

PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS IN AREAS OTHER THAN THE FOUR PRINCIPAL ISLANDS OF JAPAN
LIAISON & RESEARCH BRANCH AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR INFORMATION BUREAU
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JINSEN PRISONER OF WAR CAMP KOREA

1. LOCATION: Jinsen Camp was located on the outskirts of the city of Jinsen, Korea about 30 miles from Keijo, the capital of Korea. It was southeast of the city near the Taijungu Shrine in the Eastern Park and about 400 yards away from a railroad station. It was approximately half a mile from an artillery installation on the hilltop overlooking the camp. A military air field was located 10 miles away.

2. PRISONER PERSONNEL: This camp was first occupied by the British and the Australians in 1942. A group of 140 Americans arrived on Apr 27, 1945, from Fukuoka, Japan. They consisted of 114 Army, Navy and Marine Officers and 26 Enlisted Men. Most of these prisoners had been captured on Bataan & Corregidor. At the time of liberation there was a total of 168 American, British and Australians, out of this number 138 were Americans. This camp was known as an officers' camp and only sufficient enlisted men were kept there to perform the menial duties. Col. Curtis T. Beecher, U.S.M.C. was the senior American Officer and Col. Jack W. Schwartz was the Medical Officer, Maj. Allen Steele, R.A. represented the British prisoners.

3. GUARD PERSONNEL: The Commanding Officer was Lt. Col. Okisaki and Capt. Osabe was the executive officer and adjutant. Lt. Yamaguchi was the medical officer and was relieved on July 5, 1945. M/Sgt. Sumi became his successor. The interpreter was J. Kiteoka.

4. GENERAL CONDITIONS: Conditions at this camp was by far the best of any camp the Americans had been confined in.

(a) Housing Facilities: The camp consisted of several one-story Japanese Army barracks with one barracks fenced off from the others for the prisoners. The barrack was approximately 50 feet wide and 150 feet long, of wooden frame and tar-papered roof. It was divided into 3 sections and had a dirt floor. The prisoners slept on raised wooden platforms, about 18 inches from the floor. These platforms had straw mats and ran down both sides of the wall leaving an aisle in the middle. The heating facilities consisted of oblong brick stoves which could use either wood or coal. There was no fuel provided and it was still extremely cold when the American prisoners arrived. The compound was about 600 feet by 300 feet, it was surrounded by a wooden fence surmounted by electrically charged barbed wire. Only a very small part of the compound was available to the prisoners.

(b) Latrines: The latrines were located about 15 feet from the living quarters and were the regular Japanese type of open septic tanks. There were eight cubicles in each latrine and each cubicle had a straddle hole. There was also a separate urinal trough built along the wall and the drainage was poor.

(c) Bathing: The bathhouse was a separate building also housing the kitchen, it was about 30 feet from the barrack and had 2 rooms. The dressing room had a wooden floor and the bathing room had a concrete floor. The prisoners were allowed to bathe frequently and there were 4 large oval shaped tubs made of metal fixed to a brick base. Hot water was available and there was a cold water faucet. Wooden buckets were provided to douse the individual who soaped and then rinsed themselves by dipping the bucket into the tubs.

(d) Mess Halls: The kitchen was at the other end of the bath house building. There was one bakery oven and four huge cauldrons. Cooking was done on a brick constructed stove. The food was prepared by British cooks, assisted by the American prisoners and under constant supervision of a Japanese sergeant. Buckets of food were brought out of the kitchen to the barracks by representatives from each section of the barracks. The food was then divided to the satisfaction of the prisoners as a whole.

(e) Food: The basic food rationing consisted of a bowl of soup and a small bowl of rice in the morning and evening, a bun and a bowl of soup at noon. The bun was made of half wheat flour and half soy bean meal, most of the vegetables came from the camp garden. Occasionally a small portion of fish would be added to the diet. The additional Red Cross food packages helped to give the ration a well balanced diet and bringing the daily caloric value to approximately 1800 calories.

(f) Medical Facilities: A small separate building housed the dispensary and the hospital. The hospital was only large enough for 8 patients, no cots or beds were available and the patients slept on straw mats. Medical equipment was extremely meager, drugs and dressings were released in very limited amounts by the Japanese doctor. The army officers died here and their deaths were mainly due to the lack of medicine and interest of the Japanese doctor. This doctor was later relieved by the Japanese commanding officer.

(g) Supplies: American Red Cross shipments of medical supplies were in the camp through they were rarely issued for the American doctors use. During their entire period in Jinsen the prisoners were issued one Red Cross food parcel for two men every other Sunday. Upon arrival in Jinsen six blankets and a Japanese army woolen uniform were issued to

each man, when the weather grew warmer a cotton uniform was issued. There was also a limited issue of soap, tooth powder and razor blades.

(h) Mail: The Americans received no mail and the British received only a small amount. Post cards of 25 words were allowed to be sent twice in 3 months.

(i) Work: The officers were not compelled to work, but most of them volunteered because they thought it would be a good policy to cooperate and because of the increase in rations. The work consisted of cultivating a vegetable garden, sewing buttonholes and buttons on Japanese civilian uniforms and in pulling cartloads of garments to and from the factory. Men with poor vision and unable to sew made paper wrappers for march boxes. The enlisted men did the same kind of work as the officers. The working day was from 8 to 5 with 1 Sunday off every two weeks. The vegetable garden was supervised by Japanese and Korean guards, the garment and match projects were supervised by the prisoners and a reasonable quota was required of each man. A 15-minute tea period was allowed at 10a.m. and 3 p.m.

(j) Treatment: In general the treatment at this camp was good. There were several instances of brutality particularly from the Japanese doctor.

(k) Pay: The enlisted men received 10 sen per day. The officers were paid the same as the equivalent rank in the Japanese army:

2nd Lt.: 70.83 yen, 1st Lt.: 85.00 yen; Capt.: 122.50 yen; Maj.: 170.00 yen; Lt. Col.: 230.00 yen; Col.: 312.50 yen

Deductions were made for rations and quarters. No prisoner was permitted to have in his possession more than 50 yen at any one time. The excess was placed in a postal savings account. At the termination of hostilities the balance in these postal savings accounts were paid to the officers.

(l) Recreation: Facilities for recreation were inadequate, a few games were provided and there was a small library. In July 1945 an addition of 105 books and magazines arrived.

(m) Religious Activities: A church of England Chaplain was a prisoner and he was permitted to hold services every Sunday in a building set aside for this purpose.

(n) Morale: Morale at this camp was good.

5. MOVEMENTS: Liberated September 8, 1945.