

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON P.O.W. CAMPS IN WHICH CERTAIN ALLIED PERSONNEL HAVE SPENT 3½ years CAPTIVITY

GENERAL: This report is written at the request of Capt. Stengle U.S.A. a member of the Allied Repatriation Staff in Korea. I have only had very short notice to cover the happenings of 3½ years captivity, and I propose to forward a further full report on arrival in Manila to Allied H.Q.

The period of captivity falls naturally into four:

1. JAVA
2. Voyage by ship to JAPAN
3. JAPAN
4. KOREA

1. JAVA: 27.3.42 to 21.10.42.

Up to 14.5.42 a contingent consisting of 1093 British, 40 Australian and 23 Americans were accommodated in a children's school in BATAVIA. The sleeping space was completely inadequate (a school designed for 700 day children) and personnel slept body to body with no space on hard concrete floors. Latrine accommodation was very poor, and washing accommodation non-existent. The Japanese had made no provision for cooking whatsoever. In the centre of the prison area was a garden in which dugouts had been made by the school authorities. These had been used by the Japanese as latrines. Excreta etc were lying all over the place, and the stench was quite unbearable. Permission to fill in these nauseating trenches was only granted after the school had been in occupation several days. The latrine main drain was constantly blocked, and no arrangements were ever made by the Japanese to clear it. Had we stayed in this camp for any further time, a serious outbreak of disease could scarcely have been avoided. There was no hospital accommodation of any kind and no medicines were supplied. For the first 4 days of occupation the Japanese supplied no food, and by the 4th day we were reduced to starvation rations, having by our own arrangements brought two days iron rations with us. On the 14th May 1942 the camp was evacuated. The Australians and Americans were moved to different camps, and the British to the native gaol at BOEI GLODOK. This gaol was designed for 900 native prisoners, and on their arrival the 1093 British Army personnel joined 1160 R.A.F. making a total of 2273 P.O.W. in all. The accommodation was thus totally inadequate and some 750 men were forced, whatever the weather, to sleep in the open. Latrine accommodation was non-existent and all operations of nature were performed over open drains.

Hospital accommodation was filthy, bug-ridden and inadequate. Japanese supplied no medicines and those which were used were purchased by ourselves. The death roll during our period in this gaol was about 55, i.e. 2%.

Numerous incidents such as beatings up and men being made to kneel in the sun for long periods took place. Food was poor in quality and quantity, but was made up by local purchase. The rice was very poor in quality and frequently contained flour sweepings, cigarette ends and weavils. On 21.10.42 a party of 500 Army and R.A.F. personnel proceeded to the port en route for Japan via SINGAPORE.

2. VOYAGE TO JAPAN. 22.10.42 to 26.11.42

Accommodation on the ship to SINGAPORE was crowded but bearable. At SINGAPORE we disembarked and the following indignity was inflicted.

On a public road, in full view of all passers by, all personnel were forced to take down their trousers while a test for dysentery was made. This consisted in a glass rod being inserted per anum. We were then moved to another ship, the DAI NICHU MARU, on board of which we were joined by a further 800 British personnel. The ship was some 30 years old and 3 to 4000 tons displacement. Accommodation was appalling. About 500 men were thrust into the bottom holds and a large number compelled to sleep on wet, ore. About 800 were confined on wooden shelves adjoining the engine room, whence the heat was intense.

Food supplied was of very poor quality and only two meals per day were served, usually following very close one on another, viz 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

2/3 of a pint of water was issued daily to each man. Occasionally the Japanese provided us with our own ration food on a scale of one 12 oz tin per 100 men. The diet generally consisted of good rice cooked in fish water, with practically no vegetable.

Three latrines at either end of the ship served over 1000 personnel. There was no hospital accommodation, and this was eventually improvised on the main deck forward, and consisted of tarpaulin coverings. Underneath these coverings the sick lay among the monkey engines. When the weather changed to rain squalls and bitter winds, there was no place to which the hospital could be moved, and in consequence the sick remained under bitterly conditions and damp and leaking tarpaulins.

On arrival in JAPAN, men in poor condition were left behind at MOJI, and I later learned that out of 254 men so left 125 died (No. 4 Camp at MOJI).

### 3. CAMP IN JAPAN. 26.11.42 to 25.4.45

At MOJI the original 500 men were split and I was sent with 23 other officers and 242 other ranks to KUMAMOTO. Practically every man was suffering from scurvy, pellagra and general exhaustion. On arrival at the camp snow was on the ground, and men were in possession of only tropical clothing. The Japanese supplied no warm clothes until March, when the winter was nearly over. By the end of March 31 men had died, and this total was increased to 35 by the 1.5.43. These deaths were practically all due to poor food, lack of warm clothes and totally inadequate medical supplies and attention and, in some cases, brutal maltreatment on the part of the Japanese authorities.

Before continuing our history, I wish to emphasise that during our whole period of captivity in Japan right up to the 25 April 1945 we were under the command of the same Commandant, Lieut. SAKAMOTO. This officer was an uneducated man of a brutal and callous temperament, and was in no wise fitted for this position as Commandant. He had as his military interpreter for the whole period, a three star soldier TAKEO KATSURA. This man not only acted as interpreter, but was the undisputed power behind the throne who influenced the life of the camp to an overwhelming extent.

These two men are, in my opinion, entirely responsible for the sufferings and indignities to which men in their camps were subjected.

Taking all the camps occupied by the British, Australian and Dutch nationalities, of whom I was the senior representative, the following short notes on each camp are given.

(a) KUMAMOTO. Of the 35 men who died while in this camp the following were some outstanding cases :-

Very sick men were forced to parade in the early morning and leave barracks in icy cold weather. Should they collapse en route to work, after leaving the main gate, they were permitted to return, but they were forced to go on parade rather than to ~~return to beds~~ remain in bed.

One man, too sick to work, was deliberately forced to go out to work all of one day in bitter weather. He died the next day. On the day previous to his working, admission to hospital had been refused.

Men were forced to work in the cold with no socks or boots. They developed frostbite which turned in several cases to gangrene. In these case of one man death resulted, as the British doctor was refused permission to operate.

A further case was of a man with appendicitis. A hospital was within sight of camp, but he was not allowed an operation, and eventually he died.

Accommodation was very poor. The huts made of thin wood had leaky roofs, and walls patched with newspapers. The damp mud floors were subject to flooding and no fires for drying, except on rare occasions were allowed. The windows consisted of wooden shutters which were opened in all weathers at 5 a.m. daily.

No special treatment was accorded to the officers though after the first month they were moved to a separate hut.

All through captivity no communication between Officers and men was officially permitted until 25 Jan 1945.

On 20.11.43 we moved to KASHI camp near FUKUOKA.

#### (b) KASHI

In this camp accommodation was adequate. All personnel, both officers, men and the hospital were in one large warehouse. This warehouse consisted of concrete walls and floor with a tin roof and was in consequence dry. While here we were joined by 40 Dutch, 30 British, 1 American Doctor and 3 American enlisted men. At this camp, there were many instances of beatings and brutalities by the Commandant, KATSURA, and a Sgt. HORSUMI. Examples were :-

Two officers beaten up for no reason by Sgt. HORSUMI.  
The Cook Sgt. aged 48, beaten up, having his mouth split open and teeth

knocked out for no reason by Sgt. HORSUMI.  
One Bombardier knocked senseless and then his face ground into the ground by the heel of the Commandant's boot.

In the depth of a winter night, one man made to run round the compound for a long time stark naked.

Numerous instances of single and mass beatings and men made to kneel for long periods with bamboo sticks between the backs of their knees. All these cases were carried out by Sgt. HORSUMI and/or KATSURA.

In April we moved to MISHERODA Camp

#### (c) MISHERODA

This camp was the ~~worst~~ worst of all camps for accommodation. The huts were made of wooden frames, supporting walls made of strips of tree bark. Roofing was of inadequate and thin thatch, which leaked continuously like a sieve after one real downpour. Drainage was non-existent, and after rains the huts and camp were quagmires.

Here we were joined by 198 American civilian internees from WAKE ISLAND and 165 Dutch soldiers.

Beatings up and brutal treatment were worse than ever. Special ill-treatment was meted out to the Americans, many of whom were old men.

Four officers, in particular, were brutally beaten up. This number included two Dutch doctors.

The beatings up were carried out with wooden slippers across the face, and by blows with bamboo canes on the upper and lower legs, until the officer could no longer stand. Two of these beatings were known and approved by the Commandant, and were carried out by the interpreter KATSURA.

Men were tortured in the Japanese barrack room by the Japanese guards. The climax was reached when one man was bound by ropes to a telegraph pole for 8 hours in the sun, by personal order of the Commandant. This man had undoubtedly committed an offence, but not one which merited such brutal punishment.

Twenty five men died in this camp, twenty four of them between 26.11.44 and 16.1.45.

This camp was supposed to be a light-work camp for the summer months. We were, however, kept all through a bitter winter until mid-January, before moving on to a better camp. On Dec 1 1944 several hospital cases and men weak physically, from mining camps in the neighbourhood were moved to our camp to recuperate, while fit men from our <sup>OWN</sup> camp took their places. The presence of these weak and ill men explains the heavy death-roll mentioned above. Responsibility for these deaths must lie with the higher authorities who ordered the move, ~~Tokida~~ and in the second to the callous and indifferent attitude adopted by the Commandant, Lieut. SAKANOTO. As a final case one physically weak Dutchman while on working party was beaten by the guards so severely that he died within two days.

On 13.1.45 we moved to NAZIMA 4 miles away.

(d) NAZIMA

The move to this camp took place in a heavy and continuous blizzard of snow. All men who, though sick were able to stand, were refused conveyance and forced to make the march on foot. Several were eventually carried into the new camp by their comrades. Within a week of arrival in the new camp, six men died.

Of all our camps in JAPAN this was by far the best for accommodation and lay-out, but was largely uncompleted on our arrival. Here, at the end of January, we were joined by 193 American Officers and enlisted men, direct from the P.I. Of these 53 died between 31.1.45 and 25.4.45. In addition, between 22.1.45 and 13.4.45 there were 22 deaths among the original camp personnel. Many of these were due to lack of medical supplies. In some cases prescriptions made out by the Jap doctor, were deliberately held back by the Jap medical orderlies, and eventually given to our doctors too late.

On 25 April 1945 I and 9 other officers (British) together with the 140 Americans from the P.I. were ~~moved~~ <sup>summed up</sup> to JINSEN CAMP, KOREA.

In addition to the treatment described in the foregoing pages I wish to bring out two further points. These two points very materially contributed to the mental depression inevitably suffered by prisoners.

1. RED CROSS: Supplies on arrival in any of our camps were almost invariably kept back for several days by our Commandant. He steadfastly refused to permit me any latitude in their distribution. Boots and clothing were kept in the Japanese stores and never issued, even when the men were without boots or adequate clothing. Red Cross Medical supplies were only issued in minute quantities. At NAZIMA Camp with these particularly sick Americans from the P.I. ten cases of medical supplies which reached the camp in the middle of January were never issued. The Commandant refused all applications. At the main store in FUKUOKA there were 100s of cases of medical stores which were never issued to P.O.W. Camps, of which there were 23 in the FUKUOKA area. This can be testified to <sup>BY</sup> the American Doctor, Capt. W. KOSTECKI, some of my own officers, and by a party of 5 men whose permanent work was the care and packing of all Red Cross Stores in the main warehouses. Despite numerous requests and protests by me no dental treatment was permitted by the Commandant from our arrival in JAPAN, until NAZIMA camp - over 3 years.

2. LETTERS: The censoring and distribution was organised at P.O.W. H.Q. in FUKUOKA. The numbers of letters censored and distributed depended entirely on the whim of the Japanese civilian censors. Several of our own officers worked for many months in the H.Q. offices, sorting thousands of letters for the 23 camps in the FUKUOKA area. There were four civilian censors and on many days their combined output of work amounted to some

in the two  
Months

50 letters. Our officers know that many letters which they have sorted, and were censored in March 1945, have never yet been sent out.

This indifference by the Japanese censors caused great mental strain to everyone, and in addition to the main camp Commandant in FUKUOKA who must take the responsibility, the main culprit was the chief censor Mr. WATANABE.

Summing up our experiences in Japan, in my opinion the following Japanese officer and men are deserving of the most drastic punishment that can be meted out to them, and if instructed to do so, I am prepared to do all in my power to ensure their conviction and punishment. Witnesses can be produced and are ready to come forward to the great majority of the terrible events recorded above. The chief accused are :-

1. Lieut. SAKAMOTO, Commandant No.1 Sub-camp FUKUOKA area from 1.1.43 onwards.
2. TAKEO KATSURA the military interpreter.
3. Sgt. HORSUMI.

The only addresses I am able to give are two given to us by KATSURA. His two addresses are:- (a) Imperial Hotel Kobe  
(b) 23 Aza-Asani, Mikata-Son, Oshima-Gun, Kagoshima-Ken, Japan.

#### (4) KOREA

On 27 April 1945 the 10 British Officers and 140 American Officers and enlisted men arrived at JINSEW Korea. This was reported to be an officers camp. Treatment here was more tolerable than any camp we had previously been in. Work was voluntary. Food was scarce and extra food was only issued to officers who worked. Medical supplies which we have since learned to be in the Camp, were not issued.

The Japanese doctor who was in the Camp on our arrival carried out several brutal assaults on various prisoners. His chief victim was the Senior American Officer who, although suffering with a very bad ulcer, he knocked down on parade several times in front of the whole camp.

One American Officer died, and his life could have been saved had the requisite medical supplies, known to be in the Camp been issued.

A full report on this camp will be made by the Senior American Officer.

Sep. 8. 1945

*Melland*  
Lieut. Col. R.A.