

# "C" Force - The Hong Kong Story

## "C" Force POW Camps

In December of 1941, Japan began a conflict which engulfed the nations of the Pacific as well as others throughout Asia and southeast Asia. Citizens of these nations had their lives disrupted, with foreign soldiers occupying their lands, new government rulers telling them what they can and now cannot do. Over 300,000 Allied soldiers were taken as POWs from the now occupied territories and were now held in make shift camps. In early 1942 Japan had only one POW camp in Japan which was the Zentsuji POW Camp in Zentsuji City, and this camp held mostly American soldiers which were captured at Guam and Wake Island.

With the fall of Hong Kong on December 25, 1941, the Canadian defenders were held at North Point, Shamshuipo and Stanley camps.

### North Point Camp

Originally, North Point was built as a refugee camp in 1939, and after the Japanese invasion it was a POW camp from the onset. North Point was a camp situated in northern Hong Kong, in which the POWs lived in wooden buildings which were about 120 feet long and 18 feet wide with a concrete floor. After a few months The Royal Navy POWs were moved to Shamshuipo and North point was solely a Canadian POW camp, on September 26, 1942 they were also moved to Shamshuipo.

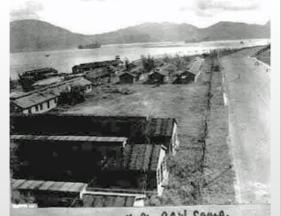


Photo of the buildings at North Point Camp. – Courtesy www.mansell.com

### Shamshuipo Camp

Shamshuipo Barracks was built by the British Army in 1920 as a military installation with Barracks and a parade square. The Japanese army used it as a POW camp for the Indian, British and Canadian soldiers. It was the main POW camp in Hong Kong.



Ink and sketch, entitled "Huts in Shamshuipo Camp 1942-45". by A. V. Skvorzov. – Courtesy www.ient.or.uk



Sketch, entitled "Shamshuipo Camp 1944". – Courtesy South China Morning



Canadian and British prisoners-of-war liberated by the landing party from HMCS Prince Robert, Hong Kong, ca. 30 August 1945 – Courtesy Library ad Archives Canada, PA-114812



Commander Peter MacRitchie of HMCS Prince Robert meeting with liberated Canadians at Shamshuipo Camp, ca. September 1945. – Courtesy Library ad Archives Canada, PA-151738

### Stanley Camp

Stanley Camp originally held a few military POWs, who were later moved to Shamshuipo, when it then became a civilian interment housing just under 3,000 in which the majority were British citizens.

### Hell Ships

In April of 1942, Japan decided to bring POWs from across their occupied territories to Japan to supplement the declining Japanese work force. POWs were taken to Japan on what were called "hell ships". These hell ships which carried the POWs who were packed tightly in the hold like sardines in a can, with the most inhumane conditions known. Two hell ships which took Canadians from Hong to Japan were the *Lisbon Maru* and *Manyru Maru*.

### Japanese POW Camps

There were three types of camps; branch, detached and dispatched. The detached camp was the same as a branch camp, but, smaller in size. Branch camps were those in which the Japanese army supplied all the housing, food and clothing for the POWs. In the dispatched camps, housing and clothing were provided by companies and the Japanese army provided the POWs as workers and military staff as guards.

### Sendai POW Camp

Canadians which were in the Sendai POW Camp system were kept at three branch camps: a) Yumoto Branch Camp, 198 Canadians were used by Joban Coal Mining; b) Yoshima Branch Camp, 46 Canadians were used by Furukawa Mining Company; c) Ohashi Branch Camp, 198 Canadians were used by Nippon Steel Company.



Map of Sendai POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com



Photo of liberated Canadians at Sendai Camp. – Courtesy Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

### Tokyo POW Camp

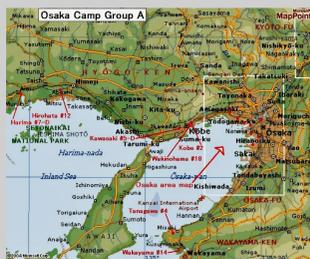
Canadians which were in the Tokyo POW Camp system were kept at four branch camps: a) Niigata Sea and Land Transportation Branch Camp, 109 Canadians were used by the Niigata Sea and Land Transportation Branch Camp; b) Suwa Branch Camp, 34 Canadians were used by the Nippon Steel Tube & Mining Company; c) Sumidagawa Branch Camp, 55 Canadian were used by Nippon Express Company; d) Niigata Iron Works Branch Camp, 82 Canadians were used by Niigata Iron Works.



Map of Tokyo POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com

### Nagoya POW Camp

Canadians which were in the Nagoya POW Camp system were kept at two branch camps: a) Narumi Branch Camp, 11 Canadians were used by Nippon rolling Stock Company; b) Toyama Tateyama Heavy Industry Branch Camp, 38 Canadians were used by the Toyama Tateyama Heavy Industry



Map of Nagoya POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com

### Hiroshima POW Camp

One Canadian was kept at the Mukaijima Branch Camp and was used by the Hitachi Dockyard Company.



Map of Hiroshima POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com

### Osaka POW Camp

Canadians which were in the Osaka POW Camp system were kept at the Oeyama Branch Camp, 128 Canadians were used by the Nippon Yakin Kogyo Company.



Map of Osaka POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com

### Fukuoka POW Camp

152 Canadians were kept at the Kawasaki Omine Branch Camp and they were used by the Furukawa Mining Company.



Map of Fukuoka POW Camp system. – Courtesy www.mansell.com



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