

Donor: Mr. S. Zacharko

Master Tape No: 279

Address:

228 King Edward St.

Interviewer:

D. Jenkins

Date:

April 17/72

I. Short Personal History:

Born in Alonsa, Man. and moved with family to Ontario.

Parents separated, subject returned to Man. with father.

Difficulties enlisting in army because of his short height.

Transferred from Little Black Devils to Winnipeg Grenadiers.

II. Subjects most informed on:

Training

The battle.

Life in prison camp.

Medical aid and communications.

Tape Footage

Subject Headings

1-16

A. PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

Background and work.

1. Born in Alonsa, Man., moved with family to Windsor Ontario.
2. Parents separated - father returned to Man. and his mother re-married, subject came to live with father.
3. Mixed farming - grain, cattle, etc. 160 acres.

16-70

Winnipeg training.

1. Was not accepted into forces because he was too short (5'3").
2. Conscription - training in Portage la Prairie - 1941. Still not accepted because of his height. Returned to Winnipeg and enlisted in the Little Black Devils.
3. Trained at Ft. Osborne Barracks for 1 month, 2 months training at Ft. William. At Ft. Osborne it was parade square, etc. Ft. William - basic training.
4. Returned to Ft. Osborne - parade square, route marches, .303 Lee - Enfield rifles, machine guns and Bren guns.

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| 71-83 | <p>5. Grenadiers returned from Jamaica and needed some reinforcements because they were going to Singapore.</p> <p>6. Signed for a transfer to the Grenadiers.</p> <p>B. DISPATCH TO HONG KONG</p> <p>Train and departure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Told they were going to reinforce a British garrison in the far East.2. Left Wpg. on C.P.R. on Oct. 23 or 24 and headed west. Did not care where they were going. |
| 83-89 | <p>Mutiny and desertion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some men tried to leave the ship, boat was moved out into the straits to prevent men from leaving ship. |
| 89-110 | <p>Boat trip and ports of call.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Plenty of mutton, an Austrailian ship. Stopped at Honolulu - could not leave the ship, 10 hours of refueling, were entertained by people on the docks.2. Stopped at Manilla, 10 hours of refueling - still thought they were going to Singapore, 2 or 3 hours after leaving Manilla, they were told they were going to Hong Kong to reinforce the Royal Scots. |
| 111-116 | <p>Arrival in Hong Kong</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Landed in Kowloon, Chinese coolies put baggage into trucks, men marched 4 miles to the barracks. |
| 117-122 | <p>C. GARRISON DUTY IN HONG KONG</p> <p>Barracks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hangcow Barracks - in "D" Company. |
| 123-132 | <p>Training and manoeuvres in Hong Kong.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Parade in the mornings, sports in the afternoons.2. Went to hills on the island, pill boxes made out of mud or clay, very little cement. |
| 133-176 | <p>D. THE BATTLE</p> <p>Company and position on outbreak of war.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wong Nei Chong Gap - bivouacking pill boxes or load blocks, ordered to man the island until the last man.2. Supposed to reinforce the Royal Scots on the mainland, both companies retreated together, met Japs in a truck. |

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176-200	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Returned to Wong Nei Chong Gap, men scattered all hills, came under fire by the Japs and driven back.4. Ron Atkinson shot, British officer told men to leave.5. Hong Kong Volunteers, British and Canadians. <p style="text-align: center;">E. SURRENDER</p>	
201-204	<p style="text-align: center;">Position at surrender.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Went to Happy Valley - race track, remained here until they were surrounded by the Japs and captured on Dec 24, 1941.	
204-230	<p style="text-align: center;">Round up and temporary quarters.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Japs took their shoes and socks, had to walk barefoot all night. Japs announced the island had surrendered.2. Taken to Argyle Camp on the mainland, here for 3 days.3. One blanket between 2 men, 2½ gallons of rice, pigs put in rice.4. Taken to Sham Shui Po. <p style="text-align: center;">F. IMPRISONMENT</p>	
230-236	<p style="text-align: center;">Shamshuipo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Camp was a wreck, beds torn up, windows and doors were out - coolies had raided the place. Stayed 2 weeks.	
237-242	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Food - rice boiled in gas barrels, men gathered like animals.	
242-248	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Organization - sergeants kept control, taken to North Point Camp.	
248-250	<p style="text-align: center;">North Point Camp.</p>	
250-268	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stayed here a year.2. Paid 15 sen per day, worked at Kai Tak Airport - were leveling a hill.3. Health - a lot of beri beri, dysentery and diptheria - 2 or 3 men died each day. The only medicines which were available were aspirin and quinine.	
269-274 275-278	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Entertainment - singing, jokes and guitars.5. Work - worked at airport during most of the stay at North Point, some men did gardening at the camp, a vegetable garden. <p style="text-align: center;">G. DISPATCH TO JAPAN</p>	
278-280	<p style="text-align: center;">Selection and draft.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First draft to Japan, 500 men chosen.	

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281-290	Boat trip and stopovers.	
291-301	1. Some men had to stand up because there was no room to sit. Never allowed out of the ship's hold. The trip took 4 days, landed at Nagasaki and was taken to camp 3-D.	
302-313	2. Put to work in the shipyards, 1st year worked in the drain pipes bending pipes for the ships.	
313-322	Food 1. More rice - 3 times a day, vegetables - 1st day the potatoes, 2nd the peelings, 3rd the tops. Carrots and seawees - boiled and bitter.	
322-336	Sickness 1. Diarrhia, 2 tangerines which had to be paid for each month and grapefruit once a month.	
336-342	Work 1. Got up at 6 A.M., ate breakfast - rice and a cup of hot water, no tea. Sick parade before breakfast, left for work at 7:00 A.M. Lunch break - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, rice and hot water, leave work at 5:00 P.M. One mile to camp from the shipyards.	
343-365	Medical. 1. Treatment same as in other camps, if a person was sick he would get only half rations. The only medicines were aspirin and quinine.	
366-369	Jap personal and guards. 1. Japs harsh towards their own men, British and the Americans seemed to be slapped around more than the Canadians.	
369-375 375-389	2. Sendai - moved here near the end of the war, in coal-mines. Worked here 3 months, loaded coal into coal-cars in the mine shaft. 3. Only 200 - 300 Canadians here, others were either Javanese or British.	
390-391	4. Moved to Sendai because of heavy bombing in Tokyo, bombs never dropped on camp in Tokyo, could see the houses burning for miles around. 5. Work - paid 15 sen per day.	
391-398	Red Cross Parcels. 1. During 4 years imprisonment, received 5 Red Cross parcels, given paper to write on but a set of rules had to be followed, not allowed to say where they were and they were fine.	

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433-442	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. All letters were censored, words either blotted out or cut out. Received 4 letters at 3-D.3. Did not receive any letters at Sendai. Through the Jap newspapers they learned how the war was proceeding.4. Had to read them in secret, papers were bought from the Japanese. <p>Jap personal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Interpreteur - Shamshuipo - "Slapper Can" a Canadian deported to Japan, slapped the men quite often.	
444-495	<p>H. WAR'S END</p> <p>Contact with the allies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Aug 14, 1945 - Japs lined men up for work, never reached work, stopped under trees to rest and they remained there all day.2. Next day they never were called out for work.3. American officer in charge of the men announced the war was over. Told to stay in camp until hostilities died down. Jap guards disappeared.	
496-525	<p>Food drops.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Before the Americans arrived the men would leave the camp and go and raid farmers of vegetables, chickens, etc.2. Americans 1st dropped food and then medical supplies (mostly penicillin). Drops were made outside of the camp. Before final evacuation of the camp the men would go into town and even take the trains to towns further away.	
525-625	<p>Liberation and dispatch to U.S.A.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Train came into camp and men boarded the train which took them to Tokyo, Tokyo was bombed out, just the odd chimney standing. Taken to the airport in Tokyo and fed, put on a battleship for a couple of days, the U.S.S. Iowa, given a medical exam, new clothes.2. Ordered off the ship and put on to an airplane.3. Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam - stayed in hospital 10 days, a medical - flew to Johnson Island - stayed 2 hours.4. Honolulu - 26 hours, changed planes, went sight-seeing by truck.5. San Francisco - hospital, 3 days - went sight-seeing. To Vancouver by train, 2 days, barracks and new uniforms, a medical.	

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625-636

6. Despatch to Wpg. and stop over, left train at Portage La Prairie, train to Slonza, few Grenadiers travelling at same time (approx. 24), great to be home.

636-641

7. Employment, helped with harvest, hard to stand, started travelling.

641-643

8. Release from service, Feb. 1946.

643-781

9. Employment, drink, visiting bootleggers, hotels, etc. Couldn't get a job in the city, tried job at Logan and McPhillips Incinerator for a week, laid off.

Hong Kong veteran, haven't got a job easy enough for you.

Unemployment Insurance - \$9.00 per week.

Took a course in barbering, Molar Barber school, gave it up.

Fort William, job in round house (C.P.R.) 3-4 months, quit.

Returned to Wpg, no job easy enough.

Wash dishes, Starlight Cafe, quit.

Empire Hotel, cook, 1 month, laid off.

Bush work, Marathon, Ont., 1 winter, Ont. Pulp and Paper Co., Atikokan, Ont. 1 winter with Pulp and Paper Co.

Returned to Fort William, worked on extra gang, didn't like it.

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Terrace Bay, worked in pulp mill, Kimberly-Clark Co.

1950, tried to go to Korea, rejected.

Worked in mattress factory- (Etman?) Bedding Co., laid off.

Odd Jobs - farm, harvesting, barbering in Churchill.

1951-re-enlisted, went to Germany for 2 years, Royal Canadian Engineers, 58th Squadron, got married in Germany.

Returned to Canada, left military, applied to Civil Service, would be transferred to Postal Corps, didn't care for it any more.

Worked odd jobs from Feb. 1954, carpentry, worked in barracks for a while.

Job came up as a mail man, took it, presently a postal carrier.