

OSS, Health Maintenance of Japanese Army in Burma No. 1230

Annotation Source: Seoul Metropolitan Archive

Annotation and Image Link: <https://archives.seoul.go.kr/item/52>

With a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan declared a war against the Allied Forces. Japan proceeded to attack the Allied Powers' colonies in Southeastern Asia, including Burma (today's Myanmar). As Japanese troops occupied Myitkyina, a major city in northern Burma, in May 1942, Japan occupied the entire territory of Burma. This report, entitled "Health Maintenance of Japanese Army in Burma, No. 1230," was sent from the Military Intelligence Division (MID), War Department General Staff (W.D.G.S.) to New Delhi, India. The MID was an intelligence agency of the U.S. War Department and took charge of collecting information for devising war strategies and conducting missions. This report was based on an interrogation of a commissioned Japanese medical officer, Heihachi Ito. According to the report, Ito was captured on March 14, 1945, and had "superior intelligence exclusively" in the field of medicine.

This report contains the following eleven sections: introduction, general conditions among Japanese troops, diseases among Japanese troops, treatment of disease, control of disease, equipment and drugs, care of the wounded and methods of evacuation, organization of the Japanese Medical Department, food and supply, miscellaneous factors, and summary. Ito's testimony regarding "comfort women" and "comfort stations" in Burma is found in "No. 11. Venereal Disease" under section V (pp. 6-7). He testified about the number of "comfort stations" and "comfort women," and control of venereal diseases. According to Ito, two "comfort homes" were "provided wherever possible with each Division." Each "comfort station" possessed 7 to 8 "comfort women" and they "were to receive a percentage of the money 'take'." As the practice of "comfort stations" were sponsored by the Army, there were rules for regular examination (once a week) and supervision by the Medical Department. However, Ito said, this rule was rarely observed and at best, "only cursory examination was made once a month" for the women. The men who visited the "comfort stations" were never examined. The "comfort women" were provided with condoms and certain medical treatments. Upon entering the "comfort station," soldiers were "advised to apply an ointment" before using condom. This is a valuable document due to its detailed descriptions regarding the maintenance of "comfort stations."

Contributors:

[Organization] Chin-sung Chung Research Team, Seoul National University, 2015~

[Organization] Women and Family Policy Affairs Office, City of Seoul, 2011~

[Organization] National Archives and Records Administration, 1934~