

Drie rapporten over Fukuoka 7B door ooggetuige Luitenant J.F.Wilkens

REPORT ON FOOD CONDITIONS IN FUKUOKA CAMP NO. 7

1. From our arrival on May 20 1943 till the early days of 1944 the camp was run by the Japanese army, which did at that time not allow any control over the kitchen by the POW officers, but placed a Japanese soldier in charge of the POW crew.

2. From Jan.1944 onwards, when the mine company took over the daily running of the camp (dai 10 hakensho). Lieut Fasso was put in charge of ration drawing and kitchen affairs. No official information was given, although asked for repeatedly, as to the quantities of base food and other that we were supposed to receive. All figure (s) mentioned in this report are based on weights actually received, in so far as we were able to check these; some of them are estimate or the figures given by the Japanese.

3. The basic food, rice, was generally speaking of fair quality, but deeply polished. Most of the time however, about 30% substitutes were given, presumably of the same value. Sometimes this would be flour, of which bread was made, sometimes baked, mostly steamed without yeast or baking powder. On other occasions the substitute would be either barley or wheat or maize or kaffircorn, all of which was mixed with the rice. Lately large quantities of soybeans either as they grow or flaked were issued instead of rice (up to 70%) These beans proved to cause serious digestive troubles: the majority of the camp suffering from diarrhea, although the beans were soaked for at least four hours and then steamed for from eight to ten hours, to soften them. Yet most men liked them because they filled!

4. As for the quantities of the base food : from Jan.44 till June 45 this has been constant in total and never changed, whether there were large numbers on light duties or not. The average fell round about 675 grams per man per day. Some of the Japanese commanders issued orders as to the quantity of raw rice to be given to the various groups of workers, but these quantities were always derived from an assumed situation of light and heavy workers and worked back from the fixed total we received.

In the attached schedule two monthly averages of daily rations are given: one for March 1944, when the food supply was comparatively good and everybody got the same quantity of base food, irrespective of the kind of work performed; the other for June 1945 when sick bay patients, inside workers, officers and farm workers were to receive 500 grams, topside mineworkers 650gr. and mineworkers proper 730 to 800gr. As the total quantity based on the average of 675gr did not change, it is obvious that the last group got less, the more mineworkers there were, and that even the lowest figure was barely attainable. Although we adhered to the system of giving different rations to different groups, we never went as far as the Jap. Extremes but set our own standards in accord with the opinion of the American camp doctors.

In June 45 two cuts in the rice rations of resp. 10 and 5% followed each other rapidly. Moreover on the three rest days that were given per month, the issue was cut down to two meals of 200gr. for everybody.

5. The supply of other material has been most irregular and did not appear subject to any rule or regulation. Fresh fish and the occasional bit of meat disappeared in 1945. During the last months there

was an occasional issue of either dried or salted fish, but these issues never lasted more than a few days. Vegetables too decreased considerably and their issue was also always been rather haphazard; sometimes enormous quantities would be brought in, issued sparingly at first then in increasing amounts because they would rot away, often faster than we could eat them. Often there were periods especially in the last months, that there would be no fresh vegetables at all.

6. Two soybean products: "Mizo", a fermented soy bean paste and "Tofu", coagulated soy bean milk were also an irregularly issued part of the daily ration, the former often taking the place of salt which was very sparingly given, lately in quantities of often less than 3 kilos per day.

7. Fruits were given or sold through the commissary on some rare occasions. I think I can remember every issue as they do not amount to more than a dozen issues of one or two tangerines or an apple per man in all the 27 months of our stay in Japan.

Augmenting diet by buying sweets, etc., has been out of the question ever since 1944.

8. Finally the cheating, petty thieving and maliciously obstructing the smooth running of ration drawing and kitchen work by the mine representative in charge of food issues, a man by the name of KIHARA should not be forgotten to be mentioned.

/S/ J.F. Wilkens

Res. 1st Lieut.

REPORT ON JAPANESE ISSUES OTHER THAN FOOD IN (FUKUOKA) CAMP 7

The most important of the other Japanese issues were the clothing issues, both army and mine-company.

The army issued winter cloths, i.e., old winter uniforms, which were handed out on October 1943 and taken in again in May 44, to be reissued again in Oct. 44 till May 45. Although old these uniforms were satisfactory and filled a need properly. During the same periods winter underwear was issued, shirt and long drawers of some cottony material, the majority being in very bad repair and the rags turned in in 44 were used again for the winter 44-45. Overcoats were issued in 44 from old Jap. Army stock, while in Oct. 45 war loot coats, Australian and British G.I. were issued and allowed to stay in possession of the men.

The mine company was responsible for the issuing of working cloths and here the position was far less satisfactory: The main items were a shirt, shorts, leggings, rubber soled shoes and water bottles. The changing of worn out material became more and more difficult as time went on while the quality of the goods deteriorated rapidly so that they never lasted the specified time. In particular the footwear became very poor, while also the proper sizes were often lacking. The last months rubber soled shoes could no more be issued and shoes made out of rice straw, that barely lasted a single shift were given instead. The generally poor condition of footwear was a cause to many troubles like athletes foot etc. Also the shirts and shorts became of extremely poor quality: being made out of extremely flimsy material like some poor grade of silk and even thin 25lb flour bags. This very thin covering was the only thing the men were supposed to wear in midwinter, as officially the winter uniforms were not supposed to be used in the mine.

Other issues like soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, laundry soap, toilet paper were also extremely irregular. At one time we were deluged by toothpowder issues, but at all times the issue of soap was far from sufficient, so that half the time the men did not have sufficient soap to wash themselves.

Cigarettes were issued sparingly, while a certain quantity could be bought, but the total has never exceeded about 5 or 6 cigarettes per man per day, and this was only during the last three months of 1944. At all other times it has been less.

/S/ J.F.Wilkens,

Res 1st Lieut. D.A.F.

REPORT ON RECREATION IN (FUKUOKA) POW CAMP NO. 7

Space: After the small recreation room attached to the barracks was transformed into officers quarters in Jan. 1945, the camp had no inside recreation space at all. Only the dining hall could be used as such. Being unheated this could only be done in between or after mealtimes, so that on workdays there was no room at all. For outside recreation existed the square inside the main building, until this was transformed into a garden in early 1945 and the yard in front of the buildings, which, being flanked by the Japanese offices, guardhouse and quarters was unpopular among the men.

Time: Under the various camp commanders various rules existed with regards to recreation time, but in general it may be stated that only on official rest days was there any time at all. On work days the men came home too late to do anything besides bathe and have their meals and perhaps attend to their clothing as the time between homecoming, 6 p.m. and the preparation for evening roll-call was hardly more than an hour and a half.

Under Lieut. Omaru there were no rules for recreation and it hardly existed even on rest days. Occasionally this commander ordered music to be made, even at the expense of church services which were ones broken up because this tyrant wanted to have the band play for him. During this period nobody was in a mood to relax at all and it may be said that recreation did not exist.

The next commandant allowed music to be made on special permission on free days after noon and announced that everybody could relax from that time until rollcall. The mornings of free days were always devoted to inspections of some kind or other.

Only during the last commandant, Lieut, now captain Sakai, the rest days were given to recreation, as this commandant ordered that on free days everybody could do as he liked, make music etc from ten o'clock onward.

Material: A few footballs were received early in our stay, but as no proper space was available, were of no use. Own chess games and YMCA supplied cards could only be used freely on rest days after capt. Sakai's arrival. A library consisting of a few owned Dutch books and a YMCA English set which was changed at irregular intervals, was the only enjoyable part of material throughout our stay, although the lack of Dutch books was severely felt. Musical instruments provided by the YMCA (guitar, mandolin, violin, drum) and an accordion given by the mine company were a great help but were only used regularly in the last half year, when they could be used every day after five o'clock.

To recapitulate: Except during the last six months, one can hardly speak about recreation in this camp, mainly because the working hours did not allow for it, but also, except in the case of capt. Sakai, because regulations hardly allowed it.

J.F.Wilkins,

Res 1st Lieut. D.A.F.