

REPORT OF CONDITIONS OF THE
OSAKA P. O. W. CAMP

1. Conditions during the first stages of the establishment of the Camp.

The Osaka P.O.W. Camp was established during the latter part of September 1942 and received the first Prisoners for internment during the middle part of October. The total number of Prisoners interned eventually increased and exceeded the figure 10,000. The Prisoners interned first were from the Lisbon Maru, 500 of which were scheduled to be interned in the Osaka P.O.W. Camp and the remaining 500 in the Tokyo Camp, but due to the sinking of the ship and the resulting hardships, they were suffering from dysentery, acute intestinal inflammation and diphtheria when they arrived. This made the removal of the 500 who were scheduled to go to Tokyo impossible and were interned in the Osaka P.O.W. Camp upon order from the Higher Authorities. I received 500 in the Kobe Camp and immediately returned to Osaka to receive the remaining 500 into the Osaka Camp. During the short distance from the Pier to the Camp much time was taken and many fainted as soon as reaching the Camp Grounds and one Prisoner died in spite of all first aid treatment and hypodermic injections. I immediately suggested to the Higher Authorities and received a large party of medical orderlies from the Osaka Army Hospital including an Army Doctor, and started the treatment. Since the 1,000 men received for internment were literally all patients, there was immediately a shortage of medical supplies. There was no flinching on the part of the Nipponese in the treatment of the epidemic cases. I recall now that some Nipponese who were on duty at the time including myself brought our own household medical supplies like gauze and medicines and also benjo paper to be used in the treatment of the sick.

There was one death on the first day of arrival. This death grieved me very much because this honourable soldier had died after safely arriving at our shores after surviving many fatal hardships on the way after being sunk on the Lisbon Maru. A Preacher was called in the next day and a fitting funeral service was held to honour the dead with all of our personnel and the Senior Staff Officer of the Army Hdq of the Central Region Army in attendance.

After that a germ examination was made and the carriers were hospitalized in the Army Hospital and since there were many more such patients unable to be hospitalized one of the Army buildings were negotiated for and the patients were hospitalized with the Nipponese Army Doctors and the Prisoner Doctors in attendance. Prisoners not being used to the climate and the atmospheric conditions and furthermore the time of the year was such that there were sudden weather changes which all in all unfortunately caused many deaths through the winter period of 1942 till the Spring of 1943. All the personnel from myself down took up our quarters in the

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office and endeavored to such an extent that at times we worked on even forgetting our meals. During this period the Medical 1st Lieutenant Kishimoto became ill due to too strenuous a duty and had to be hospitalized and eventually had to be discharged from the Army. The detailed record of Camp doings were kept but were destroyed in the fire resulting from the bombing of June 1st, 1945.

2. Establishment of the Hospital.

realising that a hospital would be required if more Prisoners were to be interned I put in an application to the Central Region Army Headquarters for a Prisoner Hospital and the Ministry of the Army were also very helpful and found a suitable sight for us in Kumouchi-cho, Kobe. The location was such that there were mountains to the north and the sea on the southward side amidst fresh air and good view, all contributing to the hygienic conditions of the camp.

The facilities were complete and it was able to accommodate 150 patients. Internal medicine, surgery, ear nose and throat, X-ray, dental and microscopic departments were established making it equal to if not better than our own Army Hospitals. We were very fortunate in being able to master the services of 1st Lieutenant Ohashi a renowned Professor of Surgery formerly on the Professor Staff of the Osaka Imperial University Medical Department. The said Professor is one of the foremost Doctors of surgery in Nippon with an exemplary character. He had the complete trust of the patients. Adding to this the foremost Prisoner Doctors were selected including the Medical Lieutenant Commander Page of the British Navy. These forementioned Doctors cooperated with each other in such a way that the health records improved immensely and there were cases of recovered patients refusing to leave the Hospital even after their recovery.

3. Nurturing and Hygiene.

We were the very first in establishing a hospital of its kind in the country. Whenever the Prisoners were interned the suggestion of the Prisoner Doctor were followed to give the men rice gruel, soup and other soft food to help in the quick recovery of the men from their fatigue of the journey. It was unfortunate that many men were lost due to illness from the winter of 1942 till the Spring of 1943. From among those disembarked from the Lisbon Maru the worst cases were left in the care of Kokura and Hiroshima Army Hospitals.

4. Rations of the Prisoners.

Since the living conditions, types of food and circumstances were different bean curds were made among other things to have the men assimilate their food properly for its calorific

value and each of the Camp Commanders were made to compete with each other in obtaining rich vitamin fruits like the mandarin oranges. After the beginning of the Summer of 1943 the Prisoners became used to the rations, and spiritual relaxation were adjusted in such a way that they eventually became very healthy.

Sub-Camp Commander meetings were held once a month to muster their efforts in bettering the health conditions and general camp conditions. Rewards and letters of commendations were given to the Sub-Camp Commander whose camp had made the best improvement during the month.

5. Removal of the Sub-Camp to the Interior.

Osaka, Kobe and Nagoya bombings began to increase from the beginning of this year. If the camps in the Osaka and Kobe areas continue it became imminent that most of our Sub-Camps would suffer resulting in making general prisoner life difficult. Therefore in March I immediately drew up plans for evacuating the camps to a safer area and submitted the plans to the Commander of the Central Regional Army and also to the Ministry of the Army. The Higher Authorities permitted the execution of the plans and evacuation was immediately begun and completed in May thus saving many Prisoner lives. The camps in the Osaka area namely; Chikko, Kobe, Yodogawa, Naruo, Taisho, Sekurajima and Umada camps all suffered explosive and incendiary bomb attacks and all were burned but due to the timely evacuations not a single Prisoner was injured.

The Kobe Hospital received heavy raids and three men were lost.

In the raid on the Chikko Camp one Nipponese N.C.O. received bad burns on face and in the raid on the Kobe Camp three Nipponese guards were killed by bomb explosion while evacuating the Prisoners. There was no injury of Prisoners in the raid on the Kobe Camp.

It could not be helped but intern the Prisoners of the Chikko Camp in a temporary place after the raid of June 1st.

6. Memorial Services.

During the early stages funeral services were held each time there was a death occurring but since there were many deaths due to the epidemical diseases collective funeral services were held on December 2nd 1942. Since then a committee was organized to hold similar services each year in December picking a good day. In these funeral services all the Nipponese personnel, all the Chikko Camp Prisoners, representatives from the different ranks of the Prisoners in each of the Sub-Camps, representatives from the Central Regional Army Headquarters, and representatives from civilian and civic organizations all attended the service very solemnly and the services themselves were conducted by the foremost preachers and fathers of the Protestant and

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Catholic Faiths each Faith taking turns with each other every other time. Those dead were honored and remembered in the most solemnity and honor befitting servicemen who had died in service.

7. Religious Services.

Religious services were left to the free will of the Prisoners. In some camps permanent places of worship were built. In order to satisfy the spiritual feeling of the Prisoners I obtained the services of the foremost preachers and fathers of both the Protestant and Catholic Faiths and appointed the Steward 1st Lieutenant Fukunaga to make the necessary arrangements and the services were held in each of the camps and I am sure that these services were appreciated by the Prisoners.

Especially the many visitations by the Archbishop Paul Marela and his many generousities were warmly received by the Prisoners.

8. Storing of the Ashes.

The ashes of the loyal soldiers were handled most respectfully. I have a friend who is in charge of one of the temples of the Honwanji Buddhist Sect, called the Juganji. I entrusted the ashes to this kindly Priest and had him appointed guard and worshipper of the ashes, the ashes being placed in front of the main Hall of Worship.

It may seem strange why Christian ashes should be left in the care of a Buddhist Temple, but the reason was that I myself am a Buddhist and I further believed that although religions may differ, the basic spirit is the same. Each Spring and on our Equinoctial Week I asked the Priest to have an impressive ceremony conducted for the Spirits of the deceased. The Priest being a personal friend of mine for one reason I visited the Temple many times to offer prayers in memory of the dead. In the major air raid of June 1st of this year the fire came to the next house but fortunately the Temple and the ashes entrusted there suffered no mishap.

9. Recreation and Comfort for the Prisoners.

The International Red Cross Committee sympathy and kind aid was a great comfort to the Prisoners. The books donated by the Y.M.C.A. went a long way to satisfy the Prisoners' in their thirst for knowledge and also to comfort them. We on our part in order to assure fair distribution of the books appointed a Prisoner to take charge of the books as he or the others saw fit.

10. Meeting with Prisoner Representatives.

Meetings were held occasionally in each of the camps with the Prisoner Representatives. The requests of the Prisoners were put forth at these meetings and if it was within our limits of

power requests were satisfied. In the Chikko Camp I've had meetings with the Representatives such as the Doctor Chief Boatswain's Mate Sanders (American), and W.O.L Matheson (British) once a month in order to listen to and have their demands fulfilled.

11. Food Supplies.

The food supplied according to the Regulations, was equal to that of our reserve forces. It was equal in all respects if not better. Besides this, in order to satisfy the Prisoners the companies for which the Prisoners were working for were forced to give substantial amounts of additional food. As one illustration, the extra amount received from the companies for the Chikko Prisoners were equal to that of a whole day Nipponese civilian ration, and as a result they enjoyed vigorous health.

12. Conclusion.

Throughout the three long years I practically lived in the Headquarters of the Camp so that Prisoners would not suffer mishaps. During the bombing raids I was always on hand in spite of the fact that I might have lost my life in order to protect the Prisoners. I also gave talks to the Prisoners occasionally to give them spirit and hope.

The camp staff and I did our best within our possible limits and only regret that we could not do more.

I respectfully submit the summarized report of camp conditions.

COLONEL J. MURATA

Commander of Osaka P.O.W. Camp.

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REPORT ON THE HEALTH
CONDITION OF WAR PRISONERS AT THE OSAKA
WAR PRISONERS' INTERNMENT CAMPS

Concerning the Health of
War prisoners

1. General Condition of Patients:

When the Osaka War Prisoners' Internment Camps received prisoners of war for the first time on October 11, 1942, almost all of them were sufferers of bacillary dysentery. The Lisbon Maru, on which they were transferred to Japan, had been sunk, and they were rescued and sent to the Osaka War Prisoners' Camps.

One-third of them were seriously ill. About 120 of ~~xxxx~~ the most serious cases, whose internment in Osaka was considered unwise, were sent to the Hiro-

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shima Army Hospital, and some others to the Osaka Army Hospital. These comparatively light cases were quarantined in a hurriedly established isolation hospital within the municipal athletic ground at Ichioka, Osaka (a branch of the Bentsoji Internment Camp until the establishment of the Osaka Internment Camp).

Generally, the prisoners of war at that time were very emaciated and looked extremely exhausted. As we received an unexpectedly great number of war prisoners contracted with infectious diseases, medical preparations were not sufficient and negotiations between the Army authorities and the Army hospitals for supplying medical supplies for the war prisoners did not go very smoothly or satisfactorily. As a result the officers of the Internment Camps including myself, offered all the medicine we had stocked at our homes and helped them out of a crisis in some way or other.

Later, large numbers of war prisoners continuously sent from the South were gradually transferred to our Internment Camps. Probably owing to malnutrition abroad, however, those suffering from beriberi, undernourishment, and chronic diarrhoea, all of which were caused by malnutrition, totaled

80% of the patients.

Due to this, the recovery of their health was very slow. As the surgeon expressed his view that it was impossible to cure them with only medicines, all the officers of the Internment Camps did their utmost to give them better nutriment.

Generally, about 70% of all the war prisoners who were transferred from abroad to our Internment Camps were very emaciated. They were anemic and weak. But by dint of the efforts of the officers in charge of the Camps sufferers of malnutrition rapidly decreased in number about one year after the opening of the Internment Camps so that very few sufferers were later found.

As the war prisoners transferred into Japan from the South were generally unaccustomed to the climate, clothing, food, and habitation of Japan, a fairly large number of them were afflicted by pneumonia during their first winter in Japan. From the second winter, however, cases of pneumonia remarkably decreased.

Those who died of illness from the time they were interned up to September 1, 1945, numbered about 1,080.

About 17 war prisoners died of their own carelessness and mistakes while engaged in work.

Five died of burns or bombs during air raids.

It is regrettable to say that the accurate number of dead cannot be given now, for all the documents connected with the health conditions of the war prisoners have been submitted to the War Prisoners' Information Bureau and we have no data here in our Internment Camps.

2. Sanitary Facilities:

(a) As we received an unexpectedly large number of war prisoners contracted with infectious diseases, we accommodated the patients in the former branch of the Zentsuji War Prisoners' Internment Camp at Ichio-oka, Osaka, a temporary isolation hospital.

(b) Whenever cases of serious illness broke out, they were sent to the Osaka Army Hospital.

(c) At the beginning of 1944, a war prisoners' hospital, which was no less comfortable than the Osaka Army Hospital in every respect, was established at a place of scenic beauty in Kobe. Although it contributed greatly toward the medical treatment of many serious cases, it was burnt down in the air raid in June, 1945. Ever since, the former Kawasaki annex served as a temporary hospital. But the patients

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were later moved to the hospital attached to the Japan Red Cross Society in Osaka.

(d) In order to leave nothing to be desired, we furnished each medical office with sick-rooms, a clinic, a business room for keeping records, private rooms for the medical corps (war prisoners) and medical impediments, conforming to the medical office of the Japanese Army.

3. Medical Corps:

(a) To each internment camp, we attached several members of a medical corps, including a surgeon of the same nationality.

(b) The Japanese Army permanently posted a non-commissioned medical officer at each camp and had him engage in the treatment of patients in full collaboration with the members of the medical corps (war prisoners).

(c) To the War Prisoners' Hospital (in Kobe) we detailed able surgeons and members of the medical corps (war prisoners) of all nationalities, so that the patients could be accorded equal medical treatment.

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(d) There were four Japanese surgeons, including the director of the War Prisoners' Hospital. The three others, taking up their abode at the Osaka War Prisoners' Camps, inspected every camp two or three times a week in order to know the condition of the patients and give instructions regarding their medical treatment.

4. Alimentation:

The chief of the Osaka Internment Camps and his men attached the greatest importance to the preservation of the health of the war prisoners. Thus, we held a physical examination and weighed them every month, and made them massage their bodies with a dry towel and gargle every morning in order to keep their skin strong. The quantity of calories given them was calculated every 10 days.

Inasmuch as the weight of the body is so to speak the "barometer" of the physical condition of the war prisoners, we recorded a list of their weights every month. Taking a serious view of any increase or decrease in their weight, I called the attention of each chief of the camps to the preservation of the health of the war prisoners.

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Also thinking much of food calory, I urged the intendants to esaliorate the nutriment for the war prisoners. We let the war prisoners cook food for themselves so that they might make it according to their fancy. We also exercised care for the patients' food and always made efforts for procur- ing soup of cow bones and other nutriments rich in fat and albumen.

Furthermore, generally once in three months, the chief of the Internment Camps, accompanied by surgeons, instructed the officers of each camp how to preserve the health of the war prisoners.

5. Prevention of Epidemics:

As soon as the war prisoners were transferred from abroad to our Internment Camps, we gave injections (for typhus, cholera, and dysentery) and vaccin- ated all of them. Since then, we injected them periodically once a year, doing ~~xxx~~ our best to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases. Thanks to our efforts, not a single case of infectious dis- ease broke out after the arrival of the Lisbon Maru.

6. Medical Supplies:

The supply of supplies was not smooth at the beginning of the establishment of our Internment

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Camps, but it became gradually smoother from about four months after their establishment and no trouble whatever occurred in the medical treatment from then. From that time on up to date, we have been supplied with medical supplies and appliances in sufficient quantities and have been distributing them to each internment camp for the use of war prisoners.

Meanwhile, we received large quantities of medical supplies from the U.S. Red Cross Society for the relief of war prisoners on several occasions from about the end of 1943 and distributed all of them to every internment camp equally.

We have been using both the medical supplies of the Japanese Army and those sent from the U.S. Red Cross Society so that the medical treatment of the war prisoners could be made doubly sure.

In short, we have been taking utmost care of the health of the war prisoners during the last three years. We have been paying utmost efforts to have those emaciated and exhausted persons coming from abroad overcome the climate of Japan and harmonize their clothing, food, and habitation, which are utterly different from those of the Japanese.

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As a result, all the war prisoners remarkably improved in health one year after their arrival in Japan.

September 10, 1945.

Colonel Sotaro Murata,
Chief of the Osaka War Prisoners'
Internment Camps.

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