

Appendix 20: Report of Pte Newman RAOC when interviewed by Major Koe and Lt. Hickey RAOC on 13.9.42 on Pte Newman's return from a Japanese working party at Bangpong, Thailand

The force of three battalions which left Changi for the mainland on 20.6.42 are located together in Bangpong, which is 40 km from Bangkok. Their task is the building of a railway.

Except for being cramped, the journey up was not too bad. Food was good, at the halts - bread, salmon and pork stew being issued. The journey lasted from Monday until Saturday.

1800 men are housed in 11 huts, tent-shaped, about 100 feet long and we sleep on a slightly raised platform. They are not cramped. Each battalion is organised into two companies and each company into six sections. The section N.C.Os sleep in one hut, the officers together in another. One hut, the 12th, is a hospital.

Cooking utensils are insufficient, an issue of 15 camp kettles was made, but as working parties take two per section, only boilers remain behind.

The camp is located near paddy fields and water is scarce. Only a limited amount of baking is permitted.

Clothing and boots are scarce and no mosquito nets are issued. It is necessary to sleep fully dressed for protection against mosquitoes.

Water is scarce, only one pump being sunk by the Japanese. Very little water for washing, perhaps once every three days. Latrines are almost on top of the camp and of the type similar to the trench system. Newman considers they are too close.

No. 1 Battalion consists of No 1 Company R.A.O.C., R.C. of Signals and R.A.S. personnel. No. 2 Company - British Battalion, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and 1 Manchesters.

Health has been fair. There are no epidemics. Sick parades number about 140 per day and diarrhoea seems to be the most prevalent complaint. Food is considered to be monotonous. Rice, meat stews daily, also ... of M & V or bully beef at mid-day for working parties.

Cigarettes are not issued.

Working pay is 10 cents per day but the purchase power is about three greater than it is here

There have been eight deaths throughout the camp

Newman speaks of the Thailanders as being friendly and very generous to us far as their limited resources will permit. They give freely and limes, and the youngsters speak English very well as, he understands, it is universally taught in all schools.

He considers that on the whole the treatment meeting out by the guards A few officers and other ranks have been beaten but it is not ato do this.