

PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS IN JAPAN & JAPANESE CONTROLLED AREAS
AS TAKEN FROM REPORTS OF INTERNED AMERICAN PRISONERS

LIAISON & RESEARCH BRANCH AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR INFORMATION BUREAU
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A DIVISIONAL CAMP OF THE TOKYO GROUP KNOWN AS
"D-12" LOCATED AT HITACHI

1. LOCATION:

Hitachi Prisoner of War Camp, known as Tokyo Camp D-12 was located on the western side of Mount JURAGAKI, approximately 70 miles northeast of Tokyo. The coordinates are 36°38'N, 140°36'E.

2. PRISONER PERSONNEL:

Three hundred Army, Navy and Marine Corps personnel, U.S.A. from the Philippines occupied this camp from April 11, 1944, until Aug. 11, 1944. The senior officer of this group was Maj. Arthur G. Christensen, U.S.A. This group consisted of 180 Army, 80 Navy, and 40 Marines, captured in the Philippines and transferred to this area from the Philippines in March 1944, arriving in Osaka on Easter Sunday, 9 April 1944.

There were 7 Army commissioned officers in this group and their duties in camp was in administration and camp cleanup category. They were also directed to carry the commissary stores into camp while the enlisted men were at the mines.

The warrant officers and enlisted men were required to work in the copper mine.

The commissioned officers attached to this camp were:

Maj. Arthur C. Christensen	USA Senior Officer	Capt. Earl R. Short	USA
Capt. William R. Nellson	USA	Capt. Roby Evans	USA
Capt. Charles C. Underwood	USA	1 st Lt. Eugene Conrad	USA
Capt. Donald S. Robinson	USA Medical Officer		

3. GUARD PERSONNEL:

The camp was commanded by a Japanese Army captain named NIMOTO. The prisoners were guarded by a group of from 8 to 12 guards and among them was a private named ASANO and a sergeant DONO. A civilian employee named NOKAMURA.

A Japanese doctor would come to camp occasionally to inspect the prisoner personnel and he informed them that he was employed by the Mining Company.

The prisoners were also informed that no more than 10% of the men in the camp could be sick at any one time, consequently, many men were sent to the mine too sick and weak from hunger to do the required work.

The general treatment by these camp individuals was fair with occasional beatings for slight infractions of the strict rules.

4. GENERAL CONDITIONS:

(a) Housing facilities: The barracks, of approximately ¼" wood construction, was completed just prior to occupancy. The prisoner compound contained 13 buildings of which 6 were used for housing prisoners, 1 for prisoners sick quarters, 1 for guard house and C.O.'s quarters, 1 for housing Japanese guards, 2 for storeroom space, 1 for galley and washroom, 1 for American headquarters and carpenter shop.

These buildings were covered with the usual Japanese roofing material. Mostly tree bark but with some shingles. The tree bark was used when needed for repair of roof.

The living quarters were divided into two categories; namely, two sizes of barracks. Three were size approximately 60' x 16' and housed 32 men each and three were approximately 140' x 16' and each housed 68 men.

These barracks were made from very thin wood and flimsily constructed and contained windows in the rear. One end of each barracks contained a small wash bench with water spigots for the washing of clothes and dishes. These spigots contained only cold water and was very hard.

To heat the living quarters the prisoners were allowed a very small amount of charcoal approximately 4 pieces, 1' long and 2" in diameter. This charcoal was burned in a small pit, approximately 18" square, in the center of the barracks. The prisoners were allowed a fire between the hours of 5 to 7 p.m. when charcoal was given to them. It was not regularly distributed and many nights the prisoners were forced to wear all their clothes to keep warm in the building. Hot water was never allowed for washing and cleaning of dishes.

(b) Latrines: The latrines were the regular Japanese fashion. Straddle trench and housed. They were located between the small barracks and at the southern end of the large barracks. These latrines were not fitted in any way to allow sanitary conditions to exist, and once a week the prisoners were compelled to dip the excreta from them and spread

same throughout the camp for fertilizing the garden area. Flies and maggots practically covered the interior of these small houses and no lime or other disinfectant was given them to control the filth. (They finally tried carbide and found it a good method of killing maggots but this had to be stolen and deposited secretly.) During the rainy season, these latrines would run over and seep through the camp, causing a very objectionable stench.

(c) Bathing: Inasmuch as they worked in a very hot and dirty mine, they were allowed to have a bath upon their return from work each day. The bath was a square wooden tub approximately 6' x 12' x 3'. The water was heated by wood and coal and taken care of by the galley force.

They had small buckets, one-gallon size, and used these to soap up and scrub themselves before entering the tub to soak and clean off. Prisoners were allowed to sit in the tub after washing their bodies but this was not too desirable as many men were suffering from ulcers and the water was filthy after a few had bathed. Their normal procedure would be to use the bucket to scrub and then use it to rinse their bodies.

(d) Mess Hall: At this camp the mess hall is more aptly described as the kitchen.

(e) Food: The mess was supervised by a Japanese soldier and was cooked by Americans detailed there for that purpose. The preparation was very poor, as the Japanese demanded a certain way of preparing same. The menu consisted mainly of barley, millet, maize and rice supplemented occasionally by a small bit of fish or meat. The fish furnished would generally be porpoise or stingray. Occasionally they would get a very small amount of salted fish but not in sufficient quantities to make up for the rice or grain cut when this was given. The Japanese made it a rule that if they were given any meat or vegetables they would lose a certain amount of their daily grain ration. Their food was normally 1600 to 2500 calories per day. Due to the limited cooking facilities, unbelievably poor sanitary conditions existed. Rotten meat & fish was boiled to a degree so as to make it palatable for the men confined there. Occasionally they would be given greens, tops of vegetables, which they used for soup.

Occasionally they were given a small amount of carrots, turnips, cabbage, potatoes, radishes and beans but these were in such small amount that they were hardly noticeable in their meager ration. The vegetables, when received were used for the making of soup so that an equal distribution could be made of them. There was never enough to make even one vegetable per man.

To distribute the food, buckets were provided and the mess carried to the barracks by men detailed for that purpose. Rationing of food was rotated to assure equal distribution daily. They were issued two bowls and chop sticks for mess gear, unfortunately with no replacements in case of breakage. This mess gear was a cheap grade of Bakelite.

Food was supposedly supplied by the Hitachi Mining Co., the contractors for whom the prisoners were reputedly working.

(f) Medical Facilities: The original medical supplies that were brought from the Philippines to Japan were confiscated upon arrival at Osaka. This shipment, given them at BILIBID Hospital in Manila, was considered enough for a few months supply for the 300 prisoners and consisted of quinine, sulfa drugs, vitamin pills and bandages. In lieu of the American medicine confiscated, the Japanese occasionally furnished Japanese medicine to the American doctor who in turn worked unceasingly trying to keep the men alive without food.

The hospital was a small barracks, similar to the living quarters, and capable of housing 16 patients. Capt. Robinson, AMC, and a corpsman attended to the sick.

The Hitachi Mining Co. allowed only 10% of the Americans to be sick on any one day and consequently many men worked when very ill and dying from starvation with no medical attention. For major surgery, the Mine hospital was made available and a Japanese doctor attended, and the treatment was considered satisfactory by American doctor.

Men sick with stomach disorders were given a small bowl of "gruel", a mixture of water and rice 3 times daily. This starvation diet was used to cause a physiological effect on the sick. They figured it would be better to work sick and get a little more food so consequently they failed to complain of their illness to the doctor until it became absolutely necessary to save their lives. The Japanese claimed that a man must work to obtain the amount of food allowed them.

Beriberi, malaria, dysentery, pneumonia and skin ulcers was the most common ailment and this was attributed to the starvation diet.

g) Supplies: The following Red Cross items were received by each individual in camp between April 11, 1944 and Aug. 11, 1944:

	<u>05/16/44</u>	<u>05/31/44</u>		<u>05/15/44</u>	<u>05/31/44</u>
Cheese	2 ounces	1 ounce	Vitamin C	3 tablets	-----
Corn beef	3 ounces	6 ounces	Corn Pork Loaf	2 ½ ounces	-----
Chocolate	2 ounces	1 ounce	butter	2 ½ ounces	1 ½ ounce
Coffee (sol)	2 ounces	1 ounce	Soap, bath	½ bar	½ bar
Sugar	1 ounce	2 ounces	Soap, laundry	½ bar	-----
Prunes	4 ounces	2 ounces	Milk, powder	8 ounces	2 ounces
Cigarettes	60 each	17 each	Razor	1	1
Tobacco, pipe	1 ounce	-----	Blades, razor	3	2
Salmon	1 7/8 ounce	-----	Tooth powder	1 1/3 can	-----
Jam	1 ½ ounce	3 ounces	Toilet tissue	160 sheets	90 sheets
Liver Pate	1 ½ ounce	1 ¾ ounce	Tooth brush	1	1
Bouillon	20 grams	-----	Pencil	1	-----
Ham & Eggs	1 ¾ ounce	-----	Party Loaf	3 ounces	-----

Japanese Issue: One each – suit of working clothes, dress suit (Japanese soldier uniform), miner Helm (for mine work), pair canvas shoes (split-toe style), straw pillow, pair socks, carbide lamp (for mine use), carbide box (for mine use), match box (for mine use), pair worn socks, and 7 cotton blankets.

(h) Mail: Incoming: During April through July 1944 approximately 15 cards and letters received. Outgoing: The following mail was allowed to be written and SUPPOSED to have been sent: 7/31/44, One 240 letter (equivalent of 40 words) communication card.

(i) Work: See "Prisoner Personnel" and "Guard Personnel".

(j) Treatment: ...at HITACHI was rather fair compared to most of the Japanese camps. Occasional beatings were given men for infractions of the rules but was not a daily occurrence. Officers and men were continuously humiliated by the Japanese demanding courtesies such as bowing, saluting and marching Japanese style.

(k) Pay: Officers pay for officers was 50 yen per month. Enlisted Men: Pay for Warrant officers 25 sen per day, non-coms 15 sen per day, and privates 10 sen per day.

(l) Recreation: None

(m) Religious Activities: None

(n) Morale: --was very low at the beginning of their confinement in HITACHI. The Japanese began by telling prisoners that they would perhaps spend their life there as they (the Japanese) would fight 100 years if necessary to crush the U.S. However, soon after their arrival, they were able through the American ingenuity, to get papers into camp and figure out our forces' activities and advancement toward Japan proper.

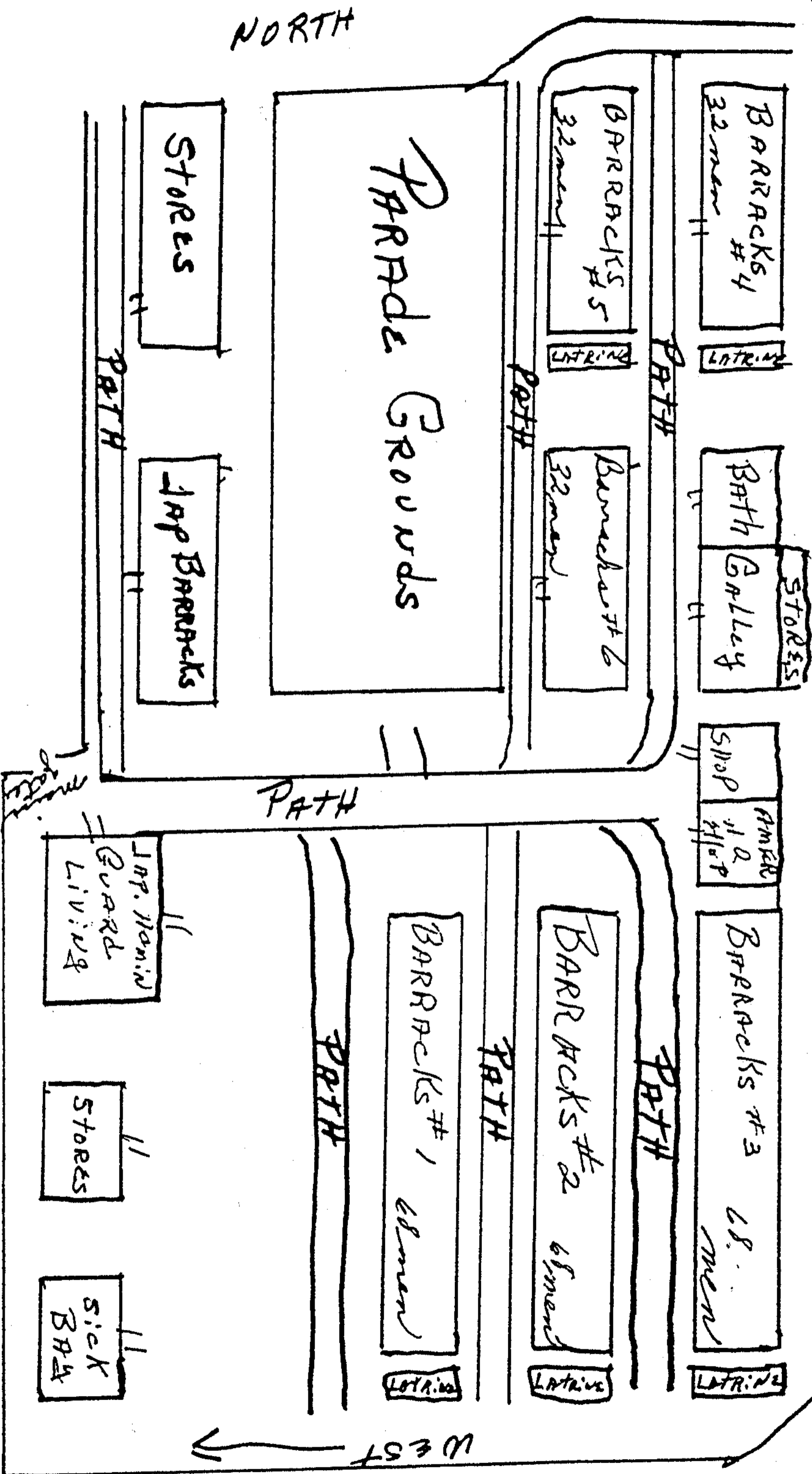
5. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT: There was no fire fighting equipment in evidence in HITACHI. The only means of fighting fires in these flimsy houses was by use of a "bucket brigade". There were 4 buckets supplied each barracks and a water box (3' square) at each end of the barracks. A fire drill was held monthly.

6. AIR RAID SHELTER: None for prisoners, one for the Japanese C.O. and the guards.

7. MOVEMENTS: On Aug. 11, 1944 a group of 150 prisoners were sent to ASHIO & 80 men to MATSUSHIMA. The Sr. American of this latter group was Boatswain Ernest W. Downey, U.S. Navy. Travel was by train with all 80 men confined to one railroad coach. They were given one meal of maize, fish and two buns for the trip, which required one day. The detail left HITACHI at 1300 on 11 Aug. 1944 and arrived at MITSUSHIMA at 0912 on 12 Aug. 1944. En route they passed through various large cities including TOKYO but were compelled to draw blinds on entering cities, however, they did see some activities en route including airfields and small towns.

All prisoners were required to carry all their belongings to and from the trains, and walk from camps to trains.

HITACHI CAMP D-12



This diagram designates the positions of building in this camp. The floor of the buildings were of sand and dirt.

The sleeping area in the building were raised about one foot above ground and an area of 30" x 72" was allowed each prisoner. Stowage space for clothing and mess gear was shelves above the sleeping area.

Each building had an enclosed passage the length of the building and a washstand in the northern portion of the passage. The smaller barracks contained two rooms and the larger ones contained five rooms.

The sick bay could accommodate 16 men.