

(Supplementary to report of S/Ldr. Blanchard, RAF.)  
covering period 28/11/42 - 28/1/43.

Report on Mitsubishi Prison Camp - Period 28/1/43 to 26/6/45.

- 1) Administration: Between July 28 and Aug 1, camp 3 became camp 2 (detached) and all army personnel with the exception of the Commandant, Lt. Nakajima (promoted Capt, Aug 1) were posted. 5 army civilian employes (GUNZOKU) took over the administration, and civilian guards were provided by Kumagai Kuni, the hydro-electric construction contractor, for whom the prisoners were working. A civilian interpreter was employed. On Jan 10 1944 Sgt. Arae arrived to become second in command. On Aug 1 1944 Lt. Kubo took over command from Capt. Nakajima.
- 2) Accommodation: On June 29 1943, the camp area had been extended by moving the fence, in order to impress the Red Cross Representative who visited on June 30 (see also para 6, week).  
Heating: - During the winters of 1943/4 + 1944/5 this was done by open wood fires in the barracks, for reasonable periods night and morning from Jan 10 (approx) till March 31, providing more warmth than previously, but causing great discomfort from dust & ash deposits, and eye trouble from smoke. The latter condition was aggravated by the refusal of Sgt. Arae on many occasions to issue dry wood.
- 3) Food: After the departure of the army personnel, the POW cooks were less interfered with, resulting in improved cooking. Rations seemed to follow no particular plan, varying considerably sometimes in consecutive issues, but grain was noticeably shorter during autumn and early winter. Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and daikons (Japanese radishes) which were fairly plentiful in the autumn and winter in that order were often issued in lieu of what the Japanese considered an equivalent weight of grain, though having nowhere near the same caloric and protein values. Seaweed was a constant substitute for vegetables. During these two years vegetables became scarcer and scarcer, until winter 1944/5 when the supply was negligible.



2.

many accidents ~~occurred~~. 786330 AC2 Tan Keng Liat, RAF (STC) had his leg broken on July 19, 1943. It was incorrectly set by a local Japanese doctor, resulting in a shortening of the leg [see statement by Capt. Weinstein].

The contract system was continuously misemployed by the Japanese as a means of getting more work out of the men: eg men agreeing to do a given amount of work with promise of returning to camp on completion would often have additional work allotted afterwards; or, men agreeing to work additional to their contract on promise of payment in tobacco or food, would find contract correspondingly increased next day.

Camp details, after a full day's work and on so-called "rest days" particularly during spring summer and autumn months, were very heavy leaving men little or no time for relaxation. Subsequent upon the extension of the camp area in June 1943, daily fatigues were required for construction of gardens, when earth & sand had to be carried long distances, and for cultivation of these gardens, when officers and men carried human faeces for manure, and many buckets of water had to be distributed. (Not more than 10% of the garden produce came to the prisoners, the rest being eaten by the administration ~~at the camp~~).

From early Jan 1945 mel details, same in place of regular work details (most of the work on the dam having ceased) were started

(i) Loads of wood up to 50 kilos were carried for long distances down steep hills twice a day with insufficient rests. Men were frequently beaten for not collecting large enough loads and forced to carry regardless of physical condition and state of boots.

PFC. Williams USMC. died after being forced out on this detail from very light duty in camp [see reports of Drs Whitfield and Weinstein].

(ii) Bundles of charcoal weighing 60 kilos were carried down a steep



seaweed and leaves from the mountain side being issued and forced to be used by order of the Commandant against medical advice [see reports by Surg-Lt. R. Whitfield R.N.V.R. and Capt A.A. Weinstein, MC., U.S.A.].

4. Clothing: This was always inadequate though considerable stocks were held by the Japanese storekeeper. Blankets and winter clothes were always issued too late in the season (see para 10, Red Cross Supplies). The boot position was improved by increased supplies of Japanese rubber shoes, though replacements were frequently refused by the storekeeper (TSUCHIYA GUNZOKU) even when absolutely essential, usually from prejudice. Clothing was sometimes issued before inspections with a strict injunction against use. Winter clothing issued to officers in Dec. 1942 was withdrawn in Oct. 1943, and in spite of repeated requests to purchase same, none was sold till April 1944. [see report of F/Lt. Rhys, R.A.F.].

5. Discipline: This was not so strict under the civilians as under the army, but many beatings occurred on the spur of the moment by Sgt. Arae, the gunzoku, and guards. Rules and regulations were freely interpreted by the administration to cover any action. The guard room was used less during this period, and under Lt. Kurbo, a fair trial, reasonable sentence, and humane guard room conditions could be expected, e.g. clothing worn + blankets permitted in guardroom, offender to walk in camp during day + be under medical supervision.

6. Work: Treatment improved but work very hard and usually dangerous. Constant falls of rock, tunnels badly propped, winch cables snapping, uninsulated electric power lines, trucks running along ill-lighted tunnels on tracks supported on rickety scaffolding made of any odd pieces of timber lashed together with worn straw rope, and insufficient planking for footway — all these caused



hill for 4 miles. This was more arduous, but less frequent, taking place often on "rest-days".

7. Pay: During summer 1944, the contractors decided to pay all working men a bonus of 10 sen a day over and above their regular pay (W/O's - 25 sen, NCO's - 15 sen, Ptes - 10 sen).
8. Health: Surg. Lt. R. Whitfield RNVR replaced 1st. Lt. J. N. van Slooten (Medical Corps, NEI.) in Sept. 1943, and Capt. A. A. Weinstein, MC, USA, a surgeon, arrived in Oct. 1944. Due largely to the experience and efforts of these two doctors only 9 deaths occurred between Aug 1943 and Aug 1945.
9. Interpreters: A civilian, Toshio Machida, replaced the army interpreter, and his linguistic ability and American education ensured an improvement in former conditions for a time. These qualities, however, brought him under suspicion of being pro-prisoner by the Japanese, and his efforts to reinstate himself in their good opinion, especially that of the commandant, caused him to create unnecessary hardship and suffering to the prisoners, often leading to beatings by the army employes in which he himself was by no means reluctant to take part. He was on several occasions overheard by prisoners with some command of the Japanese language deliberately mis-translating orders from the commandant, and statements and requests from the prisoners.
10. Red Cross supplies: These were now placed in charge of the officers, but issues were made only by order of the commandant. During 1944 the equivalent of 1 U.S. individual food package per man was received and during 1945, three packages. A quantity of clothing arrived in March 1944 and was issued in April. Men moving to a new camp in this month carried this clothing with them, but those leaving in Aug. 1944 had it all withdrawn. It was not reissued to new arrivals till Jan. 1945. More clothing arriving



in March was not issued till after the capitulation. A small quantity of comforts (toothbrushes, razor blades etc) received in May 1944, was issued in June, and a similar arrival in March 1945 was issued in April.

11. Canteen: About twice a year orders were taken, of which 10% might be received, and that composed of the most useless articles. Substitute Tobacco, about 1 oz per man, was sold once every 10 days (unless stopped for punishment, or if Red Cross issue contained cigarettes - however few), until March 1945 when ration was reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Fruit was sold about twice a year.
12. Entertainment and Recreation: Books (about one to four men, gradually increased to about 2 to 3 men) were supplied through the Y.M.C.A. but reading conditions were very difficult due to lighting and accommodation. Originally reading was only allowed in one ~~room~~<sup>barrack</sup> on the afternoons of rest-days, but after repeated representation one hour per evening was allowed, and finally the whole evening. No permission was ever granted for reading elsewhere, in spite of the fact that the "entertainment room" was often otherwise occupied e.g. as a storeroom. A few games - indoor and outdoor were sent. A Table Tennis set was constantly in use by the Japanese and never issued to prisoners. Space for any form of recreation was extremely limited, and permission for such games as basket ball frequently refused.
13. News and Mail. Newspapers - Nippon Times, English language edition - were sent sporadically, a month or so out of date, from March 1943 to April 1944. Mail when received was at first retained for a period of up to six weeks, but later a fortnight and, with a small batch, sometimes only a few days elapsed. Wrongly addressed letters were rarely returned to the headquarters camp for redirection. Outgoing mail averaged two letters or cards



per annum, until March 1945 when monthly letters were sent. From March 1945 one 10-word cablegram a month might be sent by a man selected from the whole camp.

14. Civilian P.O.W.: In Dec. 1943 Cadet-officer H.C.R. Fulford Williams of the British Colonial Administrative Service (Gilbert Is) arrived at the camp and was immediately placed under oath by the Commandant not to reveal his past. He was, from that time till the capitulation, treated as a private soldier.
15. Nominal Roll of Deaths: See report of S/Ldr. W.T. Blanchard, RAF.

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