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To : GOC Malaya Command,
c/o War Office, London, W.C.

From: Lieut S.S. ABBOTT, 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regt,
OC British and American POW.
No. 13b (AOMI) Camp, Japan.

Subject: Report on conditions at the above POW Camp from May 1943 - August 1945.

The following report is submitted for information. Attached please find the following documents -

I. War Diary. II. Reports on incidents of mis-treatment of Prisoners of War. III. Medical Records. IV. Roll of Honour. V. Record of Red Cross relief supplies received whilst in this camp. VI. Nominal Roll by Regiments of all men in the camp. VII. Recommendations on behalf of one officer and three men who performed exceptional services whilst under my command.

On the 25th of April 1943, a party of 1500 Dutch, Australian and British prisoners of war left Changi camp, Singapore. This party was designated "G" party, and was under the command of Major Glasgow, AASC. We were embarked on the Japanese merchant ship "Kyokko Maru" which arrived at MOJI on the 20th May 1943 after stopping at Cape St Jacques, French Indo-China, and TAKOIA, Formosa. Conditions and treatment on this transport were fair. Accommodation was cramped, but the men were allowed on deck for four hours daily. The main trouble was caused by lack of proper medical attention. There was no doctor on board, medical supplies were negligible, and the whole burden of medical care rested on the shoulders of our Regimental orderlies who did magnificent work. On arrival at MOJI, the 300 British troops were separated from the Dutch and Australians. We travelled from MOJI to AOMI under comfortable conditions.

General conditions.

- Accommodation. The camp area was approximately 60 yds by 60 yds. The men were housed in five rooms accommodating between 30 and 65 men. The hospital was small containing seven beds. Cookhouse, washing and lavatory facilities were adequate. Later on, when new groups of men arrived, the camp was altered and very slightly enlarged to accommodate 540 men. Taking into consideration the circumstances of our life, and the normal standard of living of the Japanese I would say that, on the whole, the accommodation was reasonable.
- Clothing. During the first winter the men suffered through having no change of working clothing. After this, I think that the Japanese did all in their power to supply us with essential articles. The only real shortage was that of boots and socks, and the Japanese themselves, even the guards, used to wrap rags round their feet because they had no socks, and most of them had no leather boots.
- Rations. During the first few months in the camp, the food supplied was totally inadequate. A mixture of rice, barley, and a kind of millet, totalling in weight 690 grams per man daily was issued, together with about 90 kilos of vegetable for 300 men. Fish stew was supplied once or twice a week, when each man would receive about two ounces of fish. At this time there were no beans of any description. I am certain that the great majority of deaths in the camp were caused by the totally inadequate feeding during these first few months.
- Canteen and general supplies. Up to the time that the Japanese themselves were strictly rationed with tobacco, the supply of smoking materials was good. After this time, that is for approximately one year, tobacco and cigarettes were very scarce. Other canteen supplies consisted of razor blades, tooth powder, tooth brushes, clay pipes, note books and pencils, and very occasionally sweets, fruit and biscuits. All these articles were limited in supply and, like tobacco, were on sale. Soap and toilet paper were supplied free of charge, but were strictly rationed.

5. Mail Services. The receipt of mail from home in the camp, compared with some others, seemed to be fairly good. But there were many men who received no mail at all, although it was obvious that their families would be writing to them. During our 2½ years stay, we were permitted to send six letters or postcards home, and later on 5% of the camp could send wireless messages each month. Cables from home were received by about 100 men.

6. Work. The working parties were made up into the following groups.

(a) Furnace parties. Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the camp was doing this kind of work. The furnaces were old-fashioned and subject to frequent blow-outs! These caused several accidents in which men were severely burned. The protection supplied for the body was inadequate but similar to that supplied to Nippon workers.

During the cold weather this type of work was popular with the men, but during the summer months when the temperature of the furnace rooms was more than 120 degrees F, men suffered greatly and many of them were put off their food for long periods, with the result that they rapidly weakened. The work was continuous in two twelve-hour shifts, with a change-over shift of 18 hours every 5 days. These were the same hours as worked by the Japanese.

(b) Quarry work. During the first two summers and autumns approximately $\frac{1}{5}$ of the camp worked in a nearby quarry (limestone). This was manual labour of the hardest and lowest type. Treatment by the Japanese civilians in charge was very inconsiderate and the number of deaths in this party shows the effect it had on the men. Of the original party in 1943 totalling 95 men - 26 men died. The proportion of deaths in other parties averaged 15%, as against this 25%. As regards the general treatment - I would like to add that the chief offender was removed from his job by order of our Camp Commandant, after I had reported several cases of men being struck with sticks.

100 American soldiers arrived in the camp in April 1944 and a large number of them were sent to work in the quarry a few days later. They suffered greatly through ill-health and weakness. One man - Sgt Cohen - was killed by a falling rock, and in another accident two men suffered severe injuries, one of them having his leg amputated. After continuous representations had been made to the Japanese, all work was stopped in the quarry in November 1944.

(c) Other work The bulk of the remainder of the men were working in the factory on various tasks. Some were shovelling basic slag and coal. Others were carrying coal and coke in boxes on the back - very unpleasant work. A few men were employed on more skilled work such as sheet metal work. For about one year there was one rest day in ten, after this, one in seven.

7. Entertainments. During the first eight months at the camp, no entertainment of any kind was permitted with the exception of card playing after 12 noon on rest days. After this time we were permitted to have a concert on rest day evenings. A few musical instruments were supplied, and a gramophone. Lectures or debates were not permitted. There were approximately 100 books in the camp library supplied by the YMCA and American Red Cross. In the summer of 1944 a few swimming parades on rest days were conducted.

8. Red Cross supplies. A full list of Red Cross supplies received whilst in the camp is attached. Generally speaking, these were totally inadequate, particularly in regard to food and footwear. The Japanese in addition made a habit of opening the individual food boxes and taking out one or two small articles from each box. It was not until January 1945 that I was able definitely to check the full contents of one of the boxes. When I did so I protested to the Japanese and for the issue of June 1945 we received the boxes complete, though still opened. At first the Japanese also attempted to give away a small quantity of Red Cross goods as prizes for men who had worked well. On my protesting, however, and after some trouble, they discontinued this practice.

9. Treatment of officers. As compared with what I have heard from other camps, treatment of officers here since 1944 has been quite good. On three occasions the authorities have threatened to place officers on half rations if we refused to do a certain amount of light work, such as gardening. On each occasion we refused to do so. They ^{did} actually put us on half rations for a period of about 10 days, but when they realised that we still did not intend to work, they again increased our rations. Once they did this we volunteered to carry out spare-time gardening work. During the later months it was the practice to hold a conference once a month with the Camp Commandant and his Sergeant. At these conferences matters of general routine and treatment were discussed fairly and fully and very good results were obtained. The atmosphere at these conferences was most friendly, and I honestly believe that the opportunity which they gave us to explain our point of view round a table was one of the best and fairest moves the Japanese made in this camp.

10. Medical care. When this party left Singapore, the Japanese specifically stated that no doctor would go with it. As a result there was no qualified medical attention during the voyage, and until November 1943 there was no prisoner doctor in the camp. Between May and November a Japanese doctor would occasionally visit the camp and examine the sickest men. For the first few months the supplies of medicine, dressings, etc. were almost negligible, but in the latter half of our stay these things were available in quite large quantities. From the outset, the policy of the Japanese has been to send every possible man out to work. Many deaths and serious illnesses have been caused by this thoughtless policy. During the first eight months, it was a common practice for the Camp Commandant himself, or one of his staff, to send sick men out to work without the authority of any doctor, or even of the Japanese Medical Orderly.

At the beginning of November 1943, Commander Cechs, USN, arrived at this camp. At this time there were approximately 150 men sick in camp, and the Japanese were beginning to worry to some extent about the situation. However, Commander Cechs's authority to decide whether a man was fit to work or not was only very scantily recognised. In March 1944, Captain Pizer, US Army Medical Corps, arrived, and started a policy of co-operation tempered with firmness which eventually resulted in his obtaining almost complete control of the sick parades. In order to do this, however, Captain Pizer himself had to send many sick men to work who should have been resting. From the time of his arrival onwards there were only five deaths in the camp, and one of these was caused by a quarry accident. With the arrival of Captain Rizzolo, US Army Medical Corps and a party of 200 men from OSAKA in May 1945, further control of the sick parades was obtained by our own doctors.

11. General Discipline and treatment. For the first three and a half months, the administration of this camp was entirely controlled by the army. The treatment given to prisoners was, I believe, similar to that given to new recruits in the Nippon army. The punishment for even the smallest offences was, to a Western mind, brutal and uncivilised; but apart from the cases in the attached documents, there were no beatings given which caused lasting or really severe injury. However, the effect on the men, both physically and mentally of continuous slapping and beating eventually showed in low morale, poor health, and in many cases a broken spirit and death. The officer in charge of the camp, Lieut. YOSIMURA, was a young and irresponsible fool. No doubt he was doing his duty in his own estimation, and in a few ways he took an interest in camp conditions; but he had no consideration for the sick, and he would punish men without waiting to hear any possible explanation. In January 1944, Sergeant SUMIKI arrived in this camp, and so influenced the Camp Commandant that conditions started to improve immediately. In April 1944, Lieut. Yosimura was killed in the quarry in which he had sent so many of our men to their death, and his successor, Lieut. YOSISAWA has always been most fair in his treatment of the men. The only complaints we could have against him were that he failed to make himself fully acquainted with all aspects of routine life and conditions, and that he did not properly supervise the issue of Red Cross goods.

In August 1943, the Army guard and staff left the Camp, and for

the remainder of our time a semi-civilian guard was on duty. The administration was carried out by civilians assisted by semi-military clerks employed by the army. Whilst the army was entirely in charge, my power of command was in no way recognised, and internal discipline had to be carried out in secret. After this, until November 1944, although I was not officially recognised as OC, nevertheless I was left pretty much alone. Some disciplinary documents were then unfortunately discovered during a search, and I was asked to account for these, and for my disobedience of Japanese orders. After some considerable trouble, I was warned that should I again disobey their orders, I should be sent to the punishment camp at Tokio. But at the same time I succeeded in obtaining permission to deal with minor disciplinary misdemeanour. Thenceforth, the word "minor" was very loosely employed, but two cases of theft from the Japanese central stores had to be reported when they threatened communal punishment if the offenders were not turned over. These men were punished very fairly, and much more lightly than they would have been in the British or American armies!

Throughout the period of Lt Yosisawa's rule here, the officers have adopted a policy of reasonable co-operation with the Japanese authorities, and we believe that this has resulted in our obtaining more and more control in internal matters, and much less interference from the Japanese. Once they saw that we could run our own affairs and discipline, they usually left us alone to do so.

Taken as a whole, and appreciating the strict limitations in supplies, and the normal standards of living and customs of the Japanese, I would say that the general treatment in the last 18 months has been fair.

(Sgd) STEPHEN ABBOTT,
Lieut.
The East Surrey Regt.

20.8.45.

OMI CAMP.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

[Signature]
HCO.

M.I. (a)

Was affix

GENERAL STAFF
M. I. I.
28 JUL 1948
DIRECTOR OF
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE