

Mukden (Hoten) Timeline

Received from Roger Mansell

Source: Cynthia B. Caples, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Consulate, Shenyang from information sent to her by Ao Wang who gathered the information at the National Archives

This is the current draft of the Camp Hoten time line (with special thanks to Roger Mansell, Kinue Tokudome, Linda Goetz Holmes, and Larry Wu):

Rough chronology (8 August 2005)

Camp Hoten No. 1

11 Nov 1942 - 1202 American POWs [1188 U.S. enlisted men (ordinary soldiers) and 14 officers (highest-ranking officer is Maj. Stanley H. Hankins)] arrive on the northeast side of Fengtian, Mukden (modern Shenyang) from Manila via Pusan on the Korean Peninsula, and are sent to the so-called North Camp, POW Camp Hoten No. 1, then a group of old Chinese Army board barracks built partly underground (there are eventually 19 barracks in all; an additional 85 English and 15 Australian and New Zealand troops who have joined them live in Barracks No. 13; ranking British officer Maj. Robert Peaty is one of those who keep secret diaries about camp life) Americans were from the hell ship Tottori Maru

March 1943 - burial of 176 POWs, most of whom died in the first 90 days at Camp Hoten; by summer 1943, a total of 205 have died, more than 17% of the American enlisted men in Camp Hoten

Night of 21/22 June 1943 - two U.S. Marines and one American seaman, Sgt. Joseph B. Chastain, Cpl. Victor Paliotti, and S1C Ferdinand Meringolo, escape from Camp Hoten; using a map acquired with the help of a Chinese fellow-worker, Mr. GaoDechun, they head for the border with the Soviet Union [Gao is subsequently arrested, tortured, and sentenced to five years in prison for his part in their escape]

29 June 29 1943 - Camp Hoten's Japanese commander Col. Matsuda issues an 'address of instruction' saying that he is angered by "the betrayal, the most outrageous and unfortunate trouble that has been caused recently" (the attempted escape); the men in their barracks undergo punishment

4 July 1943 - at the end of the punishment for the men who shared the same barracks as the escapees, they are given permission to clean up and air out their bedding

5 July 1943 - three POWs in Barracks 14 are beaten with a large stick for having hung their blankets on the boundary rope in front of the building, and forbidden to bathe for four months

6 July 1943 - the three re-captured escapees are returned to Camp Hoten

16 July 1943 - officers are allowed to make their second purchase of food for the mess (round cheddar cheeses); for a few weeks, food improves; prisoners are allowed to write postcards home, and prisoners' mess receives tomatoes for the first time (each prisoner had c. 3 slices apiece)

Camp Hoten No.2

29 July 1943 -the camp is moved c. four miles, to two-storey aboveground brick structures about half a mile from the Manchu Kosaku Kikai Kabushiki Kaisha (Manchu Work and Machine Tool Corporation Ltd.) factory, a former Ford Co. factory where some of the camp inmates work under Chinese supervision, disassembling machinery so that Japanese technicians can make blueprints of it; camp inmates also work as farm and construction labor; new camp is an improvement on the old one, and rations are increased slightly, to above starvation level; POWs begin a campaign of covert sabotage in order to frustrate the Japanese war effort; 11 American and 2-3 British officers are still alive

31 July 1943 - Col. Matsuda announces that the three American POWs who attempted to escape, Chastain, Paliotti, and Meringolo, have been executed at dawn.

Nov 1943 - first visit to Camp Hoten by a representative of the International Red Cross (ICRC), who is told of the July 31 executions, which apparently have not previously been reported in international channels by the Japanese authorities; in Dec., 1943, the U.S. government initiates urgent attempts to gain official confirmation, but the Japanese only provide it via the Swiss in June 1944.

May 2 1944 - Hoten Sub-camp No. 1 established in the western section of Hoten (as of 30 June, 1945, 150 POWs are there, working at the ManshuHikaku leather company)

24 June 1944 - Hoten Sub-camp No. 2 established in the western section of Hoten (as of 30 June, 1945, 180 POWs are there, working at the ManshuHanpu cloth company)

? June 1944 - some American POWs sent from Camp Hoten to Kamioka, Japan, to work in the lead mines there (as punishment for sabotaging work at the factory in Mukden; see Linda Goetz Holmes, 'Unjust Enrichment')

15 Aug 1944 - Hoten Sub-camp No. 3 established in the western section of Hoten (as of 30 June, 1945, 125 POWs are there, working at the Nakayama Seikosho steel company and Toyo Mukuzai lumber company)

12 Nov 1944 - a group of at least 246 Allied officers (including Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, highest-ranking American POW) and enlisted men transferred from Taiwan (on the OryokuMaru) via Japan and Korea arrives at Zheng Village (Wade-Giles spelling: Cheng-chiatun; now Shuangliao), at Hoten Branch Camp No. 1 in Jilin Province, c. 100 miles north of Mukden (Hoten Branch Camp No. 1 eventually totals 354? inmates)

01 Dec 1944 - smaller group of 34 Allied officers (includes: Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, highest-ranking American POW in WWII; Maj. Gen. E. P. King; Maj. Gen. G. F. Moore; Netherlands East Indies [Java] Gov. General Tjarda von StarckenberghStachower; Britain's highest-ranking POW, Gen. A. E. Percival, former commander of Singapore; and some of their aides) is sent from the Zheng branch camp to Hoten Branch Camp No. 2 in known as Xi'an County (Wade-Giles spelling: Hsian; Japanese name: Seihan), now part of the southern Jilin Province town of Liaoyuan, northeast of Mukden.

06 Dec 1944 - second visit to Camp Hoten by an ICRC representative, Mr. Axe from Switzerland, who is allowed to talk to M. Sgt. Joe King and Pfc. Robert A. Brown under Japanese supervision.

07 Dec 1944 - Allied B-29 bomber raids on Mukden factories and rail lines; contrary to internationally accepted regulations governing the housing of prisoners of war, Camp Hoten is situated in a heavily industrialized area, next to an ammunition factory and with a tank factory, airplane factory, and major railyard nearby; the raid destroys the ammunition factory, but two of the Allied bombs fall within the Camp Hoten perimeter, killing 19 of the POWs and injuring more than 30; 9 Dec., POWs demand that medicine

sent to them in personal packages be released to them by their Japanese captors to treat the wounded; the Japanese eventually agree to do so.

21 Dec 1944 - second wave of Allied B-29 air raids on Mukden (it later turns out that c. 14 B-29 crew members have been shot down and captured, and they are held near Camp Hoten until the end of the war [see James Bollich, 'Bataan Death March: A Soldier's Story'])

Feb 1945 - Capt. Ishikawa, Col. Matsuda's second-in-command at Camp Hoten, and Japanese Dr. Kuwashima are transferred out of Mukden

29 April 1945 - 134 men arrive [see roster] including 103 survivors of the last transport on the Japanese ship OryokuMaru (from which only 374 of the original 1619 POWs survived when the unmarked ship was attacked by U.S. Navy fighter planes on Dec. 14, 1944) are transferred from Japan to Camp Hoten, in poor physical condition due to maltreatment.

20 May 1945 - Hoten Branch Camp No. 1 at Zheng Village, Jilin Province, is closed, reportedly after the Allied officers refuse to do fieldwork there, this being contrary to international regulations which state that officer POWs may not be used as labor force by their captors; 316 (??) Allied senior officers, orderlies, and four civilians (mostly American, British, and Dutch generals and colonels; senior officer is U.S. Maj. Gen. George M. Parker, Jr.) are transferred from there to Camp Hoten.

As of 30 June 1945 - there are 1220 POWs interned at Camp Hoten main camp, 150 at Hoten Sub-camp No. 1, 180 at Hoten Sub-camp No. 2, and 125 at Hoten Sub-camp No. 3, as well as 34 mostly high-ranking POWs at Hoten Branch Camp No. 2 in Xi'an.

05 Aug 1945 - newly-appointed International Committee of the Red Cross head delegate to Tokyo, Dr. Marcel Junod, visits Mukden en route to Tokyo.

06 Aug 1945 - ICRC's Dr. Junod visits Gen. Wainwright at Xi'an; enraged by news of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima by American pilots, Camp Hoten Japanese guards beat and abuse the POWs, who are unaware of the Hiroshima events.

08 Aug 1945 - Soviet Union enters the Pacific War

16? 17? Aug 1945 - four-man American OSS Cardinal Mission parachute group (Maj. Hennessy, Maj./Dr. Robert Lamar, Sgt. Edward Starz, Cpl. Hal Leith) lands in Mukden, accompanied by an American military interpreter (Sgt. Fumio Kido) and a member of the Chinese Nationalist Army, to ensure the safety of the Allied prisoners.

18 Aug 1945 - low-flying Allied plane scatters leaflets over Mukden announcing that Japan has surrendered; OSS Maj. Lamar and Cpl. Leith leave by train for Xi'an.

19 Aug 1945 - first Red Army troops arrive by air; advance units of the Soviet 6th Guards Tank Army enter Mukden (Soviet troops will provide valuable assistance in the POW repatriation effort; a number of Soviet officers including Maj. Gen. Pritula are subsequently recommended for U.S. military decorations for their services); POWs hold church services in thanksgiving for the war's ending.

20 Aug 1945 - Russian general enters Camp Hoten, announces that the Allied POWs are free

21 Aug 1945 - first (B-24) air evacuation of 18 POWs needing immediate medical assistance

24 Aug 1945 - flightload of 29 (31?) former POWs with urgent medical conditions leaves Mukden [subsequent flights depart on Aug. 27 (36, including Gens. Wainwright and Percival); Aug. 30 (6); Sept. 2 (29); Sept. 4 (77); Sept. 5 (20); Sept. 6 (20); and Sept. 7 (22)]

26 Aug 1945 - Lamar and Leith return from Xi'an with Wainwright's group

29 Aug 1945 - 19-man POW Recovery Team No. 1 under Lt. Col. James F. Donovan arrives to process POWs out for repatriation (paperwork, issuance of new clothing, medical evaluation, identification and exhumation for eventual repatriation of remains of those buried in camp, etc.)

10-11 Sept 1945 - remaining American POWs leave Mukden by train for embarkation at the port of Dairen (modern Dalian), as the first stage of their return home (752 depart Mukden on Sept. 10, and the rest on the 11th; sadly, c. 10 of the former POWs are drowned shortly afterwards, washed overboard from the destroyer Colbert off Okinawa during a typhoon) One man was killed when the ship hit a mine.

19 Sept 1945 - POW Recovery Team No. 1 closes out its Mukden operation, returns by air to Kunming HQ.