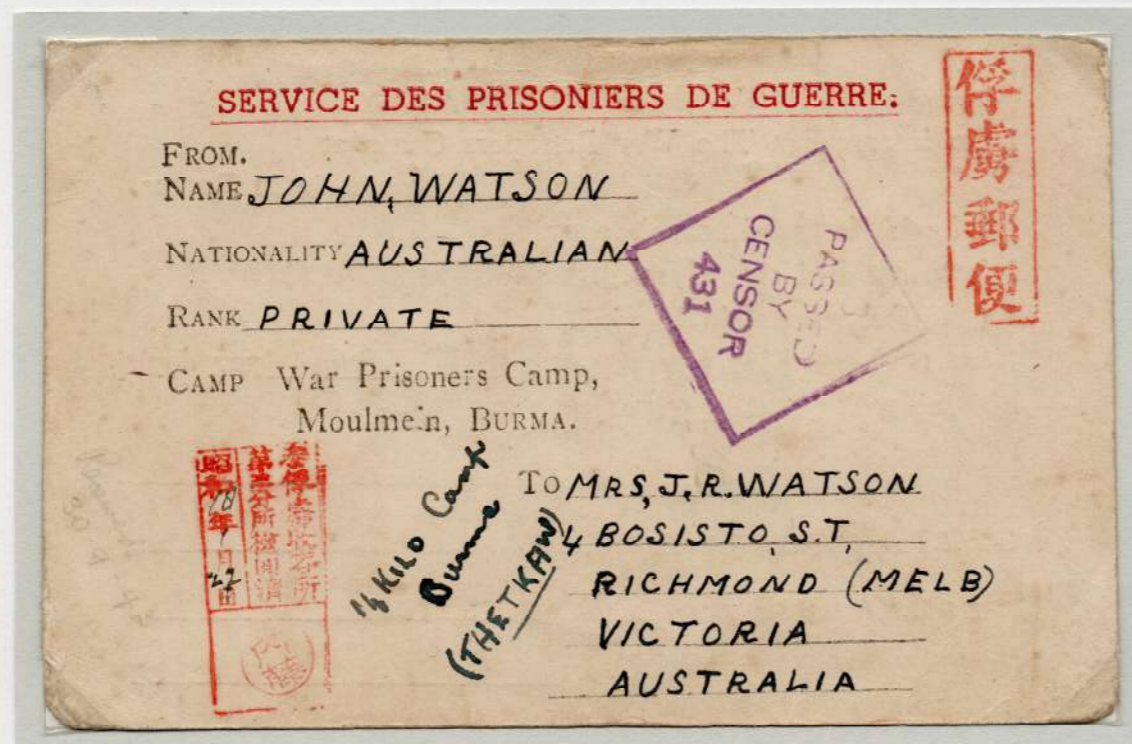


GROUP 3 BURMA

The headquarters for Group 3 was at Thanbyuzayat from October 1942 until July 1943 when it was moved to Mezali. It was responsible for all camps in Burma from Thanbyuzayat to Lonshi and also Camp No. 3 at Nike in Thailand from September 1943 to January 1944 after which it combined with group 5 at the new Camp No.3 based at Tamarkan in Thailand until the group was disbanded in February 1945.

14 Km Thetkaw

Once the first batch of Prisoners of War had arrived in Burma in September 1942 it wasn't long before they were being moved to Thanbyuzayat at the Burmese railhead of the railway and from there they were then moved up the planned route of the railway to the various camps including the camp at 14 km Thetkaw.



First type card from Australian Private John Watson in 14 km Thetkaw Camp to his wife in Richmond, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

The card is endorsed in manuscript "14 Kilo Camp Burma" (THETKAW) which was contrary to regulations as it was not permitted for the P.O.Ws to write the camp name on the card.

Rectangular boxed Japanese censor mark with the date in the Showa Era inserted by the censor 18 1 22 (22nd January 1943) and is censored by *Naito*.

The card was censored on arrival in Australia and was received in Richmond, Melbourne on 30th September 1943.

THE BRITISH SUMATRA BATTALION

In March 1942 a group of British troops who had escaped Singapore as deserters or official escapees and made their way to Sumatra only to be captured there. The groups were from assorted regiments and included 88 R.A.F. and 79 Royal Navy personnel under the command of Captain Dudley Apthorpe. They were taken by train from Padang to the port of Belawan Deli where on the 15th May they transferred to the ship *England Maru* for the journey to Mergui arriving on 25th May and joined up with the men from A Force who had arrived from Singapore. On 10th August they were sent to Tavoy and on 25th October to Moulmein and on the next day to Thanbyuzayat to work on the construction of the railway. During the next two and a half years in Burma and Thailand about 150 of the British Sumatra Battalion died during the construction of the Thai - Burma Railway.

Gunner Charles Ward



Second card from P.O.W. No. 6414 Gunner Charles Ward of the British Sumatra Battalion to his wife in Driffield, Yorkshire, England where it was cancelled on 30th December 1943 before being redirected to Malton.

The Japanese censor box has the date inserted in the Showa Era 18 5 31 (31st May 1943) and has the censor mark of *Yamada*.

About 12th January 1944 Gunner Charles Ward was sent by rail to Kanchanaburi at the southern end of the railway and by May 1944 he was then sent by boat to Saigon, Indo China.

MOUNT BRANDON AIR CRASH

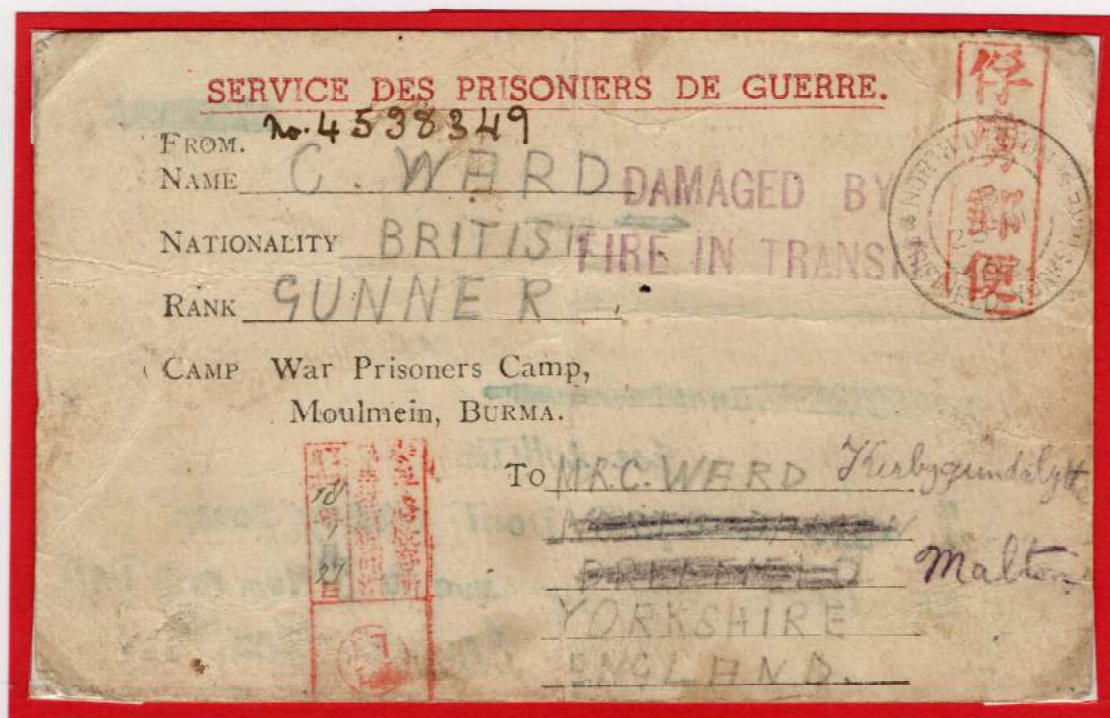
On the morning of 28th July 1943, the Shots Sunderland G-AGES, a flight from Lisbon in Portugal to Foynes in the Irish Republic, crashed due to the poor weather conditions into the slopes of Mount Brandon on the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry. Of the 25 men on board, 10 lost their lives and the remaining 15 crew and passengers suffered injuries. The crew of seven on board this aircraft was a mix of BOAC employees and Royal Air Force personnel seconded to the Corporation to fly what was in fact a military flying boat.

SALVAGED MAIL

2,570 Items of mail were recovered from the wreckage of the plane. All mail recovered regardless of its condition received the following handstamp before being forwarded.

DAMAGED BY
FIRE IN TRANSIT

Gunner Charles Ward



First card from P.O.W. No. 6414 Gunner Charles Ward of the British Sumatra Battalion to his wife in Driffield, Yorkshire, England, where it was cancelled on 25th August 1943 before being redirected to Malton.

The rectangular Japanese censor box has the date inserted in the Showa Era 18 1 27 (27th January 1943) and has the censor mark of Yamada.

AUSTRALIAN P.O.W. IN TRANSIT THROUGH SINGAPORE

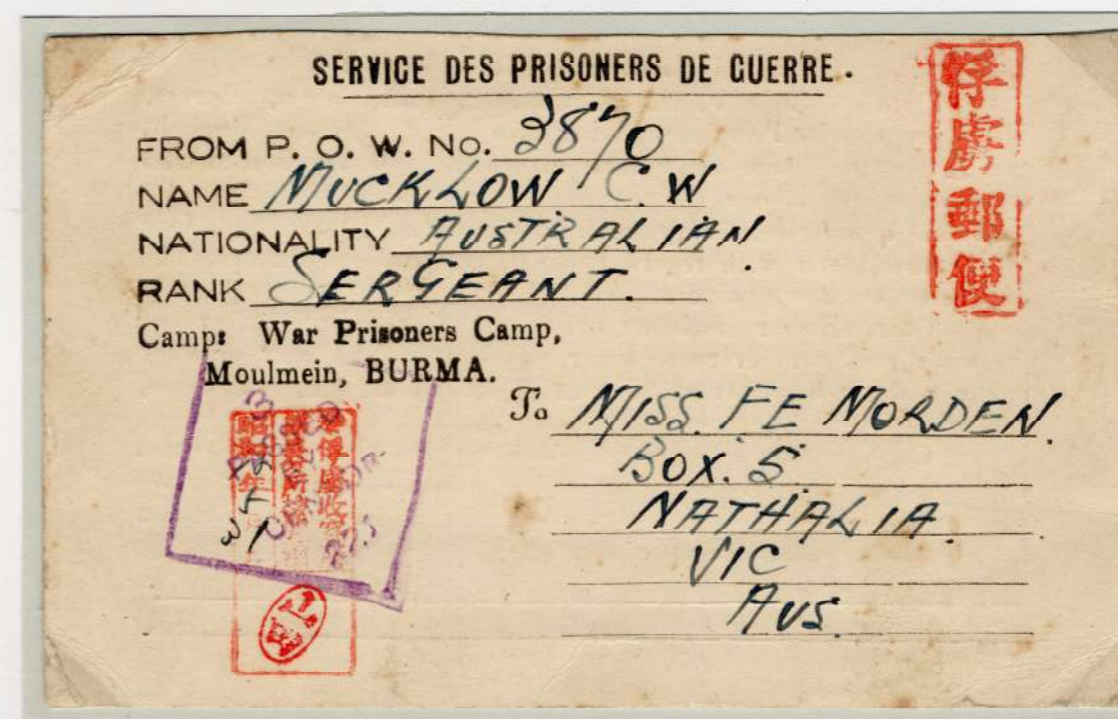
Cards were issued to Australian P.O.Ws in transit through Changi from Java to Burma in October 1942. Sergeant Mucklow was a volunteer who enlisted in Victoria. He was in Burma on 31st May 1943 but was obviously not in the draft of 14th May 1942, as this card proves. The next group of Australian P.O.Ws who were sent to Burma were parties 3 and 4 who were held in Changi for a few days before being sent to Burma on 16th October onboard the *Maebashi Maru*. No other Australians were sent to the Burmese end of the railway after this date.

Sec DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE

Marai in Violet Seal of Ozaki in red



Card sent by Sergeant Mucklow from Changi on 15th October 1942. Censored on arrival in Australia.



Card from Sergeant Mucklow in Burma (31st May 1943) Censored by Yamada, and on arrival in Australia.

GROUP 5 BURMA

Group 5 was formed in January 1943 with its headquarters in Thanbyuzayat, and was responsible for all camps from 65 km south-east to 100 Kilo Camp. In April 1943 it moved to Apon until October 1943 and then to Kyondan until November 1943. In December 1943 it combined with Group 3 at Tamarkan in Thailand until it was disbanded in February 1945.

First issue Group 5 card, it is not the usual Group 3 card as shown by the manuscript /5/ after Moulmein, Burma. The printing set-up is also different – longer title 95 mm / line 98 mm versus title 88 mm / line 90 mm for the Group 3 cards. This card has no period stop after **GUERRE** – careful examination shows an albino dot.

First issue Group 5 card issued by the Imperial Japanese Army to the Prisoners of War in the Group 5 camps in Burma.

SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE

FROM:
NAME VAN GAASBEEK F.J.
NATIONALITY NEDERLANDER
RANK PRIVATE
CAMP War Prisoners Camp,
Moulmein, BURMA. /5/

To GORTENBACH AP
NSEMPLAK 28
SOERBABA
JAVA.

Indonesien 153

First card from Dutch Private F.J. van Gaasbeek in a Group 5 camp to Soerabala, Java. The card is undated, but the Group 3 cards were mostly sent on 27th January 1943. There is a m/s 25/6 03 (1943) which is probably the date of receipt in Soerabala, Java.

Group 5 cards do not have a Japanese censor mark and date or a "P.O.W. Post" mark

Group 5 cards are exceptionally rare with only a handful of identifiable Group 5 cards being reported. David Tett records only 2 such cards in his book.

BURMA GROUP 3 – NIKE THAILAND

The cards issued to the prisoners in Group 3 in Thailand are very similar to the first two cards issued in Burma with the **SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE** at last spell correctly and the boxed Fuyo Yubin (Prisoner of War Post) in the top right corner instead of the handstamp used on the first two cards issued in Burma. The boxed censor mark has three columns, the first reads *Showa* with spaces to insert the date in manuscript. The second column reads *Dai San Bunsho Ken'etsuzumi* (No. 3 Branch Censored) and the third column reads *Tai Fuyo Shuyosho* (Thai Prisoner of War Camp).

THE BRITISH SUMATRA BATTALION

Able Seaman John Hughes

SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE

FROM P. O. W. No. 3340
NAME JOHN. H. HUGHES.
NATIONALITY ENGLISH
RANK ABLE SEAMAN
Camp : No. 3 Branch Thai War Prisoners
Camp. NIKE, THAILAND.

PASSED
P.W.7853

俘虜郵便

To MR & MRS. H. HUGHES.
4 WREKIN RD
WYLDE GREEN
NEAR BIRMINGHAM.
ENGLAND

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Third card from Able Seaman John Hughes to his parents in Wylde Green near Birmingham, England, with the censor date in the Showa Era 79 2 1 (1st February 1944) and has the censor mark of Matsuzaki. The card was also censored on arrival in England.

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

Our messes, plant, quarters, and work is unchanged since last card sent to you. The rations have increased, it is now beautiful weather, I am working healthily (strong). We receive correspondents printed in English which reveal world events.

We have perfectly modified a system of some milk, tea, margarine, sugar and cigarettes from the Japanese Antilles.

We see very anxious to hear from friends, but some prisoners have received letters or replies.

Everyone is hopeful of a speedy end to the war and with faith in the future we look forward to a happy, glorious home.

With best wishes for a cheerful Christmas.

HERE'S HOPING YOU ARE ALL WELL AND HAPPY
AT HOME, ALWAYS THINKING OF YOU.

From J. H. HUGHES.

Reduced copy of the reverse of the card.

The second and third cards issued in Burma were the only cards that the Japanese issued in the occupied territories with a propaganda message intended to reassure the families back home about how good life was in the Japanese camps.

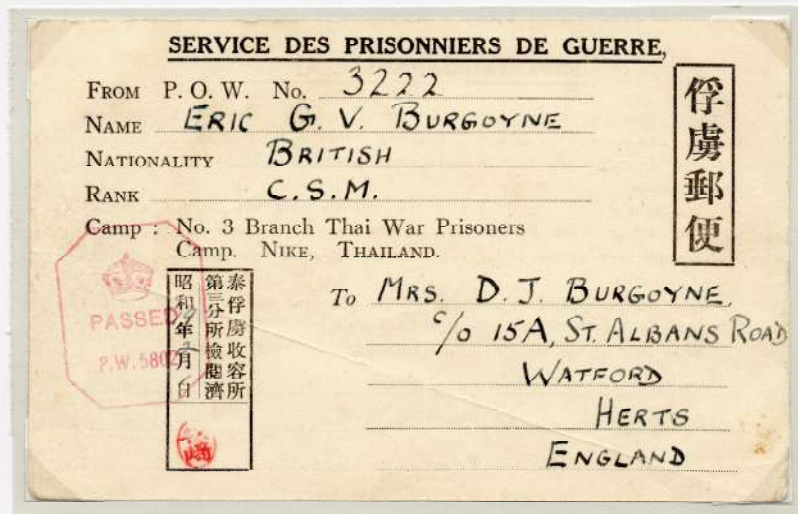
BURMA GROUP 3 - NIKE THAILAND

Company Sergeant Major Eric Burgoyne

C.S.M. Eric Burgoyne escaped from Singapore in a Sampan and then with 11 other escapees in an old steamboat on 18th February 1942 and made for Sumatra following the surrender of Singapore to the Imperial Japanese forces on 15th February 1942, and from there they were making their escape to freedom on a sailing vessel in the Indian Ocean when they were captured by the Japanese and were taken back to captivity in Sumatra.

BRITISH SUMATRA BATTALION

C.S.M. Eric Burgoyne and the other escapees managed to escape from the Japanese in Sumatra and join members of the British Sumatra Battalion under the command of Captain Dudley Apthorpe, where Eric Burgoyne was made **Battalion Sergeant Major**. The British Sumatra Battalion was captured by the Japanese in Medan, Sumatra, on 15th May. They were transferred to the ship *England Maru* for the journey to Mergui in Burma to work on the construction of the Thai - Burma Railway.



Third card from C.S.M. Eric Burgoyne to his wife in Watford, England, and was censored on arrival.

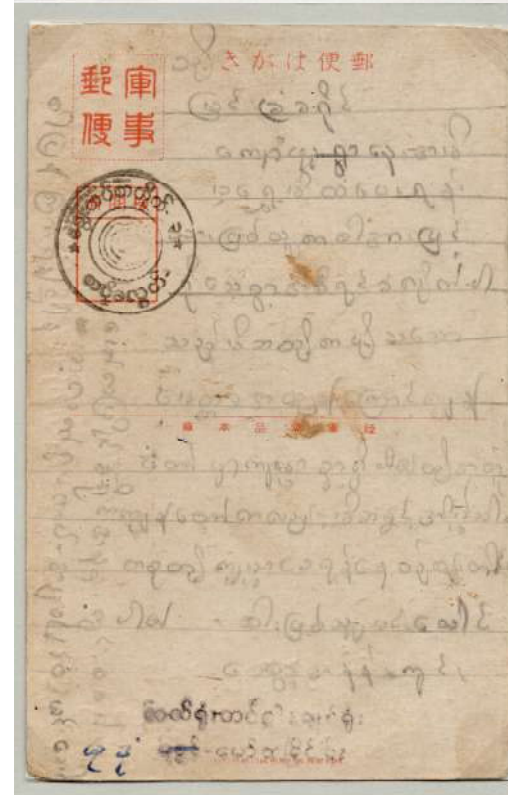
The Japanese censor box has the date inserted in the Showa Era 19 2 1 (1st February 1944) and has the censor mark of Yamada.

C.S.M. Eric Burgoyne was sent to Saigon, Indochina, from Burma via Thailand and Singapore, arriving in Saigon in February 1945, where he remained until he was repatriated.

JAPANESE LABOUR CORPS

The Burmese "Sweat Army" were conscripted Burmese slave labourers who were used by the Japanese for the construction of the Thai - Burma Railway. After the completion of the railway in Burma they were then used for road construction and maintenance work.

The Burmese romusha were entitled to free postage on their mail. A special handstamp was devised and used on all mail from the Burmese romusha.



Reduced copy of the reverse of the card.



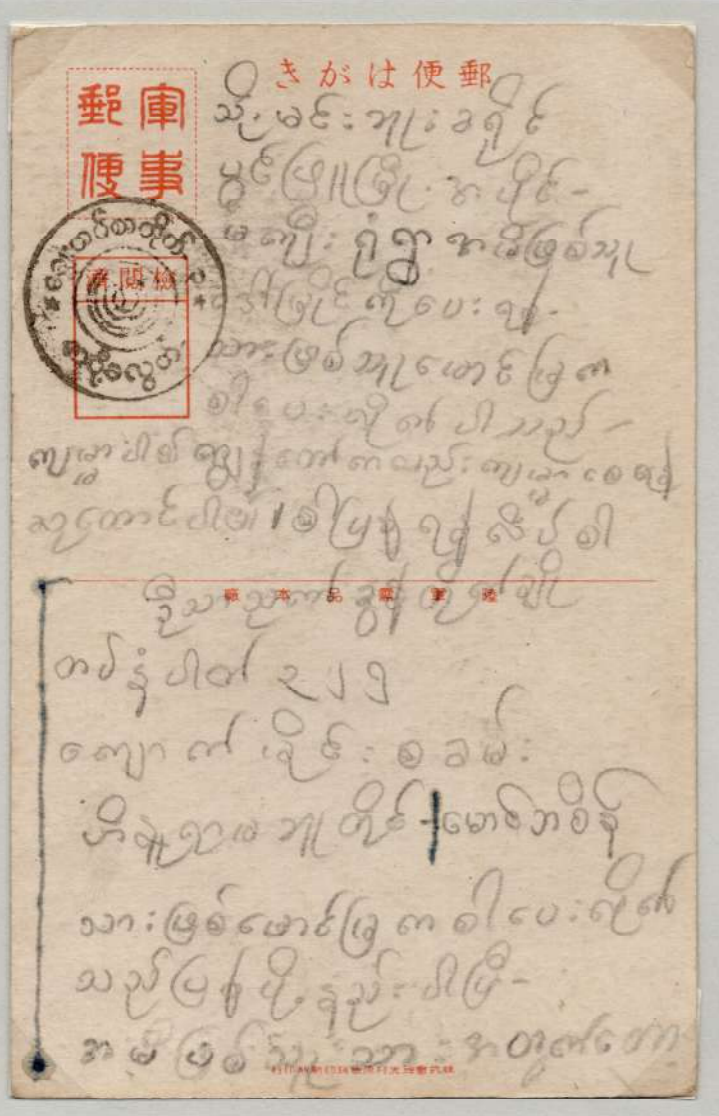
The circular handstamp reads; "Sweat corps Post office" across the top and "Postage Free" across the bottom.

1944 Military mail postcard from Maung Min Thauung, No. 210 Bama Let Tat - (Burma Heiho Army), Anandwin Saken (Camp), Mudon Myo, Moulmein district, Burma. Sent to his mother Ma Shwe MI, Kyaukfu Ywa (village) Myingyan, Burma.

Of the estimated 270,000 romusha who worked on the Thai - Burma Railway there were no records kept of where they worked, how long they were there for or how many of them survived.

JAPANESE LABOUR CORPS

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Japanese military postcard from Maung Ba Sen's son Maung Mya.

The message reads.

I am well and pray that you are well, The time to return home is near, Mother you must not worry about your son.



Reduced copy of the reverse of the card.

On the reverse of the card is the stamp of the Department of People's Army, Mudon, Moulmein.

The circular handstamp reads; "Sweat Corps Post Office" across the top and "Postage Free" across the bottom.

To be given to the mother Daw Myang From the son Maung Mya' Minbu District. Ma Kyi village. Pwin Pya Township.

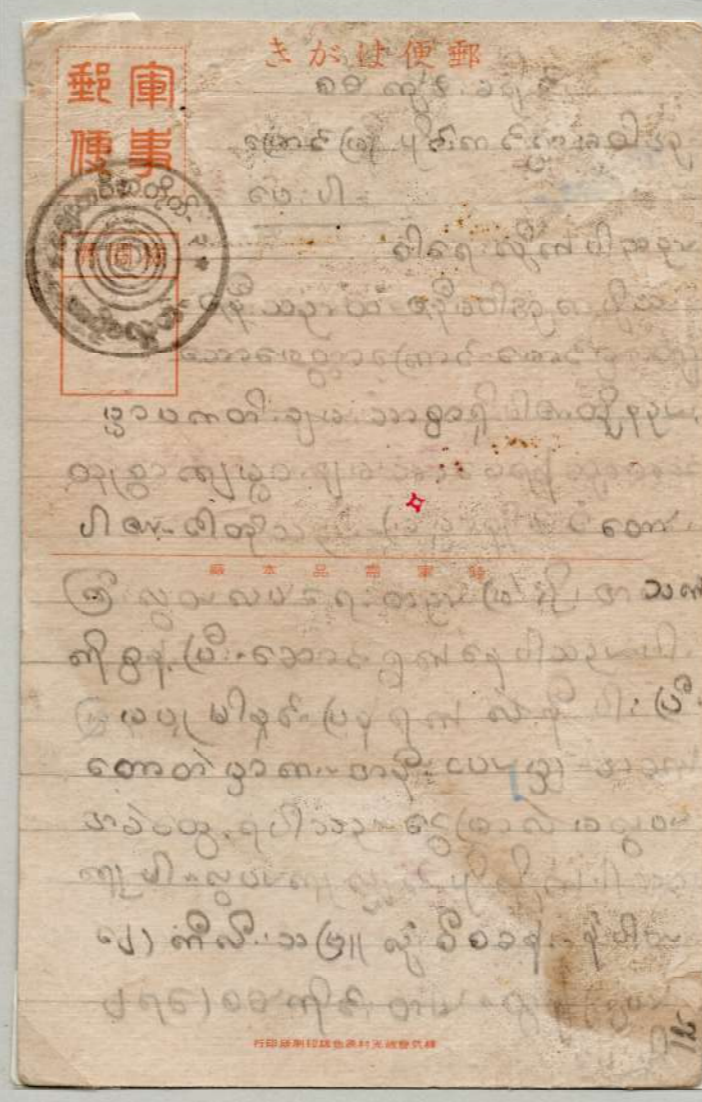
The address to reply to is.

U Tha Nyan Hkun Taik Gyo, Army No.325 Kyauk Maing Camp, Heinu Yama bu taing.

JAPANESE LABOUR CORPS

The Japanese convinced the Burmese slave labourers that by working for the Japanese they were freeing Burma of British colonial rule and helping to create an Independent Burma free of western colonial power, as can be seen by the message on this card.

Lonshi Camp



Japanese military postcard from Lonshi Camp to Sagaing.

The message reads.

Dear wife, I am writing this letter to you. Because of your blessings, I am well. I hope you are well too. We are working hard, sacrificing our lives to help Burma maintain her independence don't worry about us. My return is getting close. I'm facing some difficulties in the forest. I don't have much money; if you have some please send it to Kili-Thabu-Lone-si [Lonshi] Camp, No. 276 Sagaing District, Tun Gwch.



Reduced copy of the reverse of the card.

Japanese military picture postcard showing Japanese paratroopers seizing the oil refinery at Palembang, Sumatra 14th February 1942.

On the front of the card is a handstamp in violet of the Department of People's Army, Mudon, Moulmein.

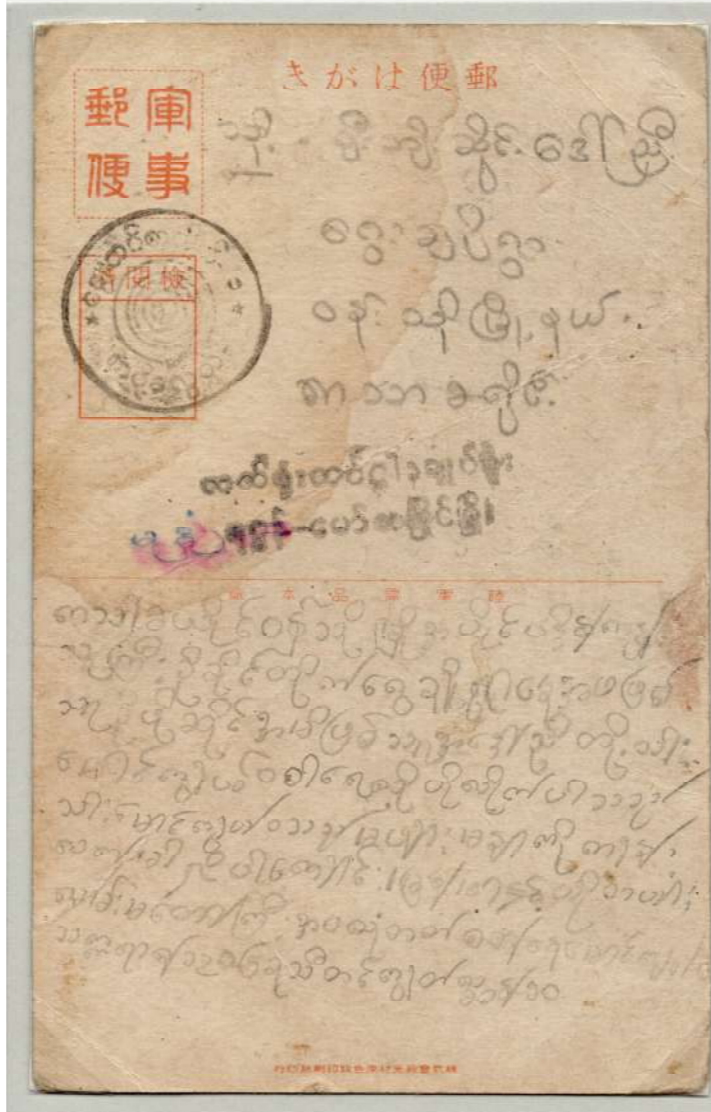
On the message side the circular handstamp reads "Sweat Army Corps Post Office" across the top and "Postage Free" across the bottom.

Please give this letter to Ma Sar U from King village in Myaung Mya, Sagaing District.

JAPANESE LABOUR CORPS

The card was written on 16th October 1945, two months after the Japanese surrender and the end of the war in the Far East, and shows that whilst the Allied Prisoners of War were on their way home the Burmese romusha workers were still in the camps and awaiting their repatriation.

Aperon Camp



Reduced copy of the reverse of the card.

The postcard is of a girl by Kitano Tsunetomi.

Stamp of the Department of
People's Army, Mudon, Moulmein.

The circular handstamp reads;
"Sweat Corps Post Office" across the top
and "Postage Free" across the bottom.

The card is addressed to U Boe Sai, Daw Nyi, Gway Jo Village, Wuntho Township, Katha District, and has a stamp of the Department of People's Army, Mudon, Moulmein.

The message reads.

I Muang Gweh Wa, son of U Boe Sai, Daw Nyi, residents of Gweh Jo Village, - village of the goldsmith U Knine Taik - in Wuntho Town, Katha District, am sending this letter. Your son Muang Gweh is well. Muang Gweh Wa from Burma - Thai Main Road, Aperon Camp. 10th waxing day of Thadingyut, 1306 (16th October 1945).