

PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS IN AREAS OTHER THAN THE FOUR PRINCIPAL ISLANDS OF JAPAN  
LIAISON & RESEARCH BRANCH AMERICAN PRISON OF WAR INFORMATION BUREAU  
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**NAKHON PATHOM, HOSPITAL POW CAMP THAILAND (JAPANESE INSTALLATION)**

1. LOCATION: Nakhon Pathom was primarily a hospital camp for those men who worked on the Burma-Thailand Railroad from Moulmein to Bangkok. Nakhon Pathom is some 60 kilometers due west of Bangkok and the prison camp was just inside of the city. The country was rich and fertile. The city of Nakhon Pathom is on the direct line from Bangkok to Rangoon, and therefore on the direct line of communications of the Japanese army toward the northwest. It was a military target. The coordinates were 13°49'N, 100°5'E. The camp was first occupied by British, Australian and Dutch in Jan. 1944, and was built to accommodate 10,000.

2. PRISONER PERSONNEL: Seventy-five hundred was the highest figure representing prisoner personnel here. Of the 7500 prisoners, 4,000 were British, 2500 Australians, 1000 Dutch, 75 Indians and 65 Americans. The American group was composed of 33 Army, 32 Navy and 5 Marines. Lt. (jg) L.W. Rogers, USN and Lt. Heinan, USA, were Sr. American Officers here.

3. GUARD PERSONNEL: This camp had various Japanese commanding officers at different times. Capt. Wakimassi who was commandant at 80 Kilo camp was assistant Commandant at this camp. The interpreter at 80 Kilo Camp was also at this camp, but not in the capacity of interpreting. The camp commandant during the last four months was "Puss in Boots". A nickname as other identification is unknown. All non-commissioned officers, Sgt. of the guard and so forth were Japanese. However the sentries, about 50 in number, were all Korean.

4. GENERAL CONDITIONS:

(a) Housing Facilities: There were 50 barracks in this camp. Some were composed of timber and others of bamboo. These buildings had thatched roofs and were 100 meter long by 20' wide. The walls of most of the buildings were of bamboo matting of the "lahala" type found in Hawaii. Platforms 7' wide on either side of the center aisle, which was of packed earth, were so placed for sleeping, feet toward the center. Two meters of space was allowed inside the barracks, providing there was room for them. Since most of the men in this camp were considered hospital patients, practically every barracks was in the nature of a hospital ward.

(b) Latrines: There was one latrine between each two barracks. The latrines at this camp were well constructed. They were concrete pits with wooden covers and individual stalls. The sides were open. Green leaves and pages from old books were used in lieu of toilet paper. The canteen also sold a very good grade of toilet paper but most men did not have enough money to purchase it. It was not necessary to move the site of the latrine from time to time, since they were bailed out daily. A sufficient amount of lime was provided for sanitary purposes.

(c) Bathing: An ample amount of water was available at this camp at all times. There were three 100' artesian wells. There were 3 bathing compounds 50' square with a bamboo platform on which to stand while bathing. There was a drainage ditch 2' deep which did not afford proper drainage. The men carried water to the bathing compound in 5-gallon oil cans to bathe. Bamboo buckets also were available. There was a small amount of soap furnished but this was used mainly by medical personnel for the care of those men who too ill to bathe themselves. Men were allowed to bathe daily.

(d) Mess Hall: There was one galley for each five barracks. These facilities were used for cooking food only. The prepared food was taken to the barracks and served to the prisoners by orderlies detailed for that purpose.

(e) Food: The food was good and plentiful. The ration consisted of rice and stew mainly. A fair amount of meat was issued. Vegetables consisted of carrots, radishes, okra and green leafy vegetables provided from the Japanese army ration. At times fish was available. Food was prepared by prisoner personnel. Each galley was supervised by a mess officer and a mess sergeant. The mess personnel were reported to have done an excellent job. Due to the fact that this camp was located in an area where food was plentiful, the prisoners always had enough to eat.

(f) Medical Facilities: There were 25 medical officers among the prisoner personnel of this camp. They were English, Australian, and Dutch. A Japanese medical officer held sick parade periodically to determine whether or not a prisoner should return to a work camp. Cole Cotes was an Australian medical officer who was very well known to medical men and was an experienced surgeon. Very little Japanese medicine was provided. In May of 1944 an American Red Cross medical shipment arrived. There was a good supply of surgical kits atabrine, sulphur drugs, bandages and antiseptics. These were used carefully and lasted quite a long time.

(g) Supplies: 1. Red Cross: in June of 1944 an issue of American Red Cross food parcels was made on a basis of one parcel to ten men. This was the only Red Cross food issue made. At the same time each American in this camp received one pair of shoes.

2. Japanese issue: A few issues were made of clothing which consisted of old cast off clothing from the Japanese warehouses and a few items of Red Cross clothing.

(h) Mail: The mailing privileges in this area were not confined to a particular camp, but were operated on an area basis. During the time the Americans were in this camp two postal cards were allowed to be sent. Very few letters were received.

(i) Work: Since this was a hospital camp, very little work was done. Officers were engaged in camp maintenance and administrative duties. In Nov. 1944 a moat 2 meters deep and 4 meters wide was dug around the entire camp area. This was done by the enlisted personnel of the camp who were not actually bed patients. The work was comparatively easy. When a man became well enough to work, he was sent out to a work camp or maintenance camp on the Burma-Thailand Railroad.

(j) Treatment: Nakhon Pathom was recognized as being constituted by the Japanese as a hospital camp. Compared to other camps, treatment here was good. However, the discipline continued to be rigid.

(k) Pay: Officers were paid 30 ticals. There were 100cents to a tical. Officers were paid whether working or not. Enlisted men were paid 20, 30, and 40 cents per day only when working. As an example of the purchasing power of the Japanese occupation money, one tical would purchase 6 duck eggs. Officers were paid on an equivalent rank basis. Sixty ticals were deducted from the officers' pay for rent and board and 30 given to them for personal use. The balance was credited to the officers' postal savings account.

(l) Recreation: There were no recreational facilities in this camp.

(m) Religious Activities: There were three Catholic Priests and three Protestant Chaplains in this camp. Religious services were allowed to be held once a week. One-half of one barracks was set aside for a chapel.

(n) Morale: The morale in this camp was fair. There were a few cases of insanity, of which none were Americans. There were 120 amputations here, but on the whole this did not lessen morale.

5. MOVEMENTS: On 25 January 1945 the Japanese authorities, through fear of an invasion through Burma, decided that all officers and men would be separated. The contingent of officers left Nakhon Pathom for Kanchanaburi on this date. This was an over-night train ride from Nakhon Pathom in an open gondola railroad car. Travelling conditions were very crowded. Many men in the party were on stretchers. It was not stated when this camp was liberated.