



1982

Donald Smith of Souris: Japan, World War II

Donald Smith

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PRISONER OF WAR

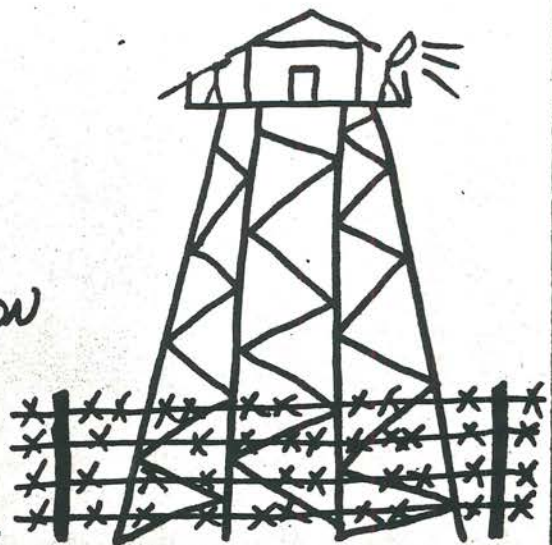
A TRUE STORY

BY: DONALD SMITH

SOURIS, N. DAK.

AMERICAN PRISONER IN PHILIPPINE
AND JAPANESE PRISON CAMPS
WORLD WAR II 1941-1945

THIS BOOKLET PREPARED
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EX-PRISONER OF WAR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:

Current Address:

Rt. 1 Box 140
Sauris, N. D. 58783

Address at time you went into service:

Sauris, N. D. 58783

Birthday:

March 9, 1908

2. Family: (spouse and children)

Spouse

3. Work and educational experience prior to going into service?

High School
Mechanic

4. Dates and place of entry into service?

May 6, 1941 Ft. Snelling

5. Summary of events from time of entry into service and until just prior to capture or entering status as a POW?

Basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood Missouri
Engineer's. From Ft. ~~Snelling~~ Leonard Wood
to Westover Field Mass. To Phillippsburg
in October of 41. attached to Ave. Engr. Bn. Sep.
Captured on Corregidor May 42

6. Unit, Country, time, area, weather, etc., at time event occurred which resulted in POW status?

803rd Engineers Ave. Bn. Sep. on Corregidor
P.I., May 1942

7. Describe military or other events that resulted in your POW status?

8. Following your capture, describe what happened. How many men were involved? Where did you go? How did you go? What type of personnel (military or civilian) took control of you?

I don't know how many men were on Corregidor. I stayed on the island and worked for the Japanese Army.

9. Were you able to hide or escape? If so, tell what happened. Where did you hide? Food? Clothing? Water? Weather? Sleep? etc.

No

10. How did your escape end? Returned to U.S. control? Discovered by enemy?

11. Could you describe in sequence the various places you were interrogated and the methods of questioning the enemy used?

I got sick and they took me to Old Bilibid prison hospital. I was questioned some as they thought I was a guerrilla as they had no record of me there.

12. Did you have a weapon on yourself when you were captured? Did it effect your treatment?

no

13. Were you at any time considered a civilian or an enemy spy or a wrong nationality? If so, how did this effect your treatment?

no

14. When captured or escaping, what clothing or equipment were you wearing? What changes did the enemy make in your clothing?

*I was wearing Coveralls. They made
no changes.
In Japan we wore their clothes.*

15. What was your first food you received after your capture and what was your food from that date on?

*We picked up a lot of our own food
at different places on the rock and done
our own cooking.*

16. Did your nationality, religion, or race have a bearing on your treatment from the enemy?

no

17. What was your impression of your captors? Were they arrogant, considerate, professional, troubled, confused, anxious, etc.?

*Some were very arrogant and others
were very considerate*

18. Were you alone or with others? How many? Same unit? Other units? Other services? Other nationalities, etc.?

I was in the hospital at the time

19. At time of your capture, did you have higher or lower ranking persons with you? Did the difference in rank effect you?

I had both.

Did not effect me

20. Following your capture, how did you feel about your family at home, and at what point or time did you feel they probably knew about your POW status?

I thought they knew but they did not know until the war was about over. I was listed as Missing in Action, no record of me from the Japanese.

21. When did you receive your first letter, package or information that your family knew of your capture?

Did not receive any

22. In regards to your interrogation or questioning--was this conducted formally at a special camp or location? Did you have special or skilled interrogators? What did they want to know? How long were you there? Then where did you go?

None

23. How did you feel the war was going when you were captured?

Good

24. Did you think you would eventually get home?

Yes I never gave up.

25. Did you have an opportunity to observe the enemy in combat, training, camp, or moving from one place to another?

No

26. Did you suffer any injury at the time of your capture? What was done about your injury or illness following your capture?

No

27. At your permanent camp or camps, would you describe your conditions. Food? Living area? Beds? Food ration? Health? Water? Weather? Number of men? Guards? Size and location of camps? Organization in camp by enemy and by U.S. forces?

Food was very poor in Japan, about 850 Calories a day.

Slept on mats of woven rattan, they were full of fleas and bedbugs.

We were all troubled with diarrhea we had mostly greens and rice or barley steamed. I weighed 183 when I went in and before the war was over 115 lbs.

We had good water.

Weather not too bad.

300 men.

Guards were pretty rough, they were returned wounded soldiers

Motoyama Copper Mine up from Hitachi

28. While in your permanent camp, did you know what was going on in the war? What did guards say about the ending of the war?

*no
Just told us we were free.*

29. If you worked in camp or lived in work camps, please describe your daily transportation, work, food, punishment, etc.?

We walked to work to the mine

30. Was your camp or camps ever bombed or damaged by the enemy or friendly military action?

no

31. Could you describe your roll call or counting procedure in camp?

*Lined up morning and night and
counted off in Japanese*

32. What type of guards did you have? Age? Rank? Weapons? Number? Service, etc.?

*Returned wounded soldiers, ~~about~~ about
12 with rifles, one Lt. and privates
in Japan*

33. Could you describe your camp? Size? Fences? Guard towers? Latrine? Ration distribution? Hours? Lock-up? Heat? Recreation, etc.?

We had wooden barracks divided into rooms, 10 to a room.

High board fence, no towers, fair latrine. Our own cooks done the cooking and distributed it.

Lights out about 8 or 9, no heat except wood we could steal at the mine, it had to be out at lights out.

No recreation of any kind.

34. Could you describe the men close to you or the men you knew best? How did you get along with them?

We all got along very well.

35. Could you tell about epidemics or sickness in camp? What were the medical facilities? How were you medically treated in camp?

No epidemics. We had an American Doctor but very little to work with.

36. Were any prisoners killed in camp or taken from camp and disappeared?

No

37. Could you describe the ration or food distribution system? How much? Fresh, canned, stale, dried, etc.? Local foods, Red Cross parcels, parcels from home, trade with guards or civilians?

Food distribution was very bad, the little fish we got were half rotten before we got it. If we got some meat you were lucky if you got a couple of bubbles of fat in your soup. Had a couple of Red Cross boxes.

38. Describe the type of work or responsibilities you were assigned within the camp from friendly or USA prisoners?

None

39. What were some of the things that kept you going while in camp? Your health? Age? Faith in U.S. Armed Forces? Religion? Family? Aid from other prisoners?

Age had a lot to do with it, most of the very young died early, and faith of our forces, Religion too and thinking of our families.

40. Did any prisoners become mentally sick or irrational in camp and were they removed?

yes they were separated

41. Did you have any secret radios, newspapers or outside news sources in camp from which you received information? What information did the enemy give you?

We had a radio on Carregidor but nothing in Japan. Interpreter in Japan gave some information

42. Did you have any serious illness in camp?

Only diarrhea and dry Beri Beri and ulcers.

43. Did you have any riots in camp?

No

44. How did you first know that war was coming to an end?

About two weeks before we saw American planes and they bombed the Smelter below us.

45. What were some of the tricks you played on guards?

46. What about escape procedures and methods used by you or others that you have knowledge of or direct information about?

None

47. Were you ever bombed by friendly or enemy aircraft?

Separating plant where I worked was strafed by day shift was on the way home. ^{U.S. planes.} no Americans there

48. Describe any special train or ship trip you took while a prisoner?

Ship trip from Manila to Japan was bad, storm all the way from Formosa. We were in a small hole, 300 men could just lay down.

49. When were you close to death or felt all was not worth living and you probably would die or be killed?

No time.

50. Could you tell about any special religious observances by the enemy or special occurrence when they relaxed or tightened security rules?

None, tight all the time

51. Would you describe in detail any particular holiday, if observed, by enemy or prisoners, such as, New Years or Christmas.

*We had none work as ~~usual~~ usual
7 days a week.*

52. How did you feel about food in camp? How did enemy food agree with you? What was food? What were utensils? What did you make to eat with? Pots, pans, cups, plates?

*Food was bad did not agree with
me. Mostly rice or barley and greens
We had our own army mess kits
with us.*

53. Were you aware of any other American or Allied POW camps in your area? Civilian camps?

no

54. In reference to your mind or yourself, how do you feel you held up in camp? Did you suffer periods of depression, crying, hysteria, headaches, loss of memory, etc.? How about the other men in camp? How do you feel you and others were able to live without nervous breakdowns?

I held up good, no depression etc.

Most were the same.

*We had conversation on many things,
what we were going to do when we
got home.*

55. How do you feel other American POW's behaved or acted while in enemy hands? Please do not name an individual by name if you feel their behavior was not correct or up to the standards you set for yourself.

Good

56. Towards the end of the war, what were first signs that the war was coming to an end in our favor?

Seeing our planes

57. How did the enemy guards or administrative personnel treat you towards the end of the war or when it was apparent the enemy would lose the war?

No change

58. Could you describe how your POW status ended?

B29's dropped us food and clothes, shoes etc. We got a special train to Tokyo.

59. When or where did enemy guards leave? Did guards say or do anything at the end of the war?

*Guards went with us to Tokyo.
They told us we were free, do as we pleased*

60. What did the American staff at the camp do at the end of the war?

61. At the end of the war, where did you move? What was your food? Your health? Your morale?

*Went to Tokyo, had good food then
Health fair,
Morale was high.*

62. Could you describe some of the confusion that took place when you were liberated at the end of the war? Time, place, friendly or enemy forces involved, food, health, morale, POW discipline in camp, contact with U.S. military forces, etc.?

No confusion really. Went to Tokyo and met U.S. military and flew out the next day.

63. After liberation or the war ending, what happened? Did you move as an individual or group, go by foot, train, bus? Where did you go, to another U.S. camp?

Same as above

64. What happened at your camp prior to returning to the States? Did U.S. military officials interrogate you, examine you physically, give you food, clothing, etc.?

We were not interrogated until just before we landed in Washington. We were examined physically and got clothes and money. All we could eat any time of the day or night.

65. How, when and where did you arrive back in the United States? Did you stay at some camp? Did you go home by train?

Came to Washington Medigan General Hospital and then sent to Newton D. Baker Hospital in Virginia. Then home by train.

66. What things today remind you of prison life in your day to day living?

67. Do you have any complaints about how you have been treated since your POW days?

Not treated very good at Veterans Hospital, by Doctors, when in for check-ups

68. Do you have a picture of yourself prior to being a POW, preferably a picture in uniform? Do you have a picture of yourself following the war? Do you have a picture of yourself and your family recently taken, or taken within recent years? Any or all of these pictures would be appreciated. They will be returned to you after we have made copies of them.

No

69. Do you have any copies of telegrams from the War Department or the U.S. Government regarding your becoming a POW? Or your release, or war time status as a POW? These or copies of these would be appreciated. If you wish them returned, they will be sent back to you.

No

70. Do you have any letters or copies of letters you sent home or received from home during war or during period you were a POW? These or copies of these would be appreciated. They also will be returned if you so indicate in your reply.

no

71. A few POW's were able to return to the U.S. or home with a few articles they may have made, been given or in some way secured in POW camp. Some of these could be: paper notes, camp regulations, clothing, cigarette lighter, insignia, hand made pans or pots, special cans used in camp, small tools, etc. If you have any of these, we would appreciate a picture of them. If you desire they could be sent with this report and we will take a picture of them and return them to you if you so desire.

none

72. The above questions or suggestions are limited and you may write or explain many items not included; therefore, feel free to express yourself in any manner you desire.

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