed 16 May 2018.

¹⁶ List of provincials: Daniel Hurley, 1935-September 1938; Geaney September 1938-1944; Thomas Heffernan 1945-1950; cf. Peter J. Ewart sm (ed.), *The Society of Mary in New Zealand 1838. 1889-1989 - Aspects of the Apostolates of the Society of Mary in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1989.

¹⁷ Geaney: provincial, then at Wanganui and Mt. Albert; Heffernan: parish priest in Christchurch, from 1945 also Master of Second Novices; Merten will be in one of his groups; Murphy: chaplain in World War I; Procurator from October 1943 to 1950; See *Marist Taonga. A Biographic Necrology of Members of the Society of Mary, associated with New Zealand*, as at 31st December 2012, for private circulation. Other Marists helped as well.

¹⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3170) Diocese of Polynesia, Apia, 21 March 1944, to Chaplain in Western Samoa, Rev. C.W. Whonsbon-Aston: asks for help from the Primate for internees who are members of their church. "One person has remarked 'If they had been British in Germany, there would have been no mercy shewn.' But that is just one of the main points of British propaganda, that our methods are not those of the Nazi"; R17961882 (IMG 3169), Campbell, Christchurch, 13 April 1944, to Mason, Minister of Justice.

¹⁹ Some indicate the difficulty to keep track. R18388123 (IMG 2562) Callan, Tribunal; R17961882 (IMG 3109) Administration Samoa, 3.9.1945, to Secretary Island Territories: 'The recent correspondence was mislaid'. Many documents needed to be forwarded in copy to other institutions and therefore are kept in different archival folders. Here it is only about Merten and Krieger!

²⁰ R18388123 (IMG 2541-2543); Information by Merten himself for the New Zealand authorities during registration on board the *Matua* at arrival in Auckland, 10 May 1942. Also Chapman, *German Marist Experience*, on both in Germany, and Marist Archives Passau, and APM 1924 (personal file). *Alive in Memory*, p. 227, Merten: 54 years in Samoa, different appointments, mentions the internment; *Alive in Memory*, p. 74, Krieger: 20 years in Apia, then in Sydney as cook, died of cancer. This entry does not mention the internment.

²¹ Archives Reference No AL7 1; Container Code C 317 673 R2854206 (IMG 2658-1668.2670): Merten, passport, all pages, all visa from his journey to Samoa.

²² Archive Passau, personal file Krieger; R2854201 (IMG 2468) New Zealand police report with Krieger's dates; APM 1546 Krieger, Josef (personal file). From Naples on board the *Venimale* for Samoa on 23 November 1936; 6.5.1937 Moamoa; 1937-1952 Apia; 1952-1957 Apia; 1957 holiday in Germany; 1958-5 April 1972 Villa Maria;

Teterow). In at least three letters Br Joseph had applied for the foreign missions. Finally, he was accepted by the superior general, Ernest Rieu (1868-1953), in May 1937 and left the same autumn. He left before he had to join the German army. In 1937, he arrived and was stationed in Apia as cook. Joseph had learned enough English to communicate with the authorities. His problem will be the months he served as stoker in the German navy during World War I. Brother Joseph died in Sydney on 5 April 1972.

They were not the only German Marists but the only ones to be interned. Father Johannes Dieter (1903-1955) arrived in Samoa in 1935.²³ In 1939 he was stationed in Aleipata. He did not strike the Administrator as suspicious. Brother Werner Ossevorth (1907-1975), carpenter at Moamoa, was close to the bishop and so it was too sensitive to intern him. Also of the other Germans some could stay and others were interned. Brother Krieger will later complain ‘why was I interned and not the others’?

Turnbull and Samoan Security

Alfred Clarke Turnbull (1881-1962; 1942: Sir Turnbull), was a member of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force from 1916 to 1919.²⁴ From 25 July 1935 until 1943, Turnbull was Acting Administrator, and until February 1946 Administrator on Western Samoa.²⁵ Western Samoa had been a German colony since 1899. In 1920, the League of Nations gave New Zealand a mandate to administer Samoa. The Wellington Conference of 1938 had asked the islands to establish their own militia for defense. Turnbull and the Samoan chiefs realized Samoa could not defend itself. They would depend on the US military on American Samoa and so the US military got influence on their security measures. In the midst of all this Samoa saw a strong indigenous movement for self-government.²⁶

At the outbreak of World War II, Turnbull had about 42 Germans interned. In May 1942, more men, especially Germans, were sent to Somes Island.²⁷ It seems Turnbull preferred white people of influence through their religious ministry or pacifist attitude to be away from the island as he included Merten, Krieger, and Pastor Reye as well as anthropologist Derek Freeman. Freeman, a New Zealander, left voluntarily.²⁸ The others were interned.

The orders for internment for Merten and Krieger

New Zealand issued legislation about members of the Axis-Powers living in New Zealand or territories like Western Samoa. Merten and Krieger were mainly affected by the Dependency Emergency Regulations of 1939, in particular Amendment No. 4, and by the Aliens Emergency Regulations of 1940.

The file has papers on his formation and the letters applying for the foreign missions. There is other correspondence on his departure from Samoa and his time in Sydney. In 1957, while on holiday in Germany and preparing to return to Samoa, he received the news he is not wanted back! His age, his infirmities, his lack of religious spirit, and a lack of a meaningful work for him caused the superiors to refuse his return – another refusal after his experience after the internment.

²³ In 1953 he was appointed bishop of Samoa, consecrated in 1954, but died 28 June 1955.

²⁴ http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE18407103

Archives New Zealand, National Library Government New Zealand; File WW1 32552 Army

²⁵ Cf Wikipedia, ‘List of Colonial Governors of Samoa’; accessed on 24 August 2017.

²⁶ F.L.W. Wood, *Political and External Affairs* (The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War), Wellington, Historical Publications Branch, 1958, Chapter 23, ‘Trusteeship in Action’; accessed 23 April 2018. The present author did not research for this paper in respective US-archives for related documents.

²⁷ <http://germansinsamoa.net/78-2/>; accessed 24 August 2017; picture of Turnbull at a military parade in Apia 1943: “The Americans reportedly felt uncomfortable at the prospect of their troop dispositions taking place on an island where men of German descent were wandering free. As a result of this unease, 15 more men were taken into custody and sent to New Zealand, with most arriving at Somes Island in May, 1942, the same month that nearly 5,000 American troops stepped ashore in Samoa”.

²⁸ Derek Freeman (1916-2001), 1940-43 in Samoa, then voluntary military service with NZ Navy; later lecturer at Universities of Otago, Samoa, and Australian National University, Canberra; [Peter Hempenstall](#), *Derek Freeman at War*, in [Geoffrey G. Gray](#), [Christine Winter](#), [Doug Munro](#) (eds.), *Scholars at War: Australasian social scientists, 1939–1945* (ANU Lives Series in Biography), ANU Press, 2012, 169-186.

Brother Joseph, Father Merten, and others were interned in Apia, from 3rd September to 3rd October, 1939. The later police report gives the argument of the administrator:²⁹

“By his serviced experience in German Navy he is capable of becoming a potential danger. His actions – so far as they are known – have given no cause for suspicion.

Acting Administrator’s comments: - It is said that Krieger is harmless, but I do not share this view. His sympathies are decidedly for Axis and I am not prepared to take responsibility of having him at large.”

This becomes the key-line for future decisions, especially the delay to release Brother Joseph from internment, as the different authorities received copies of this statement.

The attack on Pearl Harbour of 7 December 1941 brought war to the Pacific. The rapid advance of the Japanese forces spread the fear they will target New Zealand. By May 1942, the Japanese army had attacked Darwin in Australia and had reached the South Solomons with the fights on Guadalcanal. The prospect was dim. Allied Forces made base on Fiji, Wallis,³⁰ Samoa, and so on, and began to counteract the Japanese advance.

Turnbull wanted Merten brought onto the main island, Upolu, for better surveillance. Bishop Darnand thus informed Merten with a letter from 18 March 1942. Darnand asked Merten not to be upset too much.³¹

The internment of members of missionary societies Turnbull described as a problem – and this was prophetic. In a secret telegram, he added another source for his suspicions:³²

“SECRET. In consultation with General commanding U.S. Forces recommend internment New Zealand part of fifteen to twenty German nationals, unable to prove specific acts of disaffection but we are both of opinion potential danger fifth column activities necessitates this action. If Government approves could arrangements be made for transport “Maui Pomare” on next “Matua”? Listed for consideration are Meyer, Pastor Reye, Father Merten, Brother Joseph, and several part Samoans.”

A more serious measure followed a month later. In a letter from 28 April 1942, Turnbull informed Darnand about ‘instruments in time of war’: Two of your workers are temporarily deprived of their freedom. This has nothing to do with Turnbull’s personal feelings, he acts out of duty.³³ Turnbull ordered 18 Germans, among those Merten and Krieger, for internment under military authority in New Zealand on 29 April 1942.³⁴ Two stayed behind because of illness.

On the first of May, Turnbull sent a Memorandum to the Minister of External Affairs, Wellington, concerning the internees.³⁵ He underlined the consultation done. The decision was especially delicate in view of mission societies, here for Pastor Reye of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission and Father Morton [sic] and Brother Joseph of the Marist Mission:

“...I would add that, in accordance with your radio above, quoted, the decision to intern these Germans was made only after very careful enquiry and consideration. I was guided by the reports of responsible officers and by my own knowledge of the situation. I have also been in close consultation with the American Military authorities who are in agreement with the action taken. I would, however, like to comment on my recommendations to intern three members of Mission Societies. I refer to Pastor Roye [sic] of the seventh Day Adventist Mission and Father Merten and Brother Joseph of the Marist Mission. The task is distasteful enough in itself and I have had to put aside my personal feelings in carrying out a responsible duty where the interests of public security are the sole consideration. It has always been a matter of regret that certain Missions have seen fit within recent years to appoint in a British community Axis nationals who, in the course of their work, are given

²⁹ R2854201 (IMG 2468); R18388123 (IMG 2574), R22439551 (IMG 2600); A.C.T., Police Department, Personal report upon the history of Enemy Alien No. 289/41. Krieger, Julius (Brother Joseph), with major dates.

³⁰ Example Georges Delbos msc, *The Catholic Church in New Caledonia. A Century and a Half of History*, Suva, CEPAC, 2000, translated from the French by Derek Finlay sm, Paris, Editions Desclée, 1993, p. 247-261.

³¹ OMPA 51 8.12 merten2 Darnand to Merten, Apia, 18 mars 1942, in French.

³² R17961881 (IMG 3068) Telegram. From Apia to External Affairs, Wellington, dated 13/4/42 (recd 14/4/42).

³³ OMPA 58 16.2 1 Office of the Administrator, Apia, Samoa, 28th April, 1942, Turnbull to Darnand.

³⁴ R22439551 (IMG 2598).

³⁵ R17961881 (IMG 3067) Administration of Western Samoa, 1st May 1942, Memorandum for Minister of External Affairs, Wellington; R22439551 (IMG 2597); R22439554 (IMG 2493.2494) names of the internees.

much freedom of movement amongst a mixed and susceptible population. It is not surprising that there should arise – as in this instance – in time of war a situation which gives embarrassment both to the Missions and the Government....”

The same day their internment was issued, their bishop became active. First, he replied to Turnbull saying he understood in circumstances of war the measure taken, referred to the good relationship both men had, and that both Germans were rather harmless.³⁶ And, Darnand called for help of fellow Marists in New Zealand. He wrote to Archbishop O’Shea of Wellington. He said among the many Germans from Samoa are two missionaries. Darnand is sure there is nothing serious against them and hopes that O’Shea can help that they do not go into a concentration camp but rather into a Marist house.³⁷ Darnand also wrote to the Marist Provincial in New Zealand, Father Dr. V. Geaney sm in Wellington:³⁸

“...Father Merten, S.M., and Br. Joseph, a lay-Brother... I am sure there is nothing very serious against them. Both are good men and certainly harmless. But we are in war time.”

Merten knew English pretty well and could help in parochial work. Joseph could be of service in Greanmeadows. There was a long road to travel until it would get to this.

On the 2nd of May, the Germans were on the way. A first registration took place on board the *Matua* in Auckland harbor on 10 May 1942.³⁹ Merten gave his father’s address in Germany as contact person. A report in English lists his family background, his membership in the Society of Mary, his internment in Samoa, the money and private things he brought with him and so on. Merten informed the authorities about his story and his stay in Samoa. On 29 April 1942 he was arrested in Apia and left for New Zealand on 2 May 1942.

Krieger came with him. His passport was also collected and his dates registered.⁴⁰ A printer by trade, he had joined the Marists and had worked in three houses in Germany as a cook. Then he came to Samoa. He⁴¹ got his ‘Certificate of Registration of Alien Joseph Krieger’ on 11 May. A note on the sheet said: ‘Important’: Every alien had to inform the closest police station about any change of abode.⁴² This will be crucial for Krieger later. Merten received his certificate the same day.⁴³ The Police Department established a report of the Enemy Alien No. 586/44/ Albert Merten.⁴⁴ Important is the note:

“This man has been stationed at Northern point of Savaii for some time. A district isolated from normal control. His conduct has caused suspicion, Visiting Officials, British and American, doubt his sincerity and loyalty”.

The additional note on the document by the Acting Administrator was decisive:

“I have given considerable thought to the case of Father Merten. He arrived in Samoa in 1934 and during the visit of the “Karlsruhe” he showed decided Nazi leanings joining in the ship’s festivities and giving the Hitler salute. It is said he has changed since then owing to the more ruthless Nazi policies that have since developed and the view that he cannot be a priest and a Nazi at the same time. I have always had doubts about this man and have been very uneasy on that account. Recently at the instigation of the American authorities I requested the Bishop to transfer him from Falealupo, where American troops were stationed, to Falefa. He is very temperamental. He is intelligent and as he has great freedom of movement in his calling I consider that it is better he should be interned. On account of this man’s profession, I have been most careful in coming to this decision and have discussed his

³⁶ OMPA 58 16.2 2 Darnand to Turnbull, 29 April 1942.

³⁷ OMPA 58 16.2 3 Darnand to Archbishop O’Shea D.D.S.M., 7 Paterson Street, Wellington, 29th April 1942.

³⁸ R18388123 (IMG 2583); R17961881 (IMG 3065) Darnand, Apia, 29 April 1942, to Geaney. The arrival of the German internees was recorded by other institutions, for example R17961881 (IMG 3066) The Consul of Switzerland, Consulate of Switzerland, Wellington, 20th Mary 1942, to ‘Dear Sir’.

³⁹ R23436123 (IMG 2541-2543).

⁴⁰ R2854201 (IMG 2470-2475), passport Krieger.

⁴¹ R23438098 (IMG 2650), for Krieger.

⁴² R23438098 (IMG 2642).

⁴³ R23438098 (IMG 2520).

⁴⁴ R23438098 (IMG 2495).

case with the American military authorities who agreed with my conclusions. It is probable that representations will be made to have him released when he reaches N.Z. That is a matter on which I am not in a position to advise. There is another German Priest – Father Deiter,⁴⁵ stationed at Aleipata who arrived in Samoa in 1935. I am satisfied he is not a danger and unlike Father Merten shows decided opposition to Nazi principles. There is another lay brother by the name of Werner employed as a carpenter at Moamoa. His case has been given careful consideration but in view of his close association with the Bishop, I am not prepared at present to recommend any action in his case. My remarks are at length to show that most careful consideration has been given to the cases of all German nationals engaged in Mission work.”

On overnight train brought the new group of internees to Wellington for Somes Island.⁴⁶

On 12 May 1942, on Somes Island, the internees filled out a sheet about ‘Wishes of Internees in Regard to Transmission of Information Concerning Him to an enemy Government, and with Respect to Interviews’. Merten and Krieger signed not to have information passed on to an enemy government but to have contact with the International Red Cross.⁴⁷ Army Headquarters and the Department for External Affairs were then informed about the new internees on the island.

Geaney shared information on the interned Marists and news about other Marist missionaries in the Pacific in his correspondence. In a 1942 letter to Father Jean Orève (1882-1955), New Caledonia, he mentioned Merten able to celebrate mass in the camp.⁴⁸

On the 20th of May, the Department of External Affairs sent a memorandum to the Adjutant-General, Army Department, with files from Turnbull on the 18 Germans recently arrived from Samoa.⁴⁹ On 27 May 1942, Krieger filled out the ‘Interned Alien Somes Island Internment Personal History Sheet’.⁵⁰

A longer list of German internees in Somes⁵¹ included Merten and Krieger. Not included is the then leader of the camp committee, Gerd van Zeddelman. Not included then is also another German Marist, a teaching brother, Franz Heindl fms.⁵²

On 28th of May, an important paper was presented to the group. Their response was to play a role in the future question whether to release them or not. Three papers, one in translation, are kept to this day.⁵³ The translation reads:

“B” Letter from Camp Committee of German internees, dated 28.5.42.

Dear Consul,

Enclosed we forward you the undermentioned sheets covering the newly arrived Internees from Samoa:

- (1) Personal data of each filled in on the form you left with us
- (2) Accompanying letter from Mr. Berking whose signature is certified herewith by the Camp Committee;
- (3) Acknowledgment of Adherence to the German Reich as it is to-day, signed by fifteen internees requesting sustenance from Germany.

⁴⁵ Marist Father Johannes Dieter, also a German, later for a short time bishop of Samoa.

⁴⁶ Chapman, *German Marist experience*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ R22439554 (IMG 2599) for Krieger, (IMG 2496) for Merten.

⁴⁸ MA MP1, Geaney to Orève, 1 June and 1 July 1942.

⁴⁹ R22439554 (IMG 2596).

⁵⁰ R22439551 (IMG 2603), R23438098 (IMG 2648) for Krieger.

⁵¹ R22531240 - Interned Samoan Enemy Aliens 1940-1947: Berking, Rudolph Bernhard; Gabaver, Fedor Rudolf; Gebaver, Rovert Herman; Hessman, Paul Amo; Hessman, Marie Elise (Wife); Jahnke, Fritz Martin; (Hessman, Marie Elise, daughter); Jahnke, Vemer Eliche; Kruse, Rudolph Frederick; Matthes, A J G (deceased); Meiritz, Emil Otto (released); Meyer, August (released); Retziuff, Herman Paul; Stuenzner, Frederick Oscar Christian; Stuenzner, Kurt Frederick Montgomery; Wetzell, Albert August; Wetzell, Robert Carl; David, Felix; David, Rudolph; Gosche Ferninand Anton Ludwid; Jahnke, Walter Wilhelm Waldemar; Krieger, Julius; Kruse, Fritz Wilhelm; Krue, Johann Emil; Merten, Albert; Meyer, Kurt Max Hermann; August (Ze Schwabedisson); Naver, Thomas George; Rasch, Otto, Reye, Raimund (released); Schaumkel, Fritz; Schmidt, Paul; Schmalkuchen, Karl, Speimann, Julius William; Tiedemann, Christoph; Wulf, Theodor Dietrick Sophus; Schoeder, Hans Hennig; Schaafhahsen, Albert.

⁵² Given in Chapman, *German Marist Experience*, p. 10. Heindl came from Fiji, not from Samoa.

⁵³ R23438098 (IMG 2649).

As Mr. Berking informs us, he is always ready to give more information concerning these applications.

We Are, Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) Camp Committee of the German Internees at Somes Island.

G. Bellin, W. Ostermann, K.W. Schmidt, G. v. Zeddelmann.“

Document “C” is signed by Berking. It contains a ‘List of the needy Reich-Germans from Samoa who arrived here on the 11th May, 1942’. ‘Needy Reich-Germans’ could claim pocket-money from the German government. To get this they had to sign the following statement: “I acknowledge adherence to the German Reich as it is to-day”. The following did: R. David, P. Gosche, Julius Krieger, F. Kruse, Otto Rasch, K. Schmalkuchen, J.W. Spemann, T.D.S. Wulf, F. David, Walter Jahnke, J.E. Kruse, N.G. Nauer, F. Schaukel, P. Schmidt, Ch. Tiedemann. R.P. Berking, Retired Govt. Customs Inspector, signed to declare the signatures as authentic on Somes Island, 27 May 1942.

Document “D”, 18 sheets of personal data, is mainly in English with a few German terms.

Note that Brother Joseph signed the statement and applied for financial help, Father Merten did not. It will turn out that in both cases it was used against them!

Across the bay the Marist Provincial took many initiatives. From June 1942 until March 1945, Geaney corresponded with Bishop Darnand, Apia, about the interned missionaries.⁵⁴ Darnand thanked Geaney for all the help and agreed with their stay in Marist houses.

By the end of May 1942, Geaney had visited Merten in the camp:⁵⁵ “Sixteen days ago I was able after some considerable difficulty to go and see Father Merten in the concentration camp”. Notice he uses the strong term ‘concentration camp’. Geaney wanted both in Marist houses. Merten at that point saw a value in staying in the camp to serve as a priest. The officers were positive about the behaviour of both Germans.

On 14 July 1942, Father Geaney wrote to Peter Fraser, The Right Honorable Prime Minister, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.⁵⁶

“While I am most anxious to do what I can for the internees and to meet the wishes of Dr. Darnand, it is with some hesitation that I appeal for the release since I know nothing of the circumstances which led to their transfer from Samoa to Somes Island. Should however you deem it compatible with public safety to commit them to my care, I shall be very grateful and I will carefully comply with any conditions which may be laid down.”

Geaney proposed the Marist novitiate at Highden, near Palmerston North. His letter to the prime minister brought the Department of Justice into the process. On 6 August, 1942, Dallard, Under-Secretary at the Department of Justice, Wellington, sent a memorandum to the Secretary, Aliens Appeal Tribunal, C7-Supreme Court, Auckland, stating that the minister of Justice asked to review the cases of Merten and Krieger.⁵⁷ This is confirmed by Mr. Cleary, working for the department of Justice. Geaney had visited Cleary on the morning of 25 August. From the meeting, Cleary summarized that

“...Geaney had seen the prime minister some time ago at the suggestion of a Mr. Butcher. Geaney knows only that they are Marists and has no idea why they have been interned, or what is on the files against them. But if they were released, the Marists in Wellington would be pleased to take charge of the aliens and put them in suitable Homes. But if the authorities prefer to keep them interned, because of what is on the files, that is all there is to it.”

⁵⁴ MAW MP2 Geaney to Darnand, 11 June 1942; Darnand to Geaney, 22 September 1942; Geaney to Darnand, 2 January 1942; Darnand to Geaney, 24 January 1943; Geaney to Darnand, 16 February 1943; Darnand to Geaney, 22 May 1943; Geaney to Darnand, 20 June 1943; Darnand to Geaney, 6 March 1945; Geaney to Darnand, 25 March 1945. Geaney’s term as provincial ended then.

⁵⁵ MAW MP 2, Geaney to Darnand, 11 June 1942.

⁵⁶ R18388123 (IMG 2582); R17961881 (IMG 3062) Secretary of the Prime Minister, 29th July 1942, to Geaney, Wellington; R17961881 (IMG 3063) Acting Prime Minister, 29 July 1942, to Minister of Justice.

⁵⁷ R18388123 (IMG 2581). (IMG 2586), cover of a file, has a chronology 6 August 1942 to 20 September 1944.

On 31 August Geaney received a letter from Merten and Krieger asking for someone to represent them for an appeal. Cleary was willing to do so and to see the internees on Somes Island. First, T. P. Cleary said he cannot be of much use to the aliens or to the Tribunal but decided to help after a meeting with Geaney.⁵⁸

On 6 September, Krieger wrote again to his bishop saying he is 'gesund und munter' and reporting that efforts are under way for release. He inquired about the confreres in Samoa.⁵⁹ However, release was still far away.

The Aliens Appeal Tribunal heard evidence for Merten and Krieger on Somes Island on 9th September 1942.⁶⁰ Cleary counseled the aliens. Krieger told his story. He was interned on Samoa and then came to New Zealand. He had left Germany just before he was due for conscription into the army. Cleary saw no danger at stake and favored a release. For Cleary, Krieger was a cook and that was it. The Tribunal recommended to the minister for justice to release Alien Number 23728, Krieger, on 1 October 1942. Krieger could be transferred to Marist authority to live in seclusion. He was not much more than a cook and kitchen hand.⁶¹ That the appeal was heard is confirmed by the respective police officers.⁶²

Merten also presented his case.⁶³ As a priest in Germany he had guided a youth group which was against the Nazi youth. On Samoa he had gathered meteorological information for Wellington. The *Karlsruhe* visited within weeks of his arrival. With other priests and with authorities like the administrator he went on board. They had quite a feast. Merten could not remember giving the Hitler salute. Of course he is German. But his creed as Christian and priest and the creed of the Nazi party are not compatible for him. In Samoa he subscribed to the paper *The Germany Way* which is 100% anti-Nazi. Merten said (report Cleary):

"I am not a Nazi. It is not compatible with my status as a priest. Nazism is condemned by our Church, and in this matter I follow my authorities in every aspect in what they tell me."

He wanted to be released and stay with the Marists. Geaney said he could stay in Highden or Greenmeadows. Merten appealed against his internment at the end of September.⁶⁴ His report about the hearing to his bishop bore a pessimistic tone. Merten praised the efforts by Geaney and continued to say at least they know the reasons now: His visit on the *Karlsruhe*; American and British officials insisted on an action; his role as priest. About Brother Joseph some say he is harmless and some say he is strongly pro German.⁶⁵

The Aliens Appeal Tribunal produced a lengthy report to the Minister of Justice on 1 October 1942. Each individual German got a comment with the issues and an evaluation:⁶⁶

"In the case of Father Merten and Brother Joseph (or Julius Krieger) we have had to consider Dr. Geaney's letter to the Prime Minister of 14th July 1942 and the representations made by Mr. Cleary who attended at Somes Island as Counsel on their behalf. Obviously in Father Merten's case, as in the case of the Reverend Reye, the anti-Christian aspect of the Nazi regime, and the disinclination to break faith with his Church authorities here in New Zealand by abusing his liberty should operate as safeguards. Nevertheless, after careful consideration we do not make in Father Merten's case a recommendation similar to that made in Mr. Reye's case. The reasons which prevent us making a favourable recommendation as to Father Merten are, shortly, as follows:-

⁵⁸ R18388123 (IMG 2580); (IMG 2579), a document dated 1 September 1942.

⁵⁹ OMPA 51 8.12 7-8 Somes Island 6.9.42 Krieger to Darnand.

⁶⁰ R18388123 (IMG 2572), for Krieger.

⁶¹ R18388123 (IMG 2566).

⁶² R23438098 (IMG 2647), 3 October 1942, Senior Detective Doyle; 5 October, The Commissioner, Superintendent of Police.

⁶³ R18388123 (IMG 2568), Mr Cleary recorded here Merten's story.

⁶⁴ R23436123 (IMG 2540).

⁶⁵ OMPA 51 8.12 merten3 Somes Island 29.9.42, Merten to Darnand, in English.

⁶⁶ R17961881 (IMG 3058) Aliens Tribunal, to Minister of Justice, 1 October 1942, re appeals from Samoan Germans; R17961881 (IMG 3059-3061) Father Albert Merten. Al. No. 23727; Julius Krieger (Brother Joseph) Al. No. 23728; R18388123 (IMG 2567.2553).

- (1) The comments of the acting Administrator are distinctly unfavorable. They show that special consideration was given to the case and that in contradistinction to the view taken of another German priest, Father Merten makes on Mr. Turnbull a bad impression.
- (2) Father Merten is a German who has spent all his life in Germany until he left there in 1934.
- (3) The conflicting pull supplied in Reye's case by a British wife, is in this case necessarily absent.
- (4) He did not make upon us as favorable an impression as did Mr. Reye. Mr. Reye seemed to us to be making an honest effort at sincere self-analysis. Father Merten, however, gave the impression that he was considering, rather, what answers would assist in procuring his release from internment. Also, owing to Reye's diaries, it was possible to open up with him discussions which left the impression that we began to know the man. Father Merten, on the other hand, remains to us a person whom we feel we do not know. The Catholic Church authorities here do not claim to know him or Brother Krieger at all intimately. Dr Geaney's letter, we think, makes that clear. He writes that he knows nothing of the circumstances which led to the transfer of these two Marists from Samoa to Somes Island, and goes on to say "Should however you deem it compatible with public safety etc".

Julius Krieger (Brother Joseph) Al. No. 23728

In this case we are disposed to think that there would be no danger in allowing this Marist brother to reside at a secluded Marist institution and be employed there as a cook or household assistant, provided the Marist authorities understood that he would never leave the premise without police permission. This man has very little English. His naval service was as a very young man, as a stoker, and does not seem to have amounted to much. Very shortly after the last war, he joined the Marist Order as a brother in 1920, when he was only 20. He has ever since been a Cook and Kitchen hand. On the face of it, he would not appear to have had much opportunity or capacity to be interested in politics or world affairs. Nor would he appear to have any real opportunities for mischief if he were kept within some secluded Marist institution here in New Zealand. But there is the fact that the Acting-Administrator says "His sympathies are decidedly "pro-Axis". Brother Krieger had a very obscure unimportant household position in Samoa. If this remark is founded upon reliable information, his release in New Zealand would probably be unsuitable. It may therefore be deemed wise, before any action is taken, to refer back to Samoa for a more detailed report."

These decisions entered the files and will influence further deliberations.

Turnbull's communications of 4 November 1942 reveals his reasons.⁶⁷ Turnbull had met Merten many times and Krieger once. Both were sent away as precautionary measure for local security to take them out of their area of influence. He does not want them back. If New Zealand thinks they can keep or release them in this time of war that is their decision. Both are capable of providing the enemy with important information about Samoa and its defense preparations – even if they are allowed to stay in a restrained institution.

For 17 November 1942, McGill lists 98 Germans, 30 Italians, 47 Japanese, 2 Austrians, 3 Thais, 1 Finn, 1 Pole, 1 Spaniard, 1 Frenchman, 1 Norwegian, and 1 Hungarian.⁶⁸ According to their letters, Merten and Krieger praised the conditions on Somes Island.⁶⁹

On 10 January 1943, Merten reported that Geaney tried to help but the government delays. Concerning himself Merten wrote about his pastoral work, especially for the Italians.

On 31 January 1943, the 185 internees were moved to Pahiatua after an intervention by the Swiss Consul who complained that the camp conditions were against the Geneva Convention. In

⁶⁷ R17961881 (IMG 3055-3057) Turnbull, Apia, 4 November 1942, to Secretary of External Affairs, on the appeals of the German internees in NZ, name by name.

⁶⁸ McGill, *Island of Secrets*, p. 112.

⁶⁹ Chapman, *German Marist experience*, p. 8-10: There were tensions among the Germans as well as among the different nationalities. They had food, access to papers, could receive and send mail although it went through the censor. Conditions were worse in Pahiatua.

March 1944, from Pahiataua, the Italian internees were given conditional release after the armistice. In September 1944, the internees returned to Somes.⁷⁰

On 16 February 1943, Geaney had to inform Bishop Darnand that there was no answer yet from the government. From March to July 1943, he exchanged letters with Archbishop Panico, Apostolic Delegate, residing in North Sydney, Australia.⁷¹ Geaney asked for help but Panico replied he cannot do much against decisions made by the New Zealand authorities. Panico asked to be kept informed and sent a parcel of books for the internees. In the correspondence, Geaney gives important details on the internment. Geaney had procured a lawyer for the interned. He applied for permits to visit Merten and Krieger – allowed was only to see one at a time. Both did fairly well in the circumstances. The 27 Italians responded well to Merten's priestly service. Among the Germans there were only very few Catholics.

Beginning of 1943, Geaney reported to Panico that he had written to the prime minister and had met the minister for justice. Both were supportive but respected the decisions of the authorities. Merten was unhappy after the hearing in spring of 1943, especially about Callan, a Catholic, who instead of helping him gave him a 'homily' on staying in the camp to serve as a priest.

Krieger had a visual examination on 11 March 1943. This resulted in a pair of spectacles for him.⁷² His transfer to Highden was practically arranged in May. However, on 17 May 1943, Dallard, Department of Justice, wrote to Callan.⁷³ Krieger's name was discovered on a list of internees applying for money from Germany, dated 27th May, 1942. This included his 'adherence to the Reich as it is today'. The Tribunal refused to release Merten although he refused money from Germany and although he wrote anti-Nazi lines to his relatives. How can they release Krieger knowing about this statement?

On 5 April 1943, Geaney complained to Archbishop Panico, about being kept in the dark by ecclesial and civil authorities: why are Merten and Krieger interned and other German missionaries from Samoa are not? He, Geaney, tried so much in their favor but: is important information withheld from him?⁷⁴ Darnand turned to Turnbull for help. On 11 May, he wrote that the New Zealand authorities would release Merten and Krieger if Turnbull would recommend it. Would the administrator write such a line, not about a return to Samoa but about a release into a Marist house in New Zealand?⁷⁵ Four days later, Turnbull answered '...and in reply beg to say that the representations made will be submitted to the New Zealand Authorities in whose control the matter lies'.⁷⁶

In New Zealand, J.B. Callan wrote to his colleagues on 20 May 1943 about the revised situation for Krieger, Merten, and another German called Gosche.⁷⁷ He admitted it is not so easy to reconstruct all the facts. For him, Merten's remarks could be policy to seek advantage. He did not trust Merten, certainly more intelligent than Krieger or Gosche. Claude H. Weston, answered Callan on 25 May saying all three should stay interned.⁷⁸ On 9 June 1943, Callan again wrote to Weston and Collins about Merten, Krieger and Gosche. He was against a release of Merten but not sure about Gosche and Krieger.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ McGill, *Island of Secrets*, p. 112.

⁷¹ MAW ADP1: Panico to Geaney, 29 March 1943; Geaney to Panico, 5 April 1943; Panico to Geaney, 12 April 1943; Geaney to Panico, 31 July 1943.

⁷² R22439551 (IMG 2593).

⁷³ R18388123 (IMG 2564); See (IMG 2585), dates and key correspondence for Merten and Krieger.

⁷⁴ He will repeat the same complaint in a letter to Darnand on 25 March 1945.

⁷⁵ OMPA 58 16.2 4 Darnand to Turnbull, Apia, 11 May 1943.

⁷⁶ OMPA 58 16.2 5 Administration of Western Samoa, 15 May 1943, Turnbull, to Darnand, Moamoa.

⁷⁷ R18388123 (IMG 2562) "On Somes Island, 27th May 1942, 15 acknowledged adherence "to the German Reich as it is today":- R. David, F. David, F. Gosche, Julius Krieger, F. Kruse, J.E. Kruse, Otto Rasch, K. Schmalkuchen, J.W. Spemann, T.D.S. Wulf, T.G. Nauer, Walter Jahnke, F. Schaumkel, P. Schmidt and Ch. Tiedemann."

⁷⁸ R18388123 (IMG 2560), part of internal deliberations of the tribunal members.

⁷⁹ R18388123 (IMG 2559).

The Aliens Appeal Tribunal decided finally to release Krieger under conditions, namely seclusion in a Marist house and supervision by the police. This was passed on to Henry Greathead Rex Mason, Minister of Justice, who acted accordingly on the basis of the Order for Release of Alien, Aliens Emergency Regulations 1940. On 16 June 1943, Dallard forwarded the order to army headquarters Wellington.⁸⁰ The next day he wrote to D. J. Cummings, The Commissioner of Police, Wellington, with a copy to Inspector of Police, Palmerston North, and the police station for Highden.⁸¹

“I have to inform you that the Minister has now made an order for the release of the above named internee, who was removed to New Zealand from Samoa in April, 1942. Arrangements have been made for Krieger’s reception at Highden, where he will be under the control of the Church authorities. Arrangements have also been made with the Customs Department for the issue of a permit to remain in New Zealand. I do not know whether this man has as yet been registered as an alien but I presume you will, if necessary, arrange for his registration. You will be advised later of the classification to be adopted in this case. I attach two copies of the order for Krieger’s release.”

In June 1943 Brother Joseph was released on parole. Customs gave him a temporary permit. Samoa was informed on 17 June.⁸² Samoa had repeated to the Department for External Affairs on 19 May 1943 a statement made on 4 November in response to Darnand’s interventions earlier that month.⁸³ “...as long as internees are not returned to Samoa I could not offer any objection to their release in New Zealand if the Aliens Tribunal thought fit to do so and on such conditions as they would deem necessary.” On 18 June 1943, R.H. Perrett, Major N.Z.S.C., Camp Commandant, Pahiataua, told Army Headquarters, Wellington, that Leonhard Aberle and Julius Krieger have left at 1500hrs that day.⁸⁴ On the same day, H.J. Thompson, Brigadier-Adjutant General, in a memorandum for Headquarters, Central Military District, Wellington, forwarded that the Secretary of Justice wrote on 16 June 1943 that Krieger can be released to Highden.⁸⁵ The release gave him the alien status “B3”.⁸⁶

The police station at Palmerston North confirmed on 3rd July 1943:⁸⁷ “Alien transferred from Pahiataua Internment Camp to Marist Fathers Seminary on the 18/6/43”.

Meanwhile, Merten had written to Bishop Darnand to ask the administrator in Samoa for support. According to Darnand’s letter from 22 May 1943, the administrator promised him to do so. Early June 1943, Geaney had met the minister of justice again. Krieger was released but no release of Merten was in sight. The hope was the administrator would write in favour of Merten. Krieger meanwhile wrote to Darnand about his wish to return to Samoa. On 31 July 1943, Geaney informed Archbishop Panico that Darnand will ask the administrator in Samoa to write in favor of Merten’s release but there is no result so far.

In August, Krieger was pleased to tell Darnand that he was in Higden since 18 June. He is well. He will participate in the retreat for the brothers. Bishop Darnand may intervene with the administrator. Their return depends upon him.⁸⁸ Merten also wrote to Darnand – still from

⁸⁰ R23438098 (IMG 2646), R22439551 (IMG 2591.2592). Geaney had accepted the conditions for the release: R18388123 (IMG 2557), Dallard, 23rd June, Memorandum for The Secretary, Aliens Appeal Tribunal, re Father Merten, Brother Krieger and Gosche: “With regard to Brother Krieger, I should perhaps advise that the Minister in April last, acting on the Tribunal’s recommendation, committed himself to Father Geaney that he would release the internee if suitable supervision could be arranged.” Father Geaney did so for Highden and a few days ago Krieger was released. However, further advice from the tribunal is awaited for the other cases.

⁸¹ R23438098 (IMG 2644.2645).

⁸² R1796 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; R17961880 (IMG 3049); R17961881 (IMG 3050.3051).

⁸³ R17961881 (IMG 3052) Turnbull to Department; (IMG 3053), Darnand, Apia, 11 May 1943, to Turnbull.

⁸⁴ R22439551 (IMG 2588).

⁸⁵ R22439551 (IMG 2589).

⁸⁶ R23438098 (IMG 2642), Dallard, 21 June 1943, to the Commissioner of Police, Wellington, and the Inspector of Police, Palmerston North: “Further to my memorandum of the 17th June relating to the abovenamed, I have to advise you that the Minister has now directed that Krieger be classified B3.”

⁸⁷ R23438098 (IMG 2641).

⁸⁸ OMPA 51 8.12 15-16 Higden 1.8.43 Krieger to Darnand.

Pahiataua.⁸⁹ Geaney had met Mason but did not get much out of him. Merten's consolation was his pastoral work and a letter from Fürstzell with some news about German Marists in the European war theater. A planter from Bougainville who was evacuated with sisters and male religious via a submarine brought news from the Marists there like Brother Bruno was interned by Japanese. The same day, 19 August 1943, Merten also wrote to Father Antczak in Germany. The news was included in Antczak's circular of 8 November.⁹⁰ Merten had received Antczak's letters of January and February. Merten passed on news on the Marists in the North Solomons and then about his own situation on Somes Island. Brother Joseph could leave the camp and was now with one of the Marist communities in the country. He himself was given hope of release, especially since the governor of Samoa spoke in his favour. As long as there are still people in the camp he will continue his ministry. The Apostolic Delegate sent him prayer books in Italian which allowed him to serve the Italians in their own language. Personally he felt fine and enjoyed his pipe. From the German Red Cross they received two parcels last month: 300 cigarettes, six parcels of tobacco, razors, and other things. Samoa also sent him regularly tobacco.

In November 1943, the Department of Justice wanted the Aliens Appeal Tribunal to review Merten's case again. The Tribunal saw no reasons for a release except there would be a general release of all internees.⁹¹ All the cases were delayed because the appeal tribunal members were busy with many things or were sick.⁹²

Merten got impatient and complained to Darnand in his November-letter: All others interned of their group are back in Samoa – why not the two of them? What is going on? “Was führt man im Schilde?” The New Zealand authorities will follow the decision of the governor – could Darnand contact Turnbull?⁹³ Christmas was beautiful for Merten although being still in Pahiataua. Everyone received a Red Cross parcel, mail from Samoa and Germany, and he received visitors. One was Marist Father Maurice Mulcahy (1910-1988) whom Merten knew from Rome and another was Miss Paul. The visitors will pass on more details.⁹⁴

From March to June 1944, Krieger lived in the Marist Seminary of Greenmeadows – a bigger house where Krieger was of more use than in the small community of Highden. The police in Taradale reported his presence. Krieger was absent with permission when he cooked for the Marist students during their summer camp.⁹⁵

By 12 April 1944, the Department of Island Territories wrote to Samoa that the government had not changed position on Merten.⁹⁶ There is a list in the file with the German internees in alphabetical order, dated 16 April 1943, probably serving as argument for decision making. Some show an * (Krieger; but not Merten). An addition at the bottom of page reads: “*Signed application to German Govt. For sustenance allowance (Pound 1.5 monthly), acknowledging adherence “to the German Reich as it is today”.⁹⁷

In April 1944, two Germans at least accepted conditions set by the administrator to return. Each gave the Roman Catholic Mission in Apia as one of the required guarantors.⁹⁸

⁸⁹ OMPA 51 8.12 merten15-16, 19 August 1943, Merten, Pahiataua, to Darnand.

⁹⁰ ‘Nachrichten von unseren Soldaten’, Fürstzell b. Passau, den 9. November 1943, photocopied pages, with one section consisting in a summary of Merten's letter; Marist Archive Passau.

⁹¹ R18388123 (IMG 2555), Dallard to Callan; R23436123 (IMG 2537), Findlay, tribunal, to Dallard.

⁹² R18388123 (IMG 2556), Aliens Appeal Tribunal, 23rd June, 1943, to The Under-Secretary of Justice, Wellington: re Father Merten, Bro. Krieger and Gosche.

⁹³ OMPA 51 8.12 17-19 Greenmeadows 26.11.43, Merten to Darnand.

⁹⁴ OMPA 51 8.12 merten17-18 Pahiataua, 30.12.1943.

⁹⁵ Report Police Taradale R23438098: (IMG 2639), 24 March 1944; (IMG 2638), 16 June 1944; (IMG 2625), 15 September 1944; (IMG 2618), 11 December 1944; (IMG 2640), 21 December 1944.

⁹⁶ R17961882 (IMG 3172) Island Territories, 12.4.1944, to The Secretary, Samoan Administration, ‘secret’: attached a form of their parole people have to sign before they are allowed to return to Samoa.

⁹⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3173) List of 16.4.43, German Internees, names in alphabetical order.

⁹⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3167) A. Schaaffhausen, Internee, Internment camp Pahiataua, 29.IV. 1944, to the Commandant; Two guarantors: Father Deihl, Catholic Mission, Apia; G. Jackson, Solicitor, Apia; (IMG 3168) Guarantors: The Roman Catholic Mission, Apia, Western Samoa; Mr G.T. Jackson, Solicitor, Apia, Western Samoa. Signed T.D.S. Wulf; S. T. Jackson, Solicitor, Apia, see his ‘Notes regarding German internees at present confined at Pahiataua N.Z.’ (IMG 3171); Jackson does not mention Merten or Krieger.

Since the battles of the Coral Sea and at Midway in May and June 1942 tension was reduced. In February 1943, the Japanese had to withdraw from Guadalcanal. But the war was not over and security measures were upheld.

Turnbull highlighted ongoing security measures with a telegram of 2 August 1944. Military security is no longer the issue, but political security. He names Merten as one who could influence Samoans in a negative way. Others could return except there are further objections in terms of security.⁹⁹

On 4 August 1944, the acting secretary, Department of Island Territories, wrote to his minister about the German internees from Samoa in general. Public opinion in Samoa was in favor of allowing family members back. This was copied to the Assistant-Secretary to War Cabinet. Five had returned to Samoa in June, 29 are still in New Zealand. The acting secretary summarized information gained from the Samoan Administrator about further repatriations. Turnbull agreed for 19 men but warned against those with pro-Nazi tendencies or those with influence on the local people like Merten. Krieger was not mentioned and this lacuna would cause much mail to and fro. For Turnbull, some of the German internees 'are still unconverted Nazis', and others are anti-British. Those he does not want back for security reasons. Others, especially reunited married couples and part-Samoans, could return. In general Turnbull recommended to wait three more months and to see how the war situation develops.¹⁰⁰

Father M.A. Murphy sm, Greenmeadows, had written to the Collector of Customs at Auckland whether Brother Joseph could return to Samoa. This involved a number of government institutions. On 8 August, Customs sought advice from the Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet.¹⁰¹ The latter forwarded it to the Department for Island Territories.¹⁰²

"Brother Joseph was granted a temporary permit for twelve months in the first place and this has not expired. Father M. A. Murphy, S.M., Mount St. Mary's, Greenmeadows, has now written to the Collector of Customs at Auckland stating that Brother Joseph's one desire now, is to get back to his mission work in Samoa as soon as possible, and he would be grateful if his return there could be facilitated. I should be glad if you would advise me whether there is now any objection to Brother Joseph's return to Samoa."

On 11 August 1944, Security Intelligence could forward a lengthy translation to the Department for Island Territories.¹⁰³ This is the 1937 report of the German Consul in New Zealand, Walter Hellenthal, who had visited Papua New Guinea in 1936 and Samoa in 1937 to evaluate how strong the pro-German and pro-Nazi parties were.¹⁰⁴ In later discussions New Zealand authorities were critical about the report.¹⁰⁵ For what it's worth, the report gives much information and

⁹⁹ Enemy Prisoners R18872117_3.

¹⁰⁰ Enemy Prisoners of War, Aliens and Internees - Internment in NZ of aliens sent from other countries (R18872117) 1940-1946 [=Enemy Prisoners R18872117], R18872117_1, and his report, Enemy Prisoners R18872117_2: A.C. Turnbull, Western Samoa, Apia, 24th July, 1944, Memorandum for The Secretary, Island Territories, Re Internees; R18872117_1JPG Acting secretary, Island Territories, 4th August 1944, to the Right Hon. The Minister of Island Territories, 'For your information The Assistant-Secretary to War Cabinet'; R18872117_2 A.C. Turnbull, Apia, 24th July, 1944, Memorandum for The Secretary, Island Territories; R18872117_3 In the camp, part Samoans formed anti-British group; telegram: From Admor To Island Territories, 2 August 1944.

¹⁰¹ R23438098 (IMG 2637); R17961882 (IMG 3165) E.D. Good, Controller of Customs, 8th August 1944, confidential, to Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet.

¹⁰² R17961882 (IMG 3164) War Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Department, 14th August 1944, Confidential – Memorandum for The Acting Secretary, Island Territories; copy also to the police.

¹⁰³ R17961882 (IMG 3163) P.J.Nalder, Deputy Director, Security Intelligence; Secret. Wellington, 11 August 1944, to Mr. McKay, Island Territories, German Political Report on Samoa; translation of report by Dr. Hellenthal during his term as German Consul in New Zealand. Report no doubt written for the German Foreign Office.

¹⁰⁴ Christine Winter makes reference to the Hellenthal-report, cf *Mixed Race Identities in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, edited by Kirsten McGavin and Farida Fozdar (Routledge Studies in Anthropology), New York, Routledge, 2017; accessed 23 April 2018.

¹⁰⁵ R17961882 (IMG 3154-3162) Hellenthal, Carbon-copy for Consulate-general Germany, Sydney, Wellington, 30 May 1937, Confidential Political Report. German Samoa, British and NZ views, 9 pages A4.

personal views on Samoa, the NZ administration, the Germans, and the ‘missionary societies’. Hellenthal wrote that the NZ administration is not popular, the Samoans valued the German administration more, but today the tendency is for an independent Samoa. He quotes a personal comment to him by Turnbull:

“Either within three years at the most the German flag will be floating once more over Apia, or else we shall have to request Britain to have the Territory administered through the Colonial office.”

Turnbull is presented as admirer of the German administration and proposed toasts to the *Führer*: “At several dinners, at which he acquainted me with the leading officials, planters and merchants of the Territory, he invariably proposed a toast to our Führer.”

According to the report, these would be some of the statistics for 1937: Nationalities – German: 536; American: 282; French: 88; British: 1962; in all: 3338; 37 native Germans. Samoan population increases by astonishing figures. For “VII The missionary societies” he lists: 52266 Samoans; London Missionary Society is the leading missionary society; LMS 31832; Roman Catholic 9566; Methodists 8611; Mormons 1939; Seventh-Day Adventists 312; Anglican Church 6. Schools are mainly run by the missions, with a benevolent supervision on the part of the Administration. ‘Unfortunately there are only 11 Germans among missionaries – 10 Marists, 1 Adventist, and so unlike PNG (see my report) no teaching of German language’. About the German Cause Hellenthal has to say: There are 497 Reich Germans but only 39 of them are white – that shows the whole tragedy of the German cause, and there are only mixed blood children. And about the Marists:

“Unfortunately the 10 members of the Marist Mission are no props of the German cause in Samoa, as they limit themselves to their ecclesiastical task and are never to be seen in German organizations and at German functions. On the other hand the German Adventist clergyman REYE (of one-eighth Samoan blood), the son of a deceased administrative secretary of the German Government, is a notable supporter of the German cause and a protagonist of German culture and the National-Socialist outlook on life.”

The summer of 1944 brought pastoral privileges for Merten. The International Red Cross had visited the camp and recommended more space for his work as a priest:¹⁰⁶

“Protected Personnel – Privileges and Treatment. “An eight-man-hut has been set aside within the compound adjacent to the internees’ recreation room to enable Father Merten to continue his spiritual ministrations unhampered by restrictions and where he can receive clerical visitors in private. Father Merten will be provided with a separate sleeping cubicle.”

But there was still the conviction to keep him interned.

A memorandum by the Central Military District, Wellington, stated on 28 August 1944:¹⁰⁷

“6 During a recent visit to Pahiataua of a Ministerial Party the CC reports that Father Merton’s case was discussed and it was stated by the Minister i/c of Aliens that this internee’s file was such that neither the Aliens Tribunal nor he could come to any other conclusion but that Father Merten appeared to place his adherence to Nazism before his priestly duties.”

R.A. Loroche, sent in his censorship report on Merten and Krieger on 8 September 1944.¹⁰⁸ Can Merten’s true political stance be gathered from his correspondence? Merten had written to his family in Germany, his father and his three married sisters. The censor thought these people are basically politically not much interested. The only other correspondent was a Valentin Antczak. Loroche did not know who that exactly was. Other contacts were people on Samoa, mainly the Marists. Merten was unhappy with the useless internment and wished to return to Samoa. The report concluded:

¹⁰⁶ R22439554 (IMG 2490), 21.8.1944; (IMG 2491), Foss Shanahan, assistant secretary to war cabinet, on the visit; (IMG 2485.2486) for camp commander to carry out this order. (IMG 2487): Geneva Convention as reason for this privilege.

¹⁰⁷ R22439554 (IMG 2489).

¹⁰⁸ R23436123 (IMG 2534-2536), on Merten and Krieger.

“Altogether, therefore, internee appears to be a German priest of Westphalian peasant origin who takes an international Catholic attitude to the war, who stands against Nazi doctrine on grounds of conscience, and whose legitimate German nationalism and possible coolness towards Britain cannot possibly take the form of political activism in opposition to the Allied cause.”

While the Aliens Tribunal was still in session, telegrams were exchanged between the Department for Island Territories and the Samoan Administration for clarifications. The administrator said it would be ‘of no hardship for Merten and Krieger not to return’, unlike for fathers of a family, and they can work elsewhere or be sent to Germany.¹⁰⁹

On 20 September 1944, Callan sent a lengthy report of the Aliens Appeal Tribunal to the Minister in Charge of Aliens regarding the 29 German Internees from Samoa.¹¹⁰ The estimate of only 20% danger from the war for New Zealand is important for the review as was information from Turnbull, Lochore (censor), and McKay who has Samoa experience. 26 Germans are interned, 3 are released on parole, and some are sick and aged. There was quite a big number of Germans or part-Germans on Samoa and only few were interned. They stated different options: keep Merten in internment and Krieger in house arrest; send both back to Germany; ask the Marist superiors to send both to other missions somewhere in the world; allow their return to Samoa.

The Tribunal would allow Krieger to return, also based on the censors’ report, but not Merten. About Krieger they said:

“We... look upon Bro. Krieger as an obscure unimportant household cook. He has been a Marist lay brother for 24 years, does not appear to have great intelligence nor any understanding of or interest in world affairs. No doubt he is a German, and for a short time some 25 years ago, as little more than a boy was a stoker in the German navy. Without influence of others he is harmless and could return to Samoa. A brother has much less influence in Samoa than a priest.”

The final opinion of Turnbull on Krieger is not yet known. The Tribunal thinks he is harmless and could return to Samoa as is his wish.

The consultations with Turnbull blocked Merten’s release.¹¹¹ The Tribunal summed it up: Most may return except those Turnbull does not want back, among them Merten. Merten was always a difficult case in their eyes. Lochore and the Hellenthal-Report are in his favor, but Turnbull, McKay, and the Tribunal always had a negative impression. McKay wrote: “Father Merten at least lacked tact, made no concealment of his German sympathies and created embarrassment for himself and possibly also for Bishop Darnand”. A return to Samoa was denied. One option was seclusion in a Marist house. And so the Tribunal concurs with Turnbull. Merten is neither to return nor to stay permanently in New Zealand but repatriated or to work elsewhere.

Because of supplementary information, Callan had to hand in a further report on 23 September. Turnbull is now clear not to have Merten or Krieger back. Krieger could stay in New Zealand or elsewhere, and Merten and Schroeder should be sent to Germany.¹¹²

C. McKay, the secretary, went to write to his minister and to the Department of Justice on 26 September. The Tribunal and the Administrator agreed to send back 15 Germans. Others, like Merten and Krieger need further consideration and are transferred to the Justice Department – legally they now belong there as Samoa does not want them back.¹¹³ Two days later McKay

¹⁰⁹ R17961882 (IMG 3150) Island Territories to Administrator, 15.9.44; (IMG 3146) Copy of telegram, Admor - Island Territories, 17.9.1944; ‘secret’: Merten and Schroeder for repatriation; not to return would be no hardship for Merten and Krieger.

¹¹⁰ R23438098 (IMG 2628), Aliens Appeal Tribunal, report of 20 September 1944, to the Minister in Charge of Aliens, Review of Internees generally and Report on Samoan Internees; cf. R18388123 (IMG 2546), R23436123 (IMG 2531), R23438098 (IMG 2629); R18388123 (IMG 2547), 20 September 1944; R17961882 (IMG 3138-3145). Callan refers to the request from under-secretary to review the cases. The Department of Island Territories made it a memorandum for the minister, R17961882 (IMG 3135) 22 September 1944.

¹¹¹ R23438098 (IMG 2528), Tribunal; (IMG 2531), recommendations.

¹¹² R23438098 (IMG 2545), 23 September 1944; R17961882 (IMG 3137) Callan, Aliens Appeal Tribunal, 23rd September 1944, to Minister in Charge of Aliens.

¹¹³ R17961882 (IMG 3134), Island Territories, 26 September 1944, to Under-Secretary, Department of Justice; (IMG 3131) McKay, 26 September 1944, to Minister Island Territories.

informed the Administrator and mentioned that the Prime Minister wants the War Cabinet to decide.¹¹⁴ This will be the ultimate solution. Meanwhile, the Tribunal report was forwarded to the police for information.¹¹⁵

Since 17 September Merten was back on Somes and from there wrote to Darnand on the 26th of September. Their case was now considered by the war cabinet. Geaney visited him yesterday. Two choirs, plans for a chapel, and learning Italian kept Merten busy.¹¹⁶

Finally, the tide of war had changed. The Allies pressed towards Japan. For the South Pacific the danger of invasion had passed. This found expression in the release of internees.

The War Cabinet decided on 2 October: 15 Germans can return, 6 cases need to be considered as they are no part-blood Samoan 'German sympathies and relatively lesser attachments to Samoa suggest consideration of their repatriation to Germany'. Krieger was mentioned among the additional cases.¹¹⁷ Merten was not to return to Samoa.

The Island Department forwarded the recommendations of the Tribunal to the Assistant Secretary of the War Cabinet on 4 October and asked the Controller of Customs on 17 October for Merten for a temporary permit.¹¹⁸ The situation for Krieger was not so clear but the Administrator sent a telegram on 25 October not to return him to Samoa.¹¹⁹

W. Perry, Minister in Charge of Aliens, issued the order of release on parole in Wellington on 6 October 1944. Base was the Aliens Emergency Regulations 1940, Dependency Emergency Regulations (No. 2) 1939, Amendment No. 4.¹²⁰ His status is "B2".¹²¹ Merten left on 21 October 1944.¹²² Originally, he was supposed to go to Highden¹²³ but that was changed to a permission to travel in November to Greenmeadows receiving a temporary permit for 12 months to stay in the country.¹²⁴ Later Taradale police reported Merten present in Greenmeadows.¹²⁵ Merten used his stay to do his second novitiate.¹²⁶

An intervention by security intelligence complicated the decisions. Repatriated Germans be it to Samoa or Germany could be a danger for the Allies as they could pass on information about New Zealand defense.¹²⁷ McKay answered that Samoa does not want Merten and Krieger and others back.¹²⁸

¹¹⁴ R17961882 (IMG 3133) Island Territories, 28 September 1944, to Administrator.

¹¹⁵ R23438098 (IMG 2627.2626), 30.10.1944, Police Wellington gives to Police Napier the Tribunal Report.

¹¹⁶ OMPA 51 8.12 merten25 Somes Island, Sept. 26, 44, Merten to Darnand.

¹¹⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3120) McKay, 27.10.1944, to Minister of Island Territories: War Cabinet decision.

¹¹⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3132), Island Territories, 4.10.1944, to Assistant Secretary War Cabinet and (IMG 3124) McKay, 27.10.1944, to Assistant Secretary to War Cabinet, Recall of German (and Austrian) Nationals resident abroad; (IMG 3127) Department of Justice, 17.10.1944, to Controller of Customs; (IMG 3126) Customs Department, 26.10.1944, to Justice Department, re Merten: He was given six months permit; (IMG 3119) Customs Department, 10 November 1944, to Collector of Customs, copy to Island Territories: issue a permit for Merten to travel to Greenmeadows.

¹¹⁹ R17961882 (IMG 3130) Telegram Islands to Administrator, 25.10.1944; what is your wish re Krieger? (IMG 3129) Copy of telegram: Admor to Islands, 25.10.1944; Krieger should not return.

¹²⁰ R23436123 (IMG 2524).

¹²¹ R23436123 (IMG 2517-2519).

¹²² R22439554 (IMG 2481), New Zealand Military Forces. Army Headquarters, Subject Interned Alien - Albert Merten: Handwritten note 'Released 21 October 44'; (IMG 2482-2484), conditions of release.

¹²³ R23436123 (IMG 2508), Police Wellington, 22nd August, 1945, to The Superintendent of Police, Napier.

¹²⁴ R23436123 (IMG 2521.2522), police communications; ANZWO R22531240, Customs Department, Wellington, 26 October 1944, to Under-Secretary; ANZWO R22531240, Under-Secretary, 3 November 1944, to Controller of Customs; ANZWO R22531240, Customs, 10 November 1944, to the Collector of Customs, Napier.

¹²⁵ R23436123 (IMG 2516), 4.1.1945; (IMG 2514), 26.6.1945; (IMG 2515), 7.3.1945.

¹²⁶ Archive Passau, personal file 'Merten'.

¹²⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3128) McKay, 27.10.1944, to Administrator; Intelligence warns about repatriating Germans as possible danger for Allies. Cf. (IMG 3125). The idea that Germans could form a 'fifth column' passing information to the Axis-powers was not without reason. In Bougainville Australian coast watchers reported Japanese naval activities; see *Jack Read. Coastwatcher 1941-43. His Bougainville Reports. Special edition*, by Lieutenant W.J. Read R.A.N.V.R., Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea Printing Company Ltd., 2006.

¹²⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3123) McKay, secretary, 27 October 1944, to Captain Daniels, Director, Security Intelligence Bureau, Wellington, Re German Internees from Samoa, 'secret'.

From Greenmeadows, Krieger wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington, on the 27th of October, 1944.¹²⁹ He applied to return to Samoa: “My principal reason for the present appeal is due to the fact that I have just learnt that many of the internees of Pahiatua, where I was interned, have returned to Samoa.” While Krieger applied for Samoa, Merten complained that others were allowed to return but they not.¹³⁰ His immediate release was linked to the condition not to return to Samoa explained in the letter of the Department of Justice, 12 October 1944: ‘released internees sent to Samoa unless minister declares otherwise. The administrator of Samoa is not prepared to have me returned and I am only released if I accept to stay in NZ for the time being’. Merten added: “I signed. I have never been told that I have done anything wrong except that I was a German and interned as pre-monitoring measure in face of the situation in 42. But this has completely changed. Discrimination that other Samoans could return but not him”.

By the end of 1944, the New Zealand authorities would let Krieger return but the Administrator would not.¹³¹

Released in October 1944, Merten first got a six and then a twelfth month permit for New Zealand with permission to travel to Greenmeadows.¹³² In the process, the Wellington Police and Controller of Customs inquired at different places, including the Marists, for more information. The permit for New Zealand was extended to 7 January 1945 – except if permission would be given to leave the country.¹³³

With a letter from 13 November 1944, the minister in charge of aliens refused permission. The minister had consulted with the department of justice and with the administrator in Samoa who did not want Krieger back.¹³⁴

Krieger tried again in December. On 12 December, Dallard informed the Marist provincial about the decision: neither Merten nor Krieger can return to Samoa. They are free to go to Germany or any other place under Marist authority.¹³⁵ The Internal Affairs Department inquired with the Commissioner of Police and the Director of the Security Intelligence Bureau on 14th December 1944: Is there anything against Krieger’s return?¹³⁶ The Wellington police forwarded the question to the under-secretary of the justice department on 16 December.¹³⁷ Dallard wrote to the police in Wellington on 28 December that Krieger could return once the administrator allows it.¹³⁸ But the administrator did not want him back.¹³⁹

On 4 January 1945, the Police Department forwarded to the Department for Internal Affairs that Krieger had applied to leave New Zealand. This was not to be given as the Minister of Aliens after the intervention of Turnbull decided Krieger cannot return.¹⁴⁰ And so, Brother Joseph

¹²⁹ ANZWO R22531240.

¹³⁰ OMPA 51 8.12 merten27-28 Greenmeadows 5 November 1944, Merten to Darnand.

¹³¹ R23438098 (IMG 2620) Dallard, Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, Wellington, 28 December 1944, to The Commissioner of the Police, Wellington; (IMG 2627) 23 September 1944, Aliens Appeal Tribunal, to The Hon. Minister in Charge of Aliens: “I have your memorandum of the 16th December. I attach a copy of a memorandum from the Secretary to the Island Territories Department dated 1st November, and also a copy of a memorandum dated 26th September referred to therein.”

¹³² R22531240 Customs Department, Wellington, 26 October 1944, to Under-Secretary; Under-Secretary, 3 November 1944, to Controller of Customs; Customs, 10 November 1944, to the Collector of Customs, Napier.

¹³³ R23438098 (IMG 2636), Cummings, Commissioner of Police, Wellington, 23 August 1944, to the Controller of Censorship; (IMG 2635), E.D. Good, Controller of Customs, 25 August 1944, to Father John Murphy Mount St Mary’s Greenmeadows, Hawkes Bay.

¹³⁴ ANZWO R22531240.

¹³⁵ ANZWO R22531240, Dallard, 12 December 1944, to Geaney; OMPA 51 8.12 merten33, Greenmeadows, 19 January 1945, Merten to Darnand.

¹³⁶ R23438098 (IMG 2623).

¹³⁷ R23438098 (IMG 2622); (IMG 2621): The Samoan administrator did not want him back.

¹³⁸ ANZWO R22531240.

¹³⁹ R23438098 (IMG 2620) to the commissioner of the police in Wellington.

¹⁴⁰ R23438098 (IMG 2619) Police Department, Wellington, 4th January 1945, to The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, re Joseph Julius Krieger: “With reference to your memorandum I.A. 15/11/101,941 of the 14th ultimo relating to the above, I have to advise that this alien’s case has been recently reviewed, and, in consultation with the Samoan Administrator, the Hon. Minister in Charge of Aliens has directed that Krieger be not permitted to return to Samoa.”

continued as cook in Greenmeadows, including the summer camp of the students.¹⁴¹ He had a valid permit until 7 January 1946, 'unless other events occur'.¹⁴² This was to happen. Though for the time being Krieger stayed where he was.¹⁴³

Merten, writing from Greenmeadows to Darnand on 18 January 1945, was not pleased. He felt misunderstood and underlined his strictly unpolitical attitude in the camp.¹⁴⁴

Other released internees could return to Samoa. The Controller of Customs asked about Krieger on 8 February 1945. The Administrator understood that family members could return but this does not affect Krieger. German influence is still strong on Samoa and he does not want him back.¹⁴⁵

In his letter of 25 March 1945, Geaney summarized the situation for Bishop Darnand. The government made it clear to him that neither Merten nor Krieger can return to Samoa, especially as long as the war continues. After the war, both may return to Germany or to any other place in the world but not remain in New Zealand.

The Marist leadership of the Oceania Province was searching for possible new appointments for Merten and Krieger outside Samoa and New Zealand. Father Élie G. Bergeron sm (1881-1957),¹⁴⁶ was the provincial based in Villa Maria, Hunter's Hill, Sydney. He was involved in many ways with Marists affected by the war situation in the Pacific. Bergeron was in contact with Bishop Darnand, Samoa, Father Geaney, New Zealand, and Léon L. Dubois SM (1873-1959), assistant general for the missions in the general house in Rome.¹⁴⁷ By letter from 9 January 1945, he informed Geaney that he met Darnand in Fiji. Darnand had to accept that neither can return. A word of thanks goes to Geaney for everything he does for Merten and Krieger. It seems they have to think about an appointment for brother outside New Zealand. For Merten, he calls him officially to do his second novitiate while in Greenmeadows. On 12 March, Bergeron informs Geaney that Krieger would be welcome in Sydney. On 16 April, he informed the superior of Greenmeadows about this option. Another option was Bougainville though no transport was available this time. Fr Louis Schwehr sm had gone to Samoa as representative for the centenary of the missions and the silver jubilee of the bishop – Darnand had hoped Merten and Krieger would be back for this occasion.¹⁴⁸

In August 1945, Merten claimed not to have known the strictness of the condition and applied to return to Samoa.¹⁴⁹ Another complication was his move to Wellington for pastoral work his Marist superiors had asked him to do. Neither the Marists nor the police thought 'Marist house' was limited to Greenmeadows only.¹⁵⁰ On 8 August, Merten was back in Greenmeadows with a Certificate of Registration of Alien No 18619.¹⁵¹

On 7 August, the new provincial, Thomas Heffernan, wrote to Archbishop O'Shea about faculties for newly appointed Marist priests and included a mention on Brother Krieger: He is of a

¹⁴¹ R23438098 (IMG 2617), 7 March 1945, Police Taradale.

¹⁴² R23438098 (IMG 2616), Customs Department Wellington, 30 April 1945, Memorandum to The Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington.

¹⁴³ Police Taradale: R23438098 (IMG 2615), 12 June 1945; (IMG 2614), 17 September 1945.

¹⁴⁴ OMPA 51 8.12 merten31 Mount St Mary's [= Greenmeadows], 18.1.1945, Merten to Darnand.

¹⁴⁵ R17961882 (IMG 3118) Controller of Customs, 8 February 1945, to Island Territories; (IMG 3116) Administration Samoa, 22nd February 1945, Memorandum for Island Territories, copy to Prime Minister office, re Julius Krieger; (IMG 3115) McKay confirms this on 9 March 1945 for Controller of Customs and (IMG 3114) 27th April 1945, to the Administrator in Samoa.

¹⁴⁶ Bergeron: born in Lawrence, first US-born Marist to go to Oceania. In 1919, he arrived in Tonga. In 1932, he left for Sydney to be mission procurator. From 1939 to 1947, he was provincial. After that he went to Levuka in Fiji. *Alive in Memory. A Biographic Necrology of Oceania Marist Province 1836-2011*, Suva, 2001, p. 129.

¹⁴⁷ Dubois, French Marist, initiated the *Lettres aux missionnaires* for Marist communications Europe-Oceania.

¹⁴⁸ OMPA 194503f: 19450109geaneyp1; 19450109mertensp1; 19450302mcgrathp1; 19450312geaneyp1 (2); 19450312geaneyp2; 19450416chapmanp1; Bergeron – Geaney, McGrath, and Chapman; MA MP2, Darnand to Geaney, 6 March 1945; 19460423dubois1, Bergeron, Hunter's Hill, 23 April 1946, to L.L. Dubois sm, Rome.

¹⁴⁹ R23436123 (IMG 2510), Alien Enquiry Office, Wellington, 30 August 1945, report from a police officer.

¹⁵⁰ R23436123 (IMG 2511.2513), the police in Wellington questions Napier on the change of abode contrary to the release order on 23.8.45. (IMG 2512), Napier police did not see the seclusion limited to Greenmeadows.

¹⁵¹ R23436123 (IMG 2503.2504).

sullen disposition and not a good influence among the Brothers in Greenmeadows. He is not allowed to return to Samoa. Heffernan felt that their bishop or his provincial could have done more. Now he had to find a solution.¹⁵² O'Shea replied on 14 August. O'Shea could imagine that Brother's disposition could be a reason for not allowing him to return. Merten had previously visited O'Shea and admitted that once in the camp he may have said something that displeased the authorities. When O'Shea will write again to Bishop Darnand he will say it is not the Marist authorities holding them back. When he sees the Prime Minister he may find out the reasons of the Government refusing a return to the mission.¹⁵³

By the end of August Merten had a temporary permit. McKay informed the office of the Minister of Marine.¹⁵⁴ In view of Turnbull's visit James O'Brien, minister of transport, asked to see him because of clergy intervening with him on Merten's behalf.¹⁵⁵ McKay had to admit to O'Brien that there was no evidence in documents or behavior against Merten though his upbringing and demeanor gave a very pro-German impression. His influence here would be much less than in Samoa.¹⁵⁶

Turnbull insisted to keep Merten and Krieger away from Samoa on 3 September.¹⁵⁷ He answered a letter of O'Brien on 13 September saying that he conversed with Bishop Darnand and will be in Wellington to discuss Merten's case with O'Brien on 22 October.¹⁵⁸ And so the situation was reviewed again. On 18 September, the Department of Justice wrote to the Commissioner of Police: "...I agree that in the present circumstances there is no security objection to Merten's remaining in Wellington..."¹⁵⁹

With a letter by O'Brien, Father Kevin McGrath sm (1891-1965), Marist Mission house, Island Bay, was informed about the development and the arrival of Sir Turnbull.¹⁶⁰ The same day, 28 September, McGrath wrote to the Prime Minister on behalf of Merten and Krieger saying their internment was a precautionary measure in a time of crisis. This crisis is over and so he asked to allow Merten's return. Father Heffernan, himself, and many other Fathers who were with Merten the 12 months since he was released can confirm that there is no ill will on Merten's side. Merten had his love for his country and hatred for the past government, and love for Samoa. Darnand regretted that Merten was not back for the centenary celebrations and asked him to intercede for the return of Merten and Krieger.¹⁶¹

The war was over in the Pacific since 15 August 1945. Many people were on the move. Krieger and Merten wanted to return to Samoa.

On 25 September 1945 McGrath had written to the Prime Minister. On 17 October 1945, A.G. Osborne, Under-Secretary to the Right Hon. The Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, answered him that the letter had arrived and will be considered later this month.¹⁶² On 5 October, the secretary from Island Territories hoped to discuss this with the Samoan Administrator during

¹⁵² MAWwd2 55 57 58, Thomas Heffernan sm, provincial, 7.8.45, to Most Rev. O'Shea: re Brother Krieger.

¹⁵³ MAWwd2 55 57 58, Thomas O'Shea, Wellington, 14th August, 1945, to Fr Provincial, Wellington.

¹⁵⁴ R17961882 (IMG 3113) McKay, Island Territories, 23rd August 1945, to The Private Secretary to the Minister of Marine, Re Merten: forwards recent documents.

¹⁵⁵ R17961882 (IMG 3108) O'Brien, 27.8.1945, to Turnbull. Turnbull confirmed this on 13.9.: (IMG 3107).

¹⁵⁶ R17961882 (IMG 3112) McKay, Island Territories, 28th August 1945, to Administrator, Samoa, Re Merten: O'Brien discussed Merten's case with him the day before.

¹⁵⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3111) Copy of Telegram Admor to Islands Department, 3.9.1945, 'Secret': Hessmann, Schroeder, Stunzner and Retzlaff to be sent to Germany. Merten and Krieger should not return to Samoa but placed elsewhere in their religious community.

¹⁵⁸ MAW, Turnbull, Apia, to James O'Brien, 13 September 1945, answer to letter of O'Brien of 27 August.

¹⁵⁹ R23436123 (IMG 2505.2506).

¹⁶⁰ MAW, O'Brien to McGrath, Island Bay, 28 September 1945: Turnbull will come and discuss the return of Merten. A new man will be appointed for Samoa soon. Kevin Izod McGrath: ordained in 1916; St. Heliers, 1929; Mt. Albert until 1936; parish priest at Island Bay 1936-40 and 1942-48. Cf *Marist Taonga*.

¹⁶¹ MAW, Fr McGrath, to the Right Honourable Peter Fraser M.P., Minister in charge of Island Territories, 28 September 1945.

¹⁶² R17961882 (IMG 3102), A.G. Osborne, 17 October 1945, to Fr McGrath.

the latter's forthcoming visit to New Zealand.¹⁶³ The Administrator made further inquiries with local representatives. The decisions for Merten, Krieger, and four others still in New Zealand are difficult and Turnbull presented each case:¹⁶⁴

"Father Merten and Brother Joseph (released in New Zealand) belong to the Roman Catholic Mission. They were interned on the arrival of the U.S. Forces. His Lordship the Bishop is prepared to vouch for the good conduct of both. With the victorious termination of the War and the Bishop's guarantee, I would be inclined to be magnanimous except for the fact that these two men are full-blooded Germans recently arrived from Germany and thus have no deep roots in this country. If they can be absorbed in their religious community elsewhere it is better they should not return to Samoa at present at all events. Brother Joseph is probably harmless but Father Merten is of a peculiar temperament – he lacks discretion – and is likely to make things difficult for himself and those about him. It is questionable if it is wise to press for their return at present. I understand the Mission now proposes to draw its staff from non-axis countries principally New Zealand. I would suggest a review of the position in six months time." ... "The local people are in a somewhat unfortunate position – many having no clearly defined national status. It would help administration if early facilities could be provided to enable those who desire to become British subjects."

On 19 October, O'Shea informed Darnand, the authorities do not allow a return.¹⁶⁵

Based on Turnbull's caveats, McKay prepared a recommendation for the Minister for Island Territories on 30 October 45. Two Germans, one a Nazi-propagandist and one mentally ill are not to return to Samoa. The Aliens Appeal Tribunal recommended sending Merten to Germany. Krieger is harmless.¹⁶⁶ The deputy administrator was in New Zealand and 'considers that these two Churchmen are no more likely to be harmful than other Germans who are already in Samoa, and in this view I agree.' So, McKay would allow Merten and Krieger to return. The Minister followed McKay's recommendation: return on conditions set by the Samoan Administrator. The Administrator was informed by telegram.¹⁶⁷

The Minister of Justice agreed on 5 December 1945, to allow Merten and Krieger to return to Samoa – they are 'no more harmful than other Germans already there'. Two other internees were not allowed to return.¹⁶⁸ While the wheels were set in his favor, there was another initiative for Merten. James O'Brien, minister for transport, was approached again by the Marists to help.¹⁶⁹ This became obsolete as the war cabinet decided in favor of a return on 14 December.¹⁷⁰ The next day the Samoan Administration was informed.¹⁷¹ Three days later, other institutions¹⁷² and Merten

¹⁶³ R17961882 (IMG 3104), 5 October 1945, secretary to Administrator, re letter to Prime Minister; (IMG 3102) A.G. Osborne, Under-Secretary to the Right Hon. The Prime Minister, 17 October 1945, to Fr McGrath: letter of 25 September to Prime Minister about Merten and Krieger had arrived; to be considered later in the month.

¹⁶⁴ R17961882 (IMG 3101) Administration Samoa, 16.10.1945, to Island Territories, German internees.

¹⁶⁵ OMPA 47 5.91 Archbishop O'Shea sm, Wellington, to Bishop Darnand sm, Apia, 19 October 1945.

¹⁶⁶ R17961882 (IMG 3094-3095) Island Territories, 30 October 1945, to the Minister. He also mentions that the Marists made interventions in favour of Merten and Krieger.

¹⁶⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3096) Minister of Island Territories; (IMG 3099), Telegram Islands Territories to Admor Apia 30/10/1945; "Secret. Your telegram 549. Yes. After discussion with McCulloch propose recommend return 2 missionaries be allowed on ground that their nationalism is no more prominent than that of some already in the territory."

¹⁶⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3093) R. Mason, Office Minister of Justice, 5 December 1945, to A. G. Osborne, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Island Territories Department: German ex-internees from Western Samoa.

¹⁶⁹ R17961882 (IMG 3092) Marist Messenger Office, 6.12.1945: please contact Mr. O'Brien whom Merten had asked to support his appeal. Handwritten note 15 December: 'Cabinet allowed them to return yesterday!'

¹⁷⁰ R18872121 (IMG 3042) Island Territories: Recommendation Merten, Krieger, Retzlaff, be allowed to return under conditions set by NZ administrator; approved in cabinet 14 December 1945, Foss Shanahan, secretary.

¹⁷¹ R17961882 (IMG 3090) Minister for Island Territories recommends, that Merten, Krieger, and Retzlaff can return on conditions set by the Administrator; NZ to pay the trip. Approved in cabinet on 14 December; (IMG 3088) Telegram Islands Territories to Administration Samoa 15 December 1945, cabinet for return of Merten, Krieger, Retzlaff; other cases dealt with in six months; please inform Marist mission and relatives; (IMG 3085) Memorandum for the Administrator, 17 December 1945, more details.

¹⁷² R17961882 (IMG 3084), Island Territories, 17 December 1945, Memorandum for Police, Customs, Justice: Cabinet order of release for Krieger, Merten, Retzlaff.

and Krieger were informed to return on conditions set by the administrator and necessary to be accepted.¹⁷³ McKay, Department of Island Territories, wrote to Merten, including Brother Joseph in his letter of 17 December:¹⁷⁴

“Dear Sir, I am writing to confirm the information conveyed to Father McGrath by telephone on 15th instant, that Government have authorized the return to Western Samoa of Brother Joseph Krieger and yourself, conditional on your residence there being subject to conditions to be defined by the Administrator. Your fares will be paid by the Government from Wellington to Apia in all respects as if you had proceeded from Somes Island to Apia; - this provision is available for a period of up to six months. The conditions which will be required by the Administrator are

(i) that you execute and undertake terms of parole which will be presented to you upon your arrival at Apia, or any later modification of them. I enclose a copy of these terms as operating in respect of other German-ex-internees some months ago. Possibly there may be some modification made of them now but the Department has no recent information in that respect. The Aliens Emergency Regulations, 1940, are still in force as regards the relevant provisions of them.

(ii) that guarantee be given on your behalf for your proper behavior and obedience to all the terms of the parole. There is no doubt in your cases that the Catholic Mission will do so, and there will be no need for you to do anything further as to this stipulation.

Will you please let me know if you are willing to accept these terms.

If you will let me know when it is convenient for you to travel, the Department will request the Union Steam Ship Co., Ltd., to reserve passage for you, and issue orders for train and steamer tickets. I enclose forms of application for permit to leave New Zealand and tax clearance certificate.

I am sending this letter in duplicate, and would ask that you be good enough to send one copy to Brother Joseph, informing him that the provisions of it are applicable in all respects to him also.

Yours faithfully, C. McKay”

Possibly the visit of Turnbull in New Zealand and the end of the war finally resulted in new options. Turnbull has obviously set conditions and kept to himself the decision to act on them once former internees have returned. The Department for Island Territories made travel arrangements for their return.¹⁷⁵ Contacts were made with the police, customs, the department of justice, the administration in Samoa, and the shipping company.¹⁷⁶ The Department could report that Krieger left on the *Matua* from Auckland on 29 December, and Merten and Retzlaff will leave on the same ship on 25 January.¹⁷⁷ Brother Joseph left indeed on 29 December 1945.¹⁷⁸

On 8 January 1946, McKay enclosed the tickets for Merten and the permission to leave New Zealand via Auckland presuming Merten accepts the conditions.¹⁷⁹ On 16 January 1946 Merten finally thanked accepting the conditions.¹⁸⁰ He arrived on board the *Matua* on 25 January 1946.¹⁸¹

¹⁷³ R17961882 (IMG 3086), Island Territories, 17 December 1945, to Merten: Confirms permission under conditions to return to Samoa for Krieger and Merten as said on telephone to McGrath. Present yourself to the administrator, Aliens Emergency Regulations of 1940 still in force, guarantee be given on your behalf of proper behavior in Samoa. Do you accept? When do you want to travel? Please hand the duplicate to Br. Joseph.

¹⁷⁴ OMPA 58 16.2 6 C. McKay, Secretary, Island Territories, Wellington, 17 December 1945, to Fr Albert Merten, Marist Mission House, 50, Clyde Street, Island Bay, Wellington.

¹⁷⁵ R17961887 2121 (IMG 3043), Island Territories, 17 December 1945, Memorandum for Police, Customs, Department of Justice, on Cabinet approval for Merten, Krieger, Hermann Paul Retzlaff.

¹⁷⁶ R17961882 (IMG 3073), Island Territories, 25 January 1946, memorandum for commissioner of police, controller of customs, under-secretary department of justice; (IMG 3078), Id., 4 January 1946, to Secretary, Samoan Administration, Apia: Merten and Retzlaff will return on 24 January.

¹⁷⁷ R179618872121 (IMG 3045), Island Territories, 25 January 1946, to various departments.

¹⁷⁸ R17961882 (IMG 3080), Secretary, Island Territories, 20 December 1945, to Secretary Samoan Administration: Brother Krieger will return on *Matua* on 29 December 1945. Retzlaff four weeks later; (IMG 3076) Union Steam Ship Company, 7 January 1946, refund by Island Territories for Krieger; (IMG 3077) Island Territories, Order for steamer passage for Bro. Joseph Krieger, 21 December 1945.

¹⁷⁹ MAW, McKay, Island Territories, 8 January 1946, to McGrath, Marist Mission House, Island Bay.

¹⁸⁰ R17961882 (IMG 3075) Secretary, Island Territories, to Father McGrath, Marist Mission House; (IMG 3074) Catholic Presbytery, 50 Clyde Street, Island Bay, 16 January 1946, to The Secretary Island Territories.

On 18 February 1946, the Wellington police inquired with the police in Napier about the departure of Krieger of which they have heard from the secretary of Island Territories. What is going on?¹⁸² On 23 February, Taradale police reported that they had interviewed Father Murphy, Grenmeadows, about the whereabouts of Krieger. Murphy told them Krieger left some time around last Christmas. Fr McGrath, Island Bay Wellington had said he would look after the papers. Krieger did not inform the police at Taradale.¹⁸³ He had left the Dominion from Auckland on the *Matua* on 29 December 1945.¹⁸⁴ Some lack of communication among the many departments involved caused this lack of information ‘not to happen again’.¹⁸⁵

By March 1946, F. W. Voelcker,¹⁸⁶ the new administrator, began his term of office in Samoa. His new tasks included to deal with Germans formerly interned in New Zealand and now back on the Island. He met most of them in Apia on 18 March and sent a memorandum about it to the Department of Island Territories in Wellington. Among the 15 present was Krieger and also Brother Werner Ossevorth sm, German but not interned in New Zealand. Among the five absent was Merten. Certain conditions for their parole and general rules kept in place like reporting when they want to travel to other islands. 113 Germans born on Samoa will be informed by a circular letter. The new man signaled willingness to help.¹⁸⁷

All the turmoil caused by the war took time to settle. As provincial, Bergeron tried to keep the general house informed about the issues arising for all the mission areas with letters sent in April 1946. Gradually Marists could return to Bougainville, the South Solomons, and Fiji. One case was Brother Julius - this was Jules Stranen (1902-1987). He was a builder, plantation manager and a saw miller. With Krieger, Julius was the first name and not the religious name. At some point Krieger was thought to do similar things but was regarded as too old and frail.¹⁸⁸ Brother Jules was in New Caledonia waiting to return to Bougainville which he could in 1948.¹⁸⁹ Villa Maria had now space for new missionaries from Europe, the USA, or the seminary of Blessed Chanel in Toongabbie (Australia) ‘in full swing’!¹⁹⁰ Merten’s group had by then finished their second novitiate and the provincial named Merten among those recommended to make the vow of stability.

Conclusion

Krieger was released from internment in New Zealand in June 1943 and Merten was released in October 1944. First, neither was allowed to return. With the war over, both boarded a ship to

¹⁸¹ R23436123 (IMG 2502) The Aliens Office, Auckland, 29th January 1946, to: The Inspector of Police, Wellington: Albert Merten AL. 18619. The above named alien left Auckland on 25th January 1946, per M.V. “Matua” Certificate attached. Commissioner’s office not informed of alien’s departure.

¹⁸² R23438098 (IMG 2611), Wellington Police to Napier Police; (IMG 2613) Secretary, Island Territories, to police.

¹⁸³ R23438098 (IMG 2610).

¹⁸⁴ R23438098 (IMG 2607), Police Department, Wellington, 27th March 1946, Memorandum for The Superintendent of Police, Auckland, and for police in Napier; (IMG 2608), New Zealand Police, Special Branch Detective Office, Auckland, March 20th, 1946, Report of Constable Andrew J. Cummings: „I respectfully report that the above named Alien left N.Z. on the M.V. *Matua* for Apia, Samoa on the 29.12.46. I asked him for his Alien Registration Certificate and he informed me that he had not seen it for some considerable time, but thought that it had been handed to the Wellington Police.”

¹⁸⁵ R23438098 (IMG 2609), February and early March 1946: different police stations inquire about the unknown departure of Krieger. Not to happen again: (IMG 2612), The Superintendent of Police, Auckland, 27 March 1946; (IMG 2606), Commissioners Office, 2 April 1946.

¹⁸⁶ Cf Wikipedia, ‘List of Colonial Governors of Samoa’; accessed on 24 August 2017. This list gives ‘1946’ but not exact date when the changeover happened from Turnbull to Francis William Voelcker.

¹⁸⁷ R17961882 (IMG 3070) Secretary, Administration, Apia, 21st March 1946, Memorandum for The Secretary, Island Territories, Aliens Emergency Regulations 1946; (IMG 3071) Administrator’s office, Apia, 18th March 1946, notes from memory, Administrator to the following Germans at his office, 10 am, 18 March 1946.

¹⁸⁸ *Alive in Memory*, p. 261: Jules Stranen, Luxembourg. In 1926, he left for Bougainville, and spent the next 42 year in the Mission. In 1948 he was in Torokina. In 1968 he retired to France.

¹⁸⁹ APM, Indices for 1946 and 1948.

¹⁹⁰ OMPA 194503f: 19460423dubois1; 19460423dubois2; 19460423dubois3; 19460426dubois1; 19460426dubois2: Bergeron – Dubois, Rome.

return but under conditions. Krieger left in December 1945 and Merten in January 1946. Merten was in Falealupo (Savaii) and Joseph in Leone (Tutuila) in 1946 and in Apia from 1948 onwards.¹⁹¹ Ten years later he will move to Sydney where he died while Merten remained and died in Apia, Samoa.

A complex process lay behind their return from Samoa to Samoa. To understand the process we need to see whether the respective step is taken before the war, during the war with imminent danger for Samoa and New Zealand, towards the end of the war, or after the war. The process included a first internment on Samoa, due to general security measures and due to US American military influence. Then, some of the Germans, not all, were transferred to New Zealand for internment and lived in two camps. Their internment and their appeals for release and return landed on many desks: government departments, Samoan administration, the Red Cross, various bishops and Marist provincials, the apostolic delegate, Marists in Germany, their relatives in Germany, fellow Marists and friends in Samoa. First, they were released on conditions with alien status for a limited stay in New Zealand. Eventually they were allowed to return on conditions. Repatriation or other missionary appointments were serious options. The sheer complexity, in part classified information, and war conditions in general left the New Zealand provincial and Marists in Germany and Rome in the unknown for much of it. The end of the war and a new administrator on Samoa built the bridge for a re-start in their beloved mission field.

Why were they interned – and other Germans not? There are some answers in the correspondence though some parties felt not fully informed about the true reasons, among them Merten, Krieger, Geaney, and Darnand. In a first step, Merten had to be posted on a main island in Samoa for supervision and Krieger was interned in 1939. Three years later both were sent to New Zealand. Turnbull saw a potential danger in the former WWI soldier Krieger and a potential Nazi ideologist in Merten who had visited the *Karlsruhe* and being a priest had influence on people. The need to have US military assistance gave great weight to demands from American Samoa preventing any ‘fifth column’. That Germans were interned can be understood. Krieger’s question remains valid – why they and not others?

In passing, there are references to race and blood as argument. The German consul Hellenthal distinguished full-blood and half-blood Germans in Samoa.¹⁹² His example is the son of Jahnke, who was first accepted by the German Luftwaffe but soon afterwards discharged on grounds of being half-blood:

“I would therefore be thankful if a clear-cut decision could now be given as to whether Samoan blood in the sense of the German racist legislation is to be regarded as the equivalent of Aryan blood, and further, if this question arises, how great a percentage of miscegenation with Samoan blood can still be regarded as equivalent to Aryan blood.”

The same distinction is mentioned as argument by New Zealand government people. Examples are a telegram from the Samoan Administration to this Department of 17 September 1944: Some ‘would be better out of Territory as would some of the part-Samoan Germans who will always be source of trouble’, and a letter by the Department for Island Territories to the minister, 30 October 1945.¹⁹³

The case of Merten and Krieger is but one detail of a much broader story. It illustrates the situation of Marists in the Pacific War, and the interruption of missionary work. The New Zealand authorities took great care to protect the security of the country in a time of war as well as to respect national and international legislation like the Geneva Convention.

¹⁹¹ APM, Indices of Marist appointments for the respective year.

¹⁹² R17961882 (IMG 3154-IMG 3162) Hellenthal, Carbon-copy for Consulate-general Germany, Sydney, Wellington, 30 May 1937, Confidential Political Report. German Samoa, British and NZ views, here, (IMG 3161).

¹⁹³ R17961882 (IMG 3149) Telegram from Samoa; R17961882 (IMG 3094-3095), Department Island Territories.

Different church authorities came to their aid. Fr. Geaney did much and was frustrated by the feeling that important information was kept from him. Overall, church authorities respected the decisions of the state authorities.¹⁹⁴

Their status as German religious ministers played against them in the eyes of the authorities, especially for Merten as a priest, much less so for Krieger as a brother though Merten could exercise his ministry during internment.

Neither Merten nor Krieger complained about the way they were treated. Of course, they would have preferred not to have been interned at all (like other Marists!) and to have been released earlier. They could make appeals about their situation and were heard. They received material support from Samoa, the German and the International Red Cross. They could communicate with Samoa and their home province. The letterhead of the camp, censorship, and Merten's question whether Bishop Darnand received all his letters point out war conditions. To hear from Merten and Krieger and via them from other Marists in the Pacific was a great consolation to the Marists in Germany who during the war often did not know whether a confrere was alive or dead.

Sir Alfred Turnbull acted with much reservation and security as his utmost criterion.¹⁹⁵ The New Zealand authorities listed him as a key argument against release or return. Turnbull finally granted return bound to clear conditions. His retirement date is 28 February 1946 after 16 years of service. The Parliamentary report spoke about a good and cooperative relationship between state and church on Samoa during his time.¹⁹⁶ When he left Samoa on 20th of February, 1946¹⁹⁷ Krieger and Merten were back and they may well have met. At this stage we do not know if and how they looked back on the internment affair.

The fate of internees was linked to the war situation and depended on the judgment of different authorities. Which experiences did other interned Germans Marists have during World War II?¹⁹⁸ How were Merten and Krieger received back in Samoa? Which was the view of the Samoan chiefs and Samoan Catholics on their internment? How was the post-war situation of the Germans? There are links to subsequent discussions of Marists and the Second World War in the Pacific.

Appendix: The archival documents

Each document can be identified in three ways: the page belongs to an archival folder; it normally has a date, place, and name of author and address; each page has an IMG number from the camera. The reference is to the archival code (see list below) followed by the IMG number in parentheses. IMG numbers can double because some documents exist as copy with the different New Zealand authorities.

Archives New Zealand, National Archival Repository: The main archival documents stem from Archives New Zealand, the national archival repository, Wellington. Elizabeth Charlton, archivist of the New Zealand Province of the Society of Mary, viewed documents in May, June, November 2017 and February 2018. To access some files special permission and vetting are required by the controlling agency, in this case the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I thank the Ministry for the permission granted and Elizabeth for the great work she did.

Marist Archives, Wellington, New Zealand (=MAW): Elizabeth Charlton provided most kindly documentation from the Marist Archives.

¹⁹⁴ Due to little documentation on Archbishop O'Shea, his precise role is still not clear. At this moment, the archives are not accessible because of renovation works.

¹⁹⁵ Chapman, *German Marist Experience*, p. 14-16, speaks of Turnbull's ambiguous role. With much more documents available, we can nuance this in Turnbull's favor.

¹⁹⁶ R22531240 (IMG 2925) 15 March 1946, Memorandum to the Prime Minister about terms of retirement for Sir Alfred Turnbull, B.C. Ashwin, Secretary to the Treasury. Page 13 on the state-church relationship.

¹⁹⁷ E-mail 23 November 2017, Charlotte McGillen, Research adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, NZ, on return date of Turnbull: R20328669 Turnbull, Alfred C. – Administrator, Western Samoa (restricted access): "Sir Alfred Turnbull left Apia at 8.40am on the 20th of February 1946 with his wife Lady Turnbull".

¹⁹⁸ On German internees in Ireland during World War II: Cathy Molohan, *Germany and Ireland 1945-1955. Two Nation's Friendship*, Dublin, Portland Oregon, Irish Academic Press, 1999, 10-38.

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand: The library holds microfilm copies from material in the Archives of the Oceania Marist Province, Suva (=OMPA) also used here. Again I thank Elizabeth Charlton for providing photos.

General Archives of the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) in Rome (=APM): Possibly more related material is there. I limited myself to some additional information on the German missionaries.

Archdiocesan Archives, Wellington (for O'Shea): under renovation at the time of this research.

Marist Archive, Passau, Germany: Personal files for Krieger and Merten are kept in Passau. These archives also hold some of the circular letters from World War II by Father Valentin Antczak, Fürstzell, to keep the dispersed confreres informed.¹⁹⁹ Information on Merten and Krieger he got with the help of the International Red Cross.²⁰⁰ The Wellington files mention this correspondence.

Archives New Zealand, Wellington

R17961880 (IMG 3049) German Internees from Samoa, 1939-40

R17961881 (IMG 3050-3068) German Internees from Samoa, 1941-43

R17961882 (IMG 3069-3173) German Internees from Samoa, 1941-46

R18388123 Container Code C 385 444; Archives Reference No ABGU W3777 7191 Box 11; Record Number 923; Title Aliens Authority Case Files – Rev. A Merten & Brother Joseph Krieger; Dates 1942-43, Vetting required. Photos: IMG 2545-IMG 2587

R18872117_1 - _3 Enemy Prisoners of War, Aliens and Internees - Internees - Internment in NZ of aliens sent from other countries 1940-1946

R18872120 (IMG 3025-3040) Enemy Prisoners of War, Aliens and Internees - Internees - Internment in NZ of aliens sent from other countries 1940-1946

R18872121 (IMG 3041-3048) Enemy Prisoners of War, Aliens and Internees - Internees - Internment in NZ of aliens sent from other countries 1940-1946

R22014121 (digitised WW1 record) [TURNBULL, Alfred Clarke - WW1 32552 - Army](#) FL18409834. FL18409836. FL18409837. FL18409842. FL18409843. FL18409845. FL18409858: Alfred Turnbull – World War I

R22439551 Container Code C 912 860; Archive Reference No AD1 1384; Dates 0; Title Aliens and Prisoners of War – Interned aliens – Krieger J. Photos: IMG 2588-2604 [Folder 243_3105]

R22439554 Container Code C 912 860; Archives Reference No AD 1 1384, Aliens and Prisoners of War – Interned aliens – Merten A., Dates 0; Photos: IMG 2481-2499 [Folder 243_3105]

R22439554 Archives Reference No AD 1 1384, Aliens and Prisoners of War – Interned aliens – Merten A. (IMG 2481-IMG 2499)

R22531240 - Interned Samoan Enemy Aliens 1940-1947: R2253 1240 (IMG 2925) 15 March 1946, Memorandum to the Prime Minister about terms of retirement for Sir Alfred Turnbull

R22531240: Interned Samoan Enemy Aliens: Berking, Rudolph Bernhard; Gabaver, Fedor Rudolf; Gebaver, Robert Herman; Hessman, Paul Amo; Hessman, Marie Elise (Wife); Jahnke, Fritz Martin; (Hessman, Marie Elise, Daughter); Jahnke, Verner Eliche; Kruse, Rudolph Frederick; Matthes, A J G (deceased); Meiritz, Emil Otto (released); Meyer, August (released); Retziuff, Herman Paul; Stuenzner, Frederick Oscar Christian; Stuenzner, Kurt Frederick Montgomery; Wetzell, Albert August; Wetzell, Robert Carl; David, Felix; David, Rudolph; Gosche, Ferdinand Anton Ludwid; Jahnke, Walter Wilhelm Waldemar; Krieger, Julius; Kruse, Fritz Wilhelm; Krue, Johann Emil; Merten, Albert; Meyer, Kurt Max Hermann; August (Ze Schwabedisson); Naver, Thomas George;

¹⁹⁹ See Alois Greiler sm, private paper: ‚Deutsche Maristen 1933 bis 1950‘, Passau/Dublin, 2018.

²⁰⁰ See Alois Greiler sm, private paper: ‚Die Unifra-Rundbriefe während des Zweiten Weltkriegs‘, Passau, 2016.

Rasch, Otto; Reye, Raimund (released); Schaumkel, Fritz; Schmidt, Paul; Schmalkuchen, Karl; Speimann, Julius William; Tiedemann, Christoph; Wulf, Theodor Dietrick Sophus; Schoeder, Hans Hennig; Schaafhahsen, Albert Scan from Canon-1000 Archives New Zealand, Wellington Office

R22531240, Archives New Zealand, Wellington Office; Scan from Canon-10007 (0419_001) File information; Contains:

German internees (list of names); Controller of Customs, 26 October 1944, Memorandum for Under-Secretary Department of Justice, on Merten; Dallard to Controller, 3 November 1944; Customs, 10 November 1944, to Collector of Customs, Napier: on Merten; Julius Krieger, Greenmeadows, 27 October 1944, to Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington; Minister in Charge of Aliens, 1 November 1944, to Under-Secretary Justice Department; Minister in Charge of Aliens, to Krieger, 13 November 1944: Government does not allow return to Samoa; Department of Justice, 13 November 1944, to W. Perry, Minister in Charge of Aliens, on Krieger and Merten; Office of the Minister in Charge of Aliens, 13 November 1944, to Krieger: Government does not allow return to Samoa; Department of Justice, 13 November 1944, to W. Perry, Minister in Charge of Aliens, on Krieger and Merten (same as above); Dallard, Department of Justice, to Geaney, 12 November 1944, on Krieger and Merten; Police Department, Wellington, 13 December 1944, to Dallard, Justice Department, on Merten; Police Department, Wellington, 16 December 1944, to Dallard, Justice Department, on Krieger; Dallard, Department of Justice, 21 December 1944, to Commissioner of Police, Wellington: on Merten; Dallard, Department of Justice, 28 December 1944, to Commissioner of Police, Wellington: on Krieger.

R23436123 Container Code C 693 518; Record Number AL 18619, Merten, Albert (Germany). Photos: IMG 2500-2544 [Folder 243_3105]

R23438098 Container Code C 496 921; Archives Reference No AAAC 489 Box 279; Record Number AL 23728; Title Krieger, Joseph Julius known as Brother Joseph (German); Dates 1942-1946; Vetting required. Photos: IMG 2605-2651 [Folder 243_3105]

R2854201 Container C 317 673, Archives Reference No AL7 1; 1940 Interned Enemies - Alien Individual Case Files - Julius (Brother Joseph) Krieger, (includes his passport) (IMG 2468-IMG 2476)

R2854206 Container Code C 317 673; Archives Reference No AL7 1; Title: Interned Enemies – Alien Individual Case Files – Merten [sic], Albert (Roman Catholic Priest) (includes German passport); Dates 1940. Photos: IMG 2657 (archival information); IMG 2658-1668.2670: Merten, passport, all visa

R2854206 Interned Enemies - Alien Individual Case Files - Merten, Albert, (Roman Catholic Priest) (includes German passport) (IMG 2657-IMG2673)

General Archives of the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) in Rome (=APM), Italy

Indices for 1946 and 1948; APM 1924 Merten, Albert (personal file); APM 1546 Krieger, Josef (personal file). Visited on 6 June 2018.

Marist Archive, Passau, Germany

Personal files Merten and Krieger; UNIFRA circular letters World War II.

Marist Archives, Wellington (= MAW)

From Inventory 1 Series

GHL1_228-229 hw document

HD7_317-318 + PHL1_137-148, 1915-1916, Minister of Defense, NZ, to Marist provincial, about exemption for ecclesiastical students from military service.

MAW APD1: Archbishop Panico, Apostolic Delegate, to Fr. Provincial Geaney SM, 29 March 1943; Geaney to Panico, 5 April 1943; Panico to Geaney, 12 April 1943; Geaney to Panico, 31 July 1943. MAW MPI, Fr. Provincial Geaney SM to Fr. Orève SM, 1 June and 1 July 1942.

MAW MP2 Fr. Provincial Geaney SM to Bishop Darnand, 11 June 1942; Darnand to Geaney, 22 September 1942; Geaney to Darnand, 2 January 1942; Darnand to Geaney, 24 January 1943; Geaney to Darnand, 16 February 1943; Darnand to Geaney, 22 May 1943; Geaney to Darnand, 20 June 1943; Darnand to Geaney, 6 March 1945; Geaney to Darnand, 25 March 1945.

MAW Acc 11 Fr Kevin McGrath SM

MAWwd2 55 57 58, Correspondence Archbishop O'Shea with Fr Heffernan, Marist Provincial, August 1945

Marist Archives Oceania Province, Suva, Fiji (= OMPA), microfilm copies, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

OMPA 365 19450227dwyerp1 et alia [1945]

OMPA 370 Samoa 19430928 darnandp1 et alia [1943-1945; 5 pdf files]

OMPA 371 Samoa 19430423 geaneyp1 et alia [1943-1945; 6 pdf files]

OMPA 380 19430704geaney et alia [1943-1944; 2 pdf files]

OMPA Diocese of Samoa

OMPA 47 5.91 Letter Archbishop O'Shea SM to Bishop Darnand SM

OMPA 51 8.12.1ff: Correspondence Krieger to Bishop Darnand; Correspondence Bishop Darnand and Father Merten; Correspondence Bishop Darnand with Administrator Sir Turnbull, Archbishop O'Shea, and letter Mr McKay to Father Merten

OMPA 381

19450109geaneyp1; 19450109mertenp1; 19450302mcgrathp1; 19450312geaneyp1 (2);
19450312geaneyp1; 19450312geaneyp2; 19450416chapmanp1; 19460423duboispl;
19460423duboispl2; 19460423duboispl3; 19460426duboispl1; 19460426duboispl2