

109 East Bannock Street,
Boise, Idaho,
12 April 1946

Captain Willard A. Smith, CMP,
Chief, Liason & Research Branch
American Prisoner of War Information Bureau
Provost Marshal General's Office,
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Captain Smith:

I am in receipt of your letter of 1 April 1946, which finally reached me through half a dozen emergency addresses. Since returning to the United States I have been following the well publicized policy of "See America First". So far I have been from California to Florida and Idaho to Michigan and all points in between. We never realize what a wonderful country we have until deprived of its privileges.


Rather than use the check list which you sent me I have written a rather detailed report on Fukuoka Camp #17. Since my return I have been engaged in writing a history of the camp but so far progress has been rather slow as most of the men who were in the camp are traveling throughout the United States and it will take some time before answers have been received from them all and the complete history written.

If you find anything missing in the report or desire further information regarding this camp I shall be glad to supply with such data as I have. Unfortunately the Japanese relieved me of my diary and I have to resort to memory for most of the information and some dates are rather hazy.

I will be at the above address until the 20 April, then I am to report for station to March Field, Riverside, California. Organizational assignment is not known.

Trusting that the information which I have supplied will prove of benefit and satisfactory for your purposes, I remain,

Very truly yours,


JOHN R. MAMEROW,
Lieut. Col., A.G.D.,
O-276134

COPY OF INCOMING CABLEGRAM:
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

DELEGATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Ref. C/x/2

July 12, 1944
Date received

July 14, 1944

Telegram received from: Intercom Rouge
Geneva, Switzerland

4 OUR 996 1001 PERSONNEL SUPERINTENDENT FUKUOKA CAMPS COLONEL
AZAWA ALSO COMMANDERS TWO BRANCHCAMPS VISITED INTENT ON HELPING
BEST THEIR ABILITY STOP BOTH FUKUOKA BRANCHCAMPS MAKE GOOD
SESSION ESPECIALLY IN BRANCHCAMP XII RESULTS SEEM SATISFACTORY
RE FOOD CONDITIONS SEEM TO BE MORE FAVOURABLE AS PRISONERS
IVELY ENJOYED IN AGRICULTURAL WORK FOR THEMSELVES STOP BELIEVE
JOKA GROUP CONSISTS PRESENTLY NINETEEN BRANCHCAMPS FULLSTOP

OUR NOTE 995 UNDERSTAND MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN CAMP OUR
7 CAMP SEEMS IN GOOD RUNNING ORDER POW WELL ORGANIZED STOP CAMPS
YJIMA INNOSHIMA FORMER FUKUOKA BRANCHCAMPS NOW UNDER ADMINISTRATION
PSUJI CALLED ZENTSUJI BRANCHCAMPS ONE TWO RESPECTIVELY MAIL ADDRESS
PSUJI POWCAMP FULLSTOP RECENT VISIT REVEAL AGAIN SOLVING FOLLOWING
ELEMENTS OF FOREMOST IMPORTANCE

PRIMO REDCROSS FOOD PARCELS AND OR FOOD IN BULK BADLY REQUIRED
FOOD SITUATION GENERALLY TIGHT EVERYWHERE STOP SUPERINTENDENTS
JOKA ZENTSUJI CAMPS HOPE REDCROSS WILL BE ABLE MAKE FURTHER CONSIDERABLE
IMPROVEMENTS WHICH ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AS PAST SHIPMENTS HAD FAVOURABLE
EFFECT ON POWS HEALTH

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COUNTRIES ESPECIALLY DUTCH POW IN SORRY FLIGHT AS COMMUNICATIONS
FROM FORMER DUTCH EAST INDIES PRACTICALLY NON EXISTENT MOST STILL WITHOUT
THEIR FAMILIES THERE AND HOLLAND

TERTIO REMITTANCE FUNDS TO DEPENDENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
JAPAN AND ABROAD

INTERCOM ROUGE D9049

• FILE
Date
Initials

REPORT ON FUKUOKA CAMP #17
OMUTA, KYUSHU, JAPAN

In July 1943 a group of 500 Americans consisting of:

- 4 Army Officers
- 1 Navy Officer
- 2 Army Medical Officers
- 1 Army Medical Warrant Officer
- 300 Army Enlisted Men
- 150 Navy Enlisted Men
- 500 42 Marine Enlisted Men

were selected at Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp #1, Philippine Islands, located near the barrio of Cabu, Neuva Ecija, Luzon, Philippine Islands, as a working detail for transportation to Japan.

The detail left Cabanatuan Camp 21 July 1943, commencing about midnight and were transported by truck to Cabanatuan where it was placed in box cars for movement to Manila. The detail was loaded in 7 box cars approximately 65 men to the car. There was not too much crowding as these same type cars had held from 100 to 150 men on previous movements of Prisoners of War.

Prior to departure from Cabanatuan each member of the detail was issued, 1 suit of blue denims, 1 pair Japanese Army socks, 1 ~~lxswitx~~ undershirt, 1 pair drawers, 1 pr U.S. Army GI shoes, 1 Philippine Army helmet made of cocanut fiber, 1 towel, 1 G-string, soap, a toilet paper, shoe polish, tooth brush and tooth powder.

The detail arrived at Manila about noon and were immediately taken by truck to Pier #7, Manila and loaded on an 8000 ton freighter. The ship was not marked as carrying prisoners of war. The detail was placed in the upper forward 2nd hold. Accomodations were very crowded. The hold was divided into double bays, upper and lower, about 15 feet square and 20 men placed in each bay. Officers were given 1 bay for the group. The bays were of wood construction, clean, and thin straw mats placed on the bay floors for sleeping. No blankets were provided, these having been taken from the prisoners at Cabanatuan Prison Camp.

Japanese guards consisted of 1 officer, 1 non-commissioned officer, 4 privates of the Japanese Army and 20 Formosan Guards. The Japanese Army personnel did not molest the detail at any time during the voyage. There were many instances of beatings and slappings by the Formosan Guards, particularly when there were no Japanese Army personnel around.

The food served during the day was plentiful, the average daily ration being, 700 pounds of rice, 300 pounds of vegetables of various kinds particularly squash, 150 pounds of meat or fish. From Manila to Formosa cured Chinese Hams were supplies and from Formosa to Japan Shark Meat, 10 gallons of cooking oil and 200 pounds of salt (to cover the entire trip). The food was issued daily to the Prisoner Commander and prepared by prisoner cooks. Cooking facilities were ample. Two

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large steel steam kettles were provided for cooking of the rice and soup and 1 large wooden steam tub for the preparation of tea. Boiled water or tea was provided on the basis of three canteens full per day per person for use between meals and two canteen cups full of tea were served at each meal. Meals were served at 0630 - 1200 - and 1800.

The ship left Manila about 1500, 22 July for San Jose on the Lingayen Gulf and arrived at San Jose on 23 July. From 23 - 26 July the ship was loaded with Chrome Ore, every precaution was taken for the safety of the prisoners. Prisoners were shifted into two holds to prevent injury against falling ore, ore buckets, chains or slings.

On the 26 July the ship sailed for Takao, Formosa arriving on 30 July. No unusual occurrences were noted during the voyage. Hatch covers were left off during this portion of the voyage but smoking was prohibited during hours of darkness.

While in Takao the Japanese Interpreter went into the city and procured for sale to the prisoners, tobacco, pineapples, bananas, and candy. These items were delivered to the Prisoner Commander for sale and were sold at cost price charged by the Japanese. Every prisoner was given his pro-rata share of the items purchased. Those having no money to pay for the items were given their share and the entire ~~cost~~ cost divided among those who had money.

On the morning of 31 July one of the prisoners was taken seriously ill with acute appendicitis. Authority was received from the Japanese to perform an operation. The operation was performed on the deck using a hatch cover as operating table and a mosquito bar for protection against insects. The operation was performed by Captain (now Major) Thomas H. Hewlett, M.C., assisted by 1st Lieut. (now Captain) Harold Proff, M.C.. The operation was successful and the patient given special space in the hold where he was provided with medical services and supplies, medicines were fairly plentiful. Prior to departure from Cabanatuan the senior medical officer was given a supply of anesthetics, sulfa-drugs, gauze and surgical instruments.

The ship was at Takao from 30 July to 2 August loading a cargo of teak wood, canned pineapple and brooms. On 2 August the ship left for Moji, Kyushu, Japan arriving on 9 August. No incidents of importance occurring during this portion of the voyage. The operative patient continued to improve and was walking when the ship arrived at Moji.

On the morning of 10 August the detail disembarked and were turned over to a detail of Japanese Army personnel from the 49th Regiment. The detail was loaded in chair coaches and taken by train from Moji to Omuta arriving about 1900 - 10 August 1943. Upon arrival at the camp the prisoners were given supper (three 100 gram buns and a bowl of hot meat soup) a hot water bath and taken to their quarters.

Fukuoka Camp #17 was located in the north-western part of the

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ity of Omuta, Kyushu, Japan on the shore of the bay. We were informed that Nagasaki was directly west of the camp across the bay. There was a coke reducing plant about a quarter of a mile south of the camp and a coal mine about 3/4 mile beyond the coke plant.

The camp was practically new, there were some signs of previous occupancy by British prisoners but was empty upon our arrival.

There were 500 Americans in this group, including 9 officers,

501
Major John R. Mamerow, A.G.D. Commander ✓
Captain Achille C. Tisdelle, Cav. Adjutant ✓
Captain Thomas H. Hewlett, M.C. Surgeon ✓
Lieut. Edward N. Little, U.S. Navy ✓
1st Lieut. Harold Proff, M.C. ✓
2nd Lieut. Charles P. Christie, A.C. ✓
2nd Lieut. Owen W. Romaine, A.C. ✓
2nd Lieut. John H. Allen, Inf. (Tanks) ✓
2nd Lieut. Robert M. Perkins, Inf. ✓

The Japanese Army Commanders during my stay in this camp from 10 August 1943 to 25 April 1945 were:

Lieut. K. Urie - August 1943 - July 1944. ✓
Lieut. S. Fukihara - July 1944 - April 1945 ✓

Both of these officers have been tried by courts-martial and sentenced to hang for atrocities committed against Prisoners of War.

A total of approximately 1920 Prisoners of War (American-Dutch-British and Australian) had been in the camp during my period of service. On 25 April 1945, the day of my transfer the camp strength was approximately 1620 as follows:

AMERICANS - 806.

Army	-	468
Navy	-	247
Marine Corps	-	82
Civilians	-	9
		806

BRITISH	-	277
AUSTRALIAN	-	279
DUTCH	-	258
TOTAL	-	1620

There were 97 deaths of all nationalities, and 203 transfers of all nationalities. ✓

The original camp was approximately 300 yards square containing 11 buildings for occupancy of the prisoners, mess hall, bakery, bath house, and hospital. The camp was enclosed by a wooden fence 3 feet high with a three strand electrically charged wire placed five

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feet from the ground. The buildings were of frame construction, composition roofs with dirt runways, or halls. Each building contained 10 rooms (5 rooms 10' x 10' and 5 rooms 15' x 10') and held 10 men. 4 men were assigned to the small rooms and 6 men to the large room. There was no crowding and everyone had plenty of sleeping space. Closet and shelf space was provided in each room for storage of personal effects. The floors of the room were covered with Japanese Tatami Mats (approximately 3' x 6' x 3") these mats were soft and provided excellent ~~for~~ sleeping accommodations. I might say that these were the best quarters I ever had while a prisoner of war. Latrines were located in each end of the buildings, consisting of a urinal and 3 seat type stools. Feces and urine were removed by Japanese civilian workmen twice weekly. Each building was electrically lighted, the lights kept burning in each room during hours of darkness except in case of air raids.

Air raid shelters were dug, each shelter accommodated about 100 persons and was very crowded. Separate shelters were provided for hospital personnel and patients. At the time I left the camp there were 12 air raid shelters in the camp. Air raid shelters were approximately 100' x 15' x 6', covered with 4' of dirt. They could be considered splinter proof but neither bomb nor shell proof.

Shortly after arrival all buildings were remodeled, each room roofed inside (room roofing removed in March 1945) walls plastered and 1 latrine (urinal and 5 seat type stools) placed in one end of the building, hallways cemented and the buildings made suitable for winter occupancy.

Washing facilities were ample. There was a wash rack between every two barracks divided into 16 compartments, 8 compartments with water faucets on each side. Water was available from 0500 - 0900 and 1600 to 2000 each day.

Bathing facilities were excellent. A large rectangular bath tank (15' x 5') with 4 coal fired hot water heaters was provided. Each man was permitted to bathe daily. Later, upon expansion of the camp a new bath house was built containing 4 semi-circular bathing tanks (30' x 8' x 4') water being steam heated. In addition the Mitsui Coal Mining Company and the Zinc Plant provided bathing facilities for mine and zinc workers.

Messing facilities were good. A mess hall with a capacity of 250 was first provided and proved adequate for the size of the camp. Later another building was provided when the camp expanded to 1000 men. The later part of December 1944, a new mess hall was built with a capacity of 1600 men.

When we first arrived in camp and until October 1943, equal ration was provided for all prisoners. This ration provided for each prisoner:

600 grams rice
300 grams vegetables
- 4 -

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44 grams meat or fish (twice a week)
Bread was furnished from time to time and when supplied 3 - 100 gram buns were substituted for 1 meal of rice. Meat supplied ranged from beef and pork to dog and cat, some horsemeat, shark, octopus, whale, clams, mussels, and almost everything which could be classified as meat or fish.

In October 1943, a new ration was announced as follows:

For Coal extraction workers	-	750 grams rice
For Coal Preparation workers	-	650 grams rice
For Camp Workers & sick	-	550 grams rice
For Officers	-	350 grams rice

the vegetable and meat ration remained unchanged throughout our stay in the camp.

In July 1944 the daily rice ration was set at:

Outside Workers	-	700 grams
Inside workers and sick	-	550 grams
Officers	-	350 grams

The variety and supply of vegetable varied according to the season of the year and availability. At time the supply was fairly large and included squash, onions, potatoes (white and sweet) cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. At other times we received Dikong (a large white radish like vegetable) bamboo shoots, a plant called elephant ears and roots of various kinds. When the latter type vegetables were issued soup was neither good nor nourishing.

The food, what there was of it, was of generally good quality. Unpolished rice was supplied at all times. Polished rice was provided a times for hospital patients. A small amount of soya bean paste, soya bean curd and soya sauce were provided which helped to make the food palatable. Oils, fats and salt and sugar were scarce and very little was provided at any one time.

Meals were served cafeteria style in a general mess. This system was found the best method of food distribution. In some other camps food was issued in separate containers to each building and required many handlings before consumption. This method was tried and discarded as taking too long. Under the cafeteria system it was found possible to feed the 500 men originally in camp in one half hour as against an hour and a half under the barracks distribution system, the time for feeding being correspondingly increased upon the expansion of the camp.

Food was cooked in coal fired steel pots in the old mess hall and when the new mess hall was opened, rice was cooked in wooden steam pots and soup cooked in coal fired steel pots. Modern baking facilities were furnished including electric ovens. Baking of bread was

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approximately every other day. Bread was issued to outside workers only after November 1943. On some Rest Days bread was issued for the evening meal to all members of the camp.

Under the food system furnished by the Japanese and the amount of work required of the men, the loss of weight was great. In my own case, when I left the Philippine Islands my weight was approximately 75 kilos (165 pounds) and when I left the camp in April 1945 my weight was approximately 60 kilos (132 pounds), upon release from a prisoner of war status my weight was approximately 54 kilos (118 pounds) my normal weight being about 175 pounds.

Medical facilities furnished were generally good. In the beginning one building was provided and used for Camp Dispensary, operating room and hospital. There was originally space for about 10 bed patients. Later this proved inadequate and a second building was opened. When I was transferred from the camp there were 4 general hospital buildings with space for 125 patients, 1 isolation hospital for 10 patients and 1 building for the dispensary, sick callrooms, operating room and dental office.

Medical supplies were fairly adequate. At times there was a scarcity of certain urgently needed medicines and drugs. On the whole there was no great scarcity of medicine. On one occasion the Japanese purchased some 5000 yen of various types of medicine, presented them to the Prisoner Commander and three days later called me over and said that the Prisoner Officers must pay for the supplies from our postal savings account. Major Schott, D.C., and myself absorbed the cost from our own savings account.

Due to the scarcity of surgical gauze it was necessary to save and wash bandages and dressings for use over and over again. A well equipped operating room was supplied by the Mitsui Mining Company. Operative equipment on the whole was of second rate material and did not stand up well under constant use. American Red Cross surgical supplies and instruments were received but held by the Japanese and according to information received this equipment was issued to the Prisoner Doctors a few days after V-J Day.

Medicines were issued by the Japanese Medical authorities upon request of the Prisoner Doctors. However, in most cases, it was necessary to wait several days before such supplies were issued after requisitions were made. The Prisoner Doctors constantly had to keep after the Japanese for issue of needed medical supplies. Medical supplies furnished through the International Red Cross were also kept under Japanese supervision and a great deal of trouble was encountered in trying to get these supplies from the Japanese.

Medical and surgical treatment of all prisoners was carried on by Prisoner Doctors and was supervised by the Japanese Medical staff which normally consisted of 1 doctor and 5 or 6 Corpsmen. At the time of my transfer there were 5 Prisoner Medical Officers (3 American, 1 Australian, 1 Dutch) 1 Dental Officer and approximately

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26 Corpsmen of all nationalities present in the camp.

Many letters of protest regarding the issue of medical supplies and the attitude of the Japanese ~~regarding~~ in the treatment and care of the sick but little or no attention was paid to these letters. At one time Captain (now Major) Thomas H. Hewlett, M.C., the Senior Medical Officer was placed in confinement for one week for writing such a letter of protest.

An excellent Dental Office was furnished by the Mining Company with all modern equipment. The Dental Officer, Major (Now Lieutenant Colonel) Robert W. Schott, D.C., was permitted to order such dental equipment as he needed to establish his office and to the best of my knowledge and belief he was furnished all equipment requested. The facilities of the Dental Office was such that all types of dental and oral treatment could be provided with the exception of prosthetic appliances. In the majority of camps from whom I have received reports dental treatment was limited to extractions only.

When the camp was first organized in August 1943, I was permitted 1 officer as supply officer and 1 officer as mess officer, all other line officers were required to supervise the work of the men in the Coal Mine. The Medical Officers and Medical Department personnel were given work in the Prisoner Hospital. In September, 1943, the Japanese Camp Commander under quite a bit of pressure was persuaded to assign all officers to administrative and command functions within the camp area. This permitted the assignment of officers as follows:

- 1 - Prisoner Commander
- 1 - Assistant Prisoner Commander
- 1 - Mess Officer
- 1 - Supply Officer
- 1 - Police Officer
- 1 - Camp Details Officer
- 1 - Provost Marshal and Camp Inspector
- 2 - Medical Officers.

In addition the junior officers was assigned as Company Commanders on the basis of 1 officer for each 150 men.

With the exception of those who were physically unfit and the Medical Department all enlisted men were required to work in the Coal Mine. Three shifts were organized initially on an eight hour basis, 6 days a week. Later the work hours were increased to 9-10 and 12 hour shifts and the Rest Days limited to 3 each month. Work shifts departed from the camp at 0500-1230-1630 and returned approximately 12 hours later. Initially the coal mining ~~shifts~~ were organized into three 50 men sections, 1 Extraction Section, 1 Preparation Section and 1 Exploration Section. Later the exploration sections were changed to a preparation and extracting sections.

Upon the expansion of the camp three other work groups came into

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xistence. 1 group of 150 men (British) were assigned to a Zinc plant; 1 group of 50 men (Dutch) was assigned to Dock Work, loading and unloading ships. A third group of approximately 75 men who were unable to work underground at the mine were assigned a top-side working group. This group worked in cleaning up the mine equipment and machine shop work. Those considered unfit for work at the mine, in the plant or dock were given work in keeping the camp area cleaned up. The early part of April 1945 a Farm group of 90 men was organized and work started on a camp farm.

Working conditions in the Coal Mine were not good. Clothing issued was not adequate and there was a great shortage of shoes. The men were required to work in water soaked tunnels and in many cases in running water. There were many tunnel cave-ins. The injury rate was fairly high and in some instances injuries appeared to be of the self-inflicted injury type. Fortunately the death rate from mine injuries was very low. There were only 6 deaths directly attributable to mine injury; 4 men were killed outright and 2 others died as a result of injuries sustained. There were four mine injuries which will result in permanent disability. Six men ~~xxxxxx~~ had leg amputations. All other mine injuries were cleared up through prompt surgical care, many of these cases will result in a semi-permanent disability or temporary disabilities throughout their lives.

I cannot praise too highly the excellent work of Captain (now Major) Thomas H. Hewlett, M.C., the senior Medical Officer and Surgeon of the Camp. Major Hewlett worked tirelessly in providing surgical treatment for the men injured in the mines and through his efforts many men are alive and in good physical condition due to his care. Quite a bit of difficulty was had at first because Major Hewlett had no identifying papers to prove his worth as a Surgeon to the satisfaction of the Japanese, but after performing two surgical operations in the presence of the Japanese Doctor, Major Hewlett was given free rein in providing surgical service. He performed almost every kind of surgical operation in the books with success in each case. Two men who received severe back injuries in the mine and whom the Japanese Mine Surgeon stated would never walk again, were restored the use of their limbs through the ingeniousness of Major Hewlett. Most of the surgical appliances used were designed and made in the camp by Major Hewlett or under his direct supervision from scrap materials.

Working conditions of the Dock and top-side mine workers were very bad, particularly during the winter period (November-April) due to lack of proper protective clothing. Many of the Dock Workers contracted pneumonitis and several died. All Dock workers were of Dutch nationality, the majority being of Dutch-Japanese extraction. These men were used to a mild climate and the colder climate of Kyushu made them susceptible to pneumonia and quick death.

Working conditions in the Zinc plant were better than either the coal mine or docks. These men were working inside at all times in a warm place and were suitably clothed for the type of work performed. Zinc workers were British and brought quite a lot of clothing

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with them when they arrived in camp from Singapore.

There were no restrictions on the receipt of mail. Mail was held for a short time at Japanese Headquarters waiting for camp censorship. By keeping after the Interpreter and Camp Authorities, when we knew mail was in camp, we were able to get our mail fairly promptly after receipt. Prisoners were permitted to send one card of approximately 35 words each three months. In addition to this about 25 radio propaganda messages were permitted each month. On two occasions 150 men were permitted to send an unlimited propaganda radio message for transmission over Radio Toyko. One of these messages was broadcasted and received as it was a message which I sent to my wife. However, out of some 15 radio propaganda messages which I prepared only two were broadcasted and received. Restrictions on the sending of cards and propaganda messages included; no mention could be made of the camp or its location; no mention of working conditions; treatment; physical condition other than good; illnesses or diseases; conduct of the war; financial affairs; needs for food and clothing. Generally the messages were required to be in the form of questions to insure an answer from the receiver. Personal boxes were received in March, 1944, the only boxes which were sent to us from home.

Prisoner officers were credited with the pay of the corresponding grade in the Japanese Army. A deduction of 30 yen was made to cover the cost of subsistence. Initially officers were paid 20 yen per month, the remainder placed in Postal Savings Account. Later, through the efforts of the Prisoner Commander and other Prisoner Officers this was raised to 40 yen per month. Pay schedules were as follows:

Major	170.00	Yen
Captain	122.50	"
1st Lieut.	85.00	"
2nd Lieut. and		
W.O. Med. Dept.	70.83	"

Warrant Officers (other than Medical Department) received 25 sen for each day worked. (Warrant Officer, Medical Department, was paid the same as that for officers).

Non-Commissioned Officers (other than Medical Department) were paid 15 sen for each day worked. Non-commissioned officers, Medical Department were paid 10 yen per month.

Privates (Except Medical Department) were paid 10 sen for each day worked. Private 1st class Medical Department were paid 7 yen per month; Privates 4 yen.

In addition to the above pay schedules, the mine and zinc companies paid a daily bonus based upon production. This bonus ranged from 3 sen to 50 sen per day. Average bonus being about 15 sen.

No prisoner was given a complete Red Cross food parcel while

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I was a member of the camp. The boxes were broken and certain items removed for issue through the mess, to the sick in the hospital and in many cases used as prizes for cooperation with the Japanese and for working prizes in the coal mine, zinc and dock works. Quite a bit went into the hands of the Japanese Military for their own use.

In 1943 approximately 750 boxes were received and after breaking them up and taking out the Japanese Military Cut, the prisoners were issued the equivalent of 1/2 box per man.

During 1944-45 approximately 6000 boxes were received in two separate shipments. Up to the time I left in April, 1945, the equivalent of 2 boxes per man had been issued. Each box was stripped of all meat products, butter and milk which was later issued through the mess or to the sick in the hospital. Each rest days (about every 10 days) approximately 200 cans of meat and butter and 100 cans of milk were issued to the mess officer. The meat was usually placed in the soup and the butter and milk cooked with the rice. The stripped boxes were then issued on the basis of 1 box for each 4 men or officer. I made numerous protests to the Japanese Camp Commander against this method of distribution of the Red Cross food parcels which promptly brought me a face slapping and the remark that the Red Cross items would be issued as the Japanese Camp Commander decided.

In one instance the Japanese Camp Commander was highly incensed because the Prisoners of War did not share any portion of their Red Cross boxes with the Japanese Soldiers to show a spirit of fraternity, and appreciation for what the Japanese were doing for the Prisoners.

Early in 1944 some Red Cross clothing, blankets, shoes, toilet articles and tobacco was received. This was turned over to the Prisoner Commander for issue. Distribution was made to each section in proportion to its strength. Distribution within the section was made by lot and supervised by an officer to insure fairness in distribution. The latter part of 1944 and early in 1945 additional clothing supplies were received but up to the time I left only a few overcoats had been issued. When I left the camp in April 1945, each person on the outgoing detail (22) were issued 1 complete Red Cross food parcel and 1 bar of soap.

All clothing supplied by the Red Cross and issued to the men was taken up on the records of the Japanese Army. When a protest was registered the Japanese Camp Commander informed me that all items issued were property of the Japanese Government whether issued by the Japanese or received through the International Red Cross.

The clothing situation was very bad. The majority of the men were without adequate shoes and repeated requests to the Japanese authorities brought no appreciable relief. When we arrived in camp in August 1943, each person was issued: 1 pair shorts; 1 white shirt; 1 cotton Japanese Army uniform; 1 pair canvas shoes and 1 towel. In November 1943 each person was issued 1 overcoat (wool, British Army)

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and 1 heavy Japanese winter uniform. In the fall of 1944 each person was issued 1 suit of Japanese winter underwear. Several issues of G-strings and towels were made, approximately one of each every six months. 1 pair of socks was issued in March 1945. Other prisoners were issued the items listed above upon their arrival in camp. In some instances replacement of clothing destroyed through mine cave-ins were replaced but not often. The salvation of the original 500 group insofar as clothing is concerned was through the personal boxes received in March 1944 most of the boxes containing quite a bit of clothing.

Rubber Japanese Army shoes were issued to each prisoner and these shoes were supposed to last six months. The average usefulness was about 2 months. Through the excellent work of the supply officer 2nd Lieut. (now 1st Lieut) Owen W. Romaine, A.C., the shoes were kept in an excellent state of repair. This officer was very diligent and resourceful in the organization and operation of the shoe repair system.

My treatment at the hands of the Japanese in Camp #17 was fairly good. Upon several occasions I was slapped by the Camp Commander for my complaints regarding the food, clothing and treatment of the men, and by the Japanese Guards for failure to observe some regulation of the camp. On one occasion I was relieved as Prisoner Commander for a period of time for failure to apprehend and turn over to the Japanese a thief and to properly cooperate with the Japanese authorities and was placed in confinement for two days as punishment for the offense.

Prisoners were slapped and beaten for the least excuse. The treatment given to the Prisoners by the Japanese Authorities was not in accord with that provided by the Geneva Treaty. However, while the Japanese Commander and Interpreter were continually referring to the Geneva ~~Treatment~~ Treaty while talking to me, if mention was made of the Treaty by me or any of the Prisoner Officers we were promptly told the Geneva Treaty was not recognized by the Japanese.

Morale among my original 500 men was generally good. Among the later arrivals morale was only fair. My original group were always in high spirits and always confident in the outcome of the war and were every looking for and talking about the day that "The Yanks and Tanks would come in and get us out". The attitude of the men might best be expressed in the following incident:

"One of the men was placed in confinement for lying, upon his release and in my presence the Camp Interpreter lectured him on his conduct and the necessity for better cooperation and obedience to the Japanese orders. The interpreter said in part "You Americans are no good, you are always causing trouble, you do not show proper appreciation of what the Japanese Army is trying to do for you. You lie to us, you steal from us, you call us monkey people behind our backs. When we punish you do you show proper respect and humiliation? Do you show a willingness to do better? Are you repentant? Do you try to cooperate with us? We place you in confinement, we slap and beat you, we stare you. But do you appreciate? No. You come out from confinement, walk away with your head thrown high in the air and just say "Fuck Em"."

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When the interpreter finished talking he had tears in his eyes.

The Japanese provided base ball, volleyball and basket ball equipment and encouraged its use among the prisoners. Base ball teams were organized between sections and the Japanese provided prizes in the form of cigarettes and fresh fruit for the winners. We had a base ball team which could lick any Japanese team which we were permitted to play, in fact the Japanese told me what men could not be used on teams which were to play the Japanese and still we produced teams that could beat them each time.

Tennis was provided but its use was more or less restricted to the best players and these were required to play Japanese opponents.

Shows were organized and produced about every three months. Practice was limited to between shifts hence it took just about three months to rehearse and put on a show. The Japanese sanctioned these shows and provided quite a bit of equipment for staging the shows. Most of the stage properties were manufactured by the prisoners from scrap material. Much credit for putting on these shows should be given to 2nd Lieut. (now 1st Lt. John H. Allen, Inf., and Private Lester I. Tennenberg. Lieutenant Allen was Camp Recreation director.

In the spring of 1944 the Japanese Camp Commander took the prisoners to a park in Omuta to view the Cherry blossoms in bloom and on several occasions during the summer of 1944 swimming parties of about 150 men were taken to the bay. Several trips to the bay for clam digging were also organized.

Religious facilities were good. The Japanese permitted religious services each rest day. There was a Baptist Minister among the enlisted personnel who conducted church and funeral services. In May 1944 a Dutch Reformed Chaplain, who was educated in Chicago, came into camp and the conduct of church services and funerals was handled by him. Catholic Rosary services were conducted by various Catholic men in the camp. In January a Catholic Chaplain Father John E. Duffy, Chaplain Corps, came into camp and conducted several Masses before he was transferred to another camp in April 1945.

The Japanese gave me much liberty in the preparation for funeral services of the Prisoners. A modified service, based on Army procedure, was prepared and after approval by the Japanese was used for all services. Practically the entire funeral service was conducted in accordance with Army practice with the exception of a firing squad. Funeral services for the British, Australian and ~~Dutch~~ Dutch personnel was handled by officers of the respective nationality.

I left Fukuoka Camp #17 on ²⁵~~22~~ April 1945. In the party were:

- 9 American Officers
- 2 Dutch Officers
- 2 English Officers
- 9 American Enlisted men

FUKUOKA CAMP #17, (page 13)

We were taken by train to Fukuoka City, placed on a fast steamship across Shushima Straits to Fusan, Korea, thence by train to Mukden, Manchuria. On the train we occupied chair cars. Enroute from Omuta to Fukuoka City we were joined with about 300 other officers and men from various camps in Kyushu the final detail leaving Fukuoka City being about 300 officers and men. Another detail of 300 officers and men were also placed on the boat for Fusan and were taken to some place in Korea. We were forbidden to talk with this group and they were placed in a separate compartment on the boat.

On the boat from Fukuoka to Fusan the 300 officers and men were jammed into a small hold with no room to lie down or stretch, there was hardly room for our legs to straighten out after sitting down. The boat trip took about 6 hours. We were given one meal on the boat consisting of a small portion of rice and some soup.

On the train from Fusan, Korea to Mukden, Manchuria, we occupied chair cars. The food was good and we were given food three times a day consisting of 1 box of rice and 1 box containing sea-weed, fish, eggs and meat at each meal time. During the train ride we were required to pull down the blinds when passing through and stopping at stations. We arrived at Mukden on the morning of 29 April 1945, where we remained until released by the Russian troops on 20 August 1945.

During the period I was at Fukuoka Camp #17 there were 97 deaths as follows:

AMERICAN: 36.

Army	-	24
Navy	-	7
Marine Corps	-	2
Civilians	-	3

Pneumonia	11
Starved to death	1
Murdered	1
Executed	1
Died from Mine Causes	3
Pellegra	2
Inanition-Emaciation	15
Dysentery	1
Tuberculosis	1
TOTAL	<u>36</u>

BRITISH: 18

Pneumonia	7
Inanition-Emaciation	9
Diarrhea	1
Edema	1
TOTAL	<u>18</u>

Tuberculosis	1
Embolus	1
Peritonitis	1
TOTAL	<u>13</u>

DUTCH

30

Heart Disease	1
Pneumonia	19
Inanition-Emaciation	5
Embolus	1
Chicken Pox	1
Mine injury	1
Dysentery	1
Hemorrhage of adrenal gland	1
TOTAL	<u>30</u>

In addition to the above deaths in the camp there was brought into the camp the remains of 12 Americans who died at the Military Hospital, Moji, Kyushu, Japan. These men were part of the detail which left Manila about 20 December 1944 and were bombed by American planes at Subic Bay, Philippine Islands and Takao, Formosa.

Three unidentified bodies were brought into camp and turned over to the Prisoner Commander for safe keeping. No information was furnished by the Japanese as to their names. It has been presumed they were American Pilots shot down over Japan. This presumption is based on the fact that the bodies were brought into camp within a day or two after an air raid.

During the winter of 1943-44 each person in camp was furnished 1 silk filled mattress, 1 silk filled comforter and 4 heavy blankets. All men were supplied with adequate sleeping facilities. During the summer of 1944 2 blankets were taken from each person to supply incoming details and in the winter of 1944-45 each prisoner was issued 1 mattress, 1 comforter, and 3 blankets. In addition there was issued 1 earthenware hot water bottle for each 2 men. Officers and hospital patients were issued 1 hot water bottle. ~~XXXXX~~

During the period November-March of each year, small coke stoves were issued for use in the Prisoner Headquarters and Hospital. In 1943-44 coke was issued by the coal mine company. In 1944-45 we made our own coke. The stoves were small and gave off very little heat but were sufficient to take the chill out of the room. Temperatures in the winter rarely fell below 5 degrees below zero centigrade.

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FUKUOKA CAMP #17 (page 15)

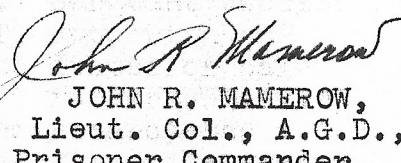
After quite a bit of trouble and lots of talk a Barber Shop was established for the Prisoners. This barber shop was fairly well equipped with hair clippers, straight razors, barber chairs, towels, soap and shaving cream. All hair was clipped short in the Japanese Army style. Once established there was no further trouble in keeping the shop operating. The Japanese Camp authorities and guards used it's facilities constantly. Two permanent barbers were authorized and on Rest Days volunteer barbers were obtained through the offer of extra food.

A canteen was established and from time to time, soap, canned fruits, canned fish, fresh fruits, and various other items were brought in for sale to the Prisoners. Working prisoners and those in the hospital as a result of work injuries were allowed 1 package of 10 cigarets every other day. Every effort was made to obtain articles for sale in the Canteen. The canteen steward was Master Sergeant Jack C. Wheeler, D.E.M.L., who also acted as Prisoner Sergeant Major and clerk for Japanese Headquarters. Sergeant Wheeler worked constantly to obtain items for sale and his influence with the Japanese was such that he was able to procure many food items for sale.

Other persons from whom information can be obtained regarding Fukuoka Camp #17, are:

Lieut. Col. Robert W. Schott, D.C.,
Whatcheer, Iowa
Major Thomas H. Hewlett, M.C.,
919 East Spring Street, New Albany, Indiana.
Major Achille C. Tisdelle, Cav.,
Wilmette, Illinois
Mr. Sgt. Jack C. Wheeler, D.E.M.L.,
60 Brete Harte Terrace, San Francisco, Calif.

Two sketches showing the camp on August 10, 1943, and on 25 April 1945, are inclosed herewith.


JOHN R. MAMEROW,
Lieut. Col., A.G.D., O-276134
Prisoner Commander.

HOME ADDRESS: 109 East Bannock Street,
Boise, Idaho.

DUTY STATION: March Field, California.

FUKUOKA CAMP #17 (page 15)

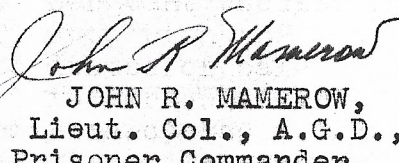
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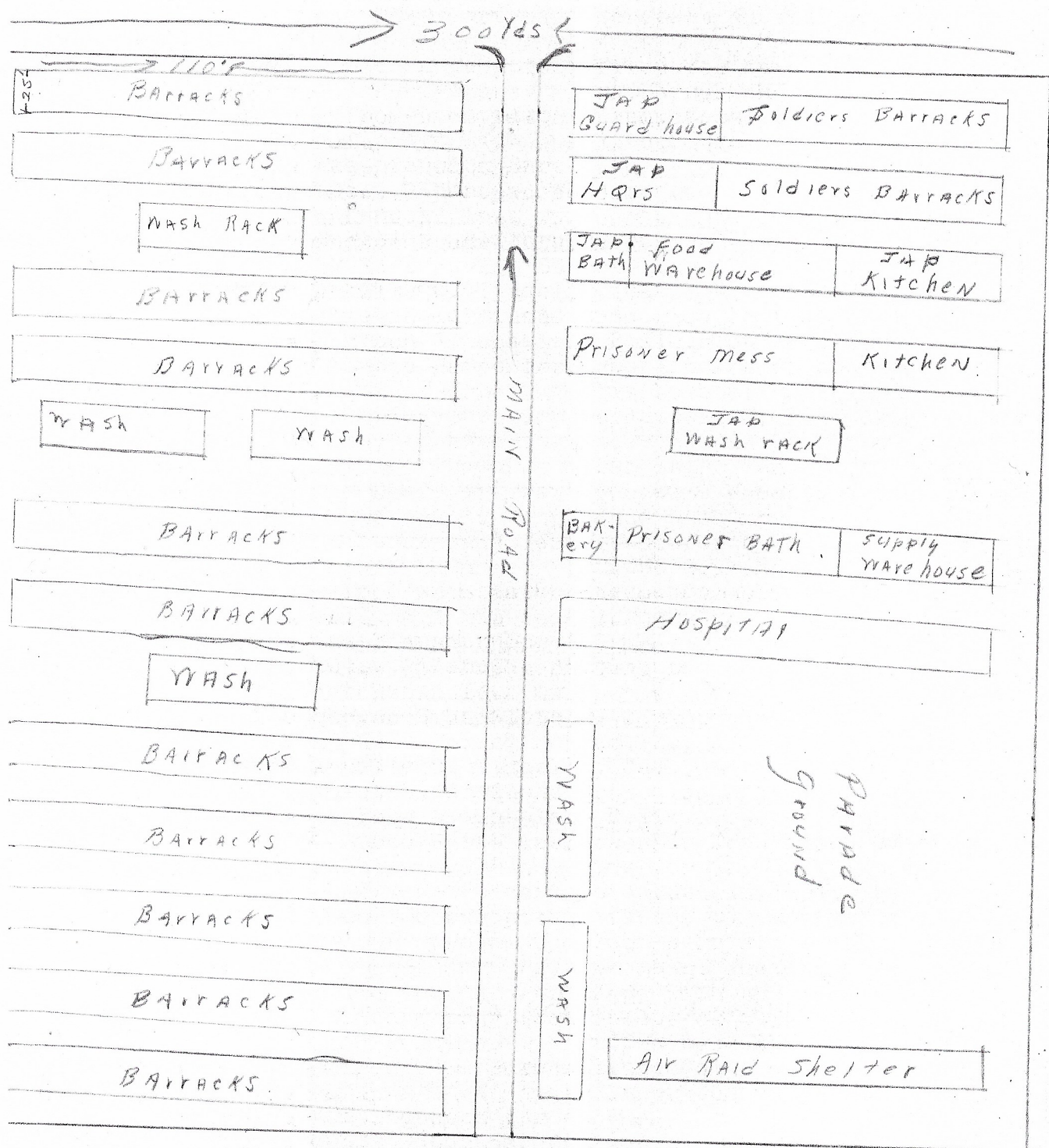
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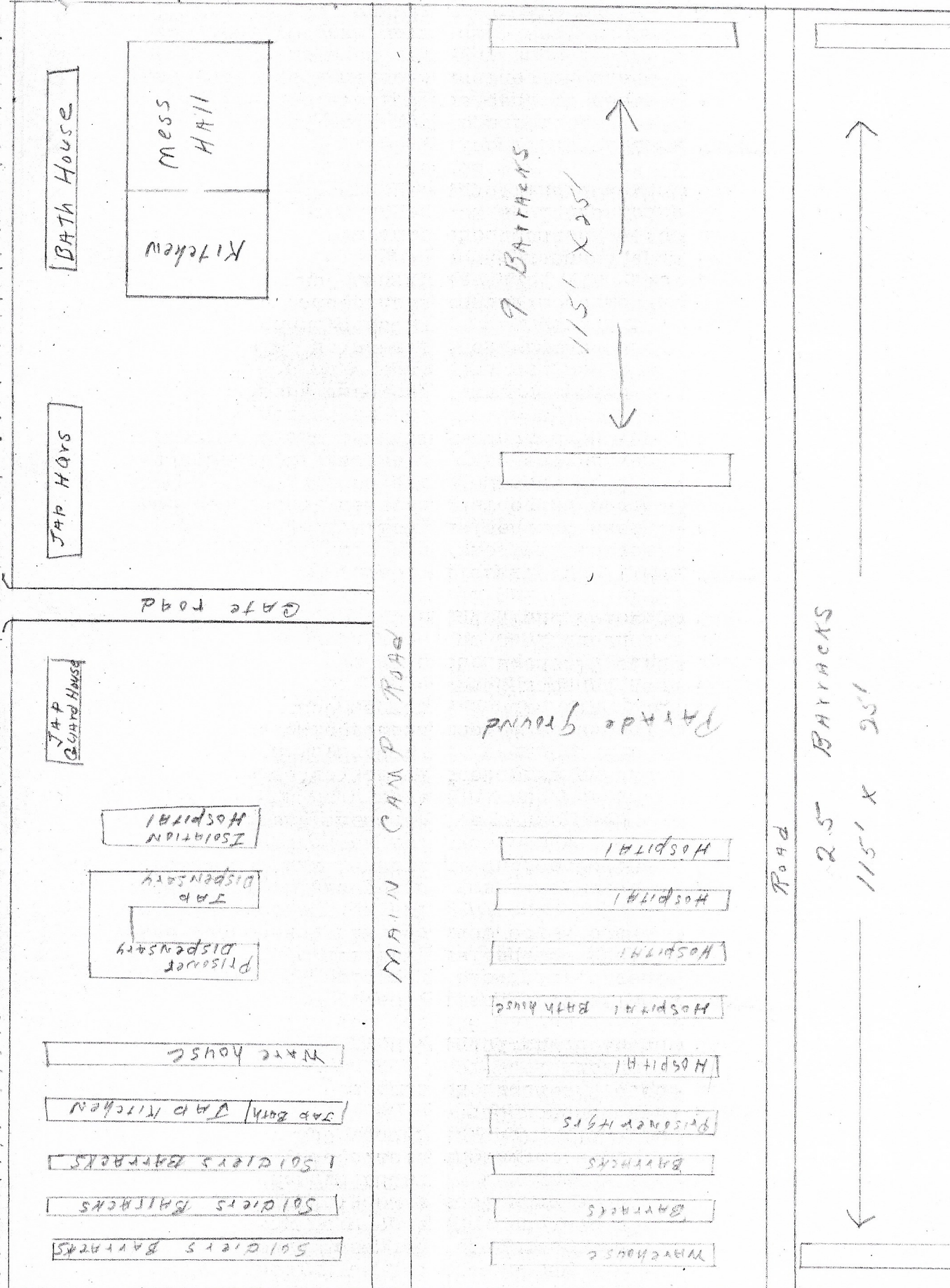


Sketch of Original Camp.



Incl. 1.

1000 Yds



CAMP AS OF April 20, 1945.

Ind. 2.