

Takesima

(This interview is conducted with an interpreter)

Interviewer: We are in Japan and we are going to interview Asia's father. What is your name?

Takesima: Takesima

Interviewer: And when were you born?

Takesima: I was born in 1921.

Interviewer: 1921 and where were you born?

Takesima: In Torah City in Japan.

Interviewer: And to whom what are his parent's names?

Takesima: My father's name was Gosket and my mothers name was Sua.

Interviewer: What year was it when you went in the service? And how old was he?

Takesima: 1941

Interviewer: And what did they have different branches of the military? He was in the air force or army?

Takesima: He joined army.

Interviewer: He was in the army. How long did he serve in the army.

I have been serving for 3 years and 2 and a half years as a prisoner in Siberian.

Interviewer: So five and a half year altogether?

Takesima: Yes

Interviewer: Before the war what was his family lifestyle like?

Takesima: I have been I had been working at the department store at Hutchiloka City I work for picture.

Interviewer: What about his home his parents where did they work?

Takesima: My parents were working as farmers.

Interviewer: Did they grow rice?

Takesima: Yes rice and beans and other things other vegetables.

Interviewer: Before you went into the war did you have to sign up to the war or were you enlisted? Was he enlisted or was he drafted?

Takesima: I was not a volunteer but was drafted.

Interviewer: He was drafted?

Takesima: Yes

Interviewer: Did he have knowledge of the war before he was drafted? Did you know what was going on who was fighting?

Takesima: I knew all about it who we fighting against who something about that.

Interviewer: Did how did you find out did you listen to the news or read newspaper?

Takesima: I listened to the radio we didn't have a TV set yet.

Interviewer: When he when you went in to the war what was your training?

Takesima: He joined the anti-aircraft and then after that he was an accountant.

Interviewer: So the first year he went into the military he trained in anti-aircraft artillery second year he went into accounting?

Takesima: Yes

Interviewer: And did he fight during those two years?

Takesima: I never fought any enemies. Not in the front line.

Interviewer: So he didn't have to experience the real battle the first two years?

Takesima: I haven't experienced.

Interviewer: Where did he go where did you go during the beginning of the war?

Takesima: I have been in Alkyd and Atorough Island it is now in control of Russia.

Interviewer: When you were in the military where did you stay like in tents and how did you eat?

Takesima: We ate normal meals like we do now and we sleep on the bed.

Interviewer: Oh so it was nice okay so treatment during the military was good if he was in Japan.

Takesima: They had some kind of regression to treat soldiers.

Interviewer: And how was he captured?

Takesima: 1945 when he was in Altorough they was defeated and the Russian soldiers were just coming down to the island and captured me. They took the Japanese soldiers to Siberia.

Interviewer: How many Japanese soldiers were captured with him?

Takesima: There were 12,000 soldiers Japanese soldiers on the island at that time and the Russian soldiers took them all to Siberia. Russian took maybe 600,000 Japanese soldiers altogether to Siberia. From Monchero too there was many soldiers in Monchero. And buses came down and took all Japanese soldiers as prisoners of war.

Interviewer: How did you get to Siberia?

Takesima: They just put up to ship and then to Russia and then off to Siberia and train into Siberia.

Interviewer: How when you were captured what was your treatment like how did the Russians treat you?

Takesima: I think Russian they are nice people as person the system is kind of hard push you hard work and the food it very poor.

Interviewer: Can he tell us a story of when he was captured or during the time when he was going to Siberia?

Takesima: They just give us real food we were hungry they just give us beans sometimes and we cooked it and eat it and sometimes feed us peeps but its found would be cured. And when there were some that tried to escape and were shot in front of me by Russians. So we had hard time because of the shortage of food and the cold.

Interviewer: It was 40 to 50 Celsius below?

Takesima: Temperature 45 below zero.

Interviewer: It was 45 degrees Celsius that's cold. When you were captured by the Russians how much did you weigh?

Takesima: He weighted about 60 kilograms. And he lost his weight about 20 kilograms and became about 40 kilograms.

Interviewer: He lost 20 that was 132 pounds and he lost to 80 pounds 88 pounds after he was captured. When it got really cold in Siberia how did they stay warm if they were prisoners?

Takesima: It is okay at nighttime because they were in rock house and it was a really good one so they could keep heat. In the daytime they had to go to work and it's cold very cold and they had a heavy coat and the Russians provided them shoes and but they didn't provide socks so they tried to find some cloth and just rub it to their legs.

Interviewer: They would pick up cloth?

Takesima: Yes a piece of cloth some the Russians throw away and they pick it up and just rub it up their legs to make them warm. We got sick and you can't get sleep on the bed just sleep on the floor and no medicine to give. They don't have medicine.

Interviewer: Did a lot of people die?

Takesima: You got sick and the Russians send you to the hospital and if some guys could not return they must go on and die.

Interviewer: When they were prisoners it was because the war was already over when they were captured or right before they were captured the war was about to end but the Russians were able to keep them why is that?

Takesima: I don't know for sure but maybe the government decided maybe some contract to help. I guess Japanese soldiers come home at once but there were no jobs for them to do and maybe their unemployier there aren't there might be some things here because there are so many soldiers 600,000 and in Siberia in Siberia Russian Government wanted some angles to develop Siberian fields cut the road build some buildings or something.

Interviewer: They needed renters.

Takesima: One of ten soldiers never come back they die over there because maybe a lack of food because of maybe because of sick.

Interviewer: What kind of jobs did you do when you were in Siberia?

Takesima: We all were doing the making a rail on railway what we are doing is a cutting wood. My finger were broken at that time when we were cutting a log tow guys make a pair and just bring a big rock together and when the rock down we have to do it together at the same time and we lost some kind of timing

Interviewer: Balance

Takesima: Balance and then the big rock just hit my finger and it broken. Rains could be very cold you feel like your fingers are dying like frost bitten. So it's very cold when you take off your clothes sometimes might get frost bitten so you have and the fingers like a mutant that's getting I forgot.

Interviewer: Sometimes when it gets so cold when they would take their gloves off their fingers would be frozen and start to rot the skin would start to rot and fall off the fingers to where you could see the bone.

Takesima: You needed to cut it off because of it you know no use anymore.

Interviewer: The toes too I should imagine? On your feet?

Takesima: Yes the same thing you need socks.

Interviewer: When he when you were in Siberia did you get to write letters did they let you write letters to your family or to?

Takesima: They permitted me only once to write to my family only once in two and a half year they only once they give me just one chance to do that.

Interviewer: Do say he was alive.

Takesima: Only I can right in the letter I am okay fine just one line. You couldn't write anything about the Russians how the Russians call you or something like that just I am fine okay.

Interviewer: What about were you able to listen to news or anything about outside about the world outside?

Takesima: There was no radios so you can't get none of what's going on about word. They just told me about theory of communist and that's all I hear about the communist socialist.

Interviewer: What about did you have civilian contact civilian people the Siberian people?

Takesima: There is not any inhabitants around us the prison and foreign soldiers and there are no contact with but there are some other prison for the German soldiers so we can see and great a little bit with German soldiers they were also in prisons.

Interviewer: How big was the area where you were?

Takesima: There are a five about five or six hundred people with us.

Interviewer: When they were about to free you did you know you were going to be freed?

Takesima: There was some health checks and the doctors just came out and pulled the skin off your buttocks and started rosin and maybe your getting skinny getting weakened so they decided to send you home. You can't walk anymore because you don't have any power inside so they so men for no workers.

Interviewer: If you don't work you don't get to eat.

Takesima: You can't work you can't get any years so they just send you home. Because you are useless. They give you a sandwich for day and if you complete the assignment a hundred percent they give you a hundred percent bread today but if you have done only 80 percent maybe they give you 80 percent of bread for day because maybe the amount of bread was for your waiver today.

Interviewer: So they paid you as a waiver. What kind of food did they feed you?

Takesima: They gave us bread and like consign soup nothing you can find any where.

Interviewer: Just clear.

Takesima: Just cardboard. There is more amount of bread you can get.

Interviewer: How much soup did you get?

Takesima: About a hundred cc. About as big as milk bottle they had black bread too. In Russia maybe rich people eat white bread like we eat and the very poor people eat black bread.

Interviewer: Black bread is made out of what?

Takesima: When you make bread you take the skins out of wheat but when you make this makes bread white. They use it all together to make a bread main reason why it cheaper and very poor people just can buy black bread.

Interviewer: Before we finish the interview I wanted to take a picture of Mr. Takesima in his garden in Japan. He loves his garden he works in his garden every day he has a beautiful garden beautiful trees a beautiful yard. This is what he does with his family here. This is his neighborhood. They ride bicycles everywhere they go. The day that you were released from the prisoner of war camp what did you feel?

Takesima: He first doubted I couldn't believe that I could go back home because they tell me so. The Russian soldiers took us to the port where it we ride train.

Interviewer: A freight train.

Takesima: Yes it took about one week from the camp to port and then we also have to stay there several days and if you were not doing good maybe they would take you back to the camp again.

Interviewer: If you weren't acting good?

Takesima: Yes

Interviewer: How many were able to leave at the same time with you?

Takesima: About 1,000 Japanese soldiers onboard heading to Japan at one time.

Interviewer: So a lot of soldiers were left in the prisoner of war camp?

Takesima: Yes there were only 1,000 of 600,000.

Interviewer: Did he know of soldiers that left before him?

Takesima: They released the soldiers little by little not so much people at one time maybe 1,000 soldiers 2,000 soldiers something like that.

Interviewer: When they were on the ship for Japan did you realize that you were free?

Takesima: Yes I did I sure did. I felt I'm going back home. The American soldiers came up and put the DDT from head to feet. We turned white all of us with the powder.

Interviewer: Was the ship American or Japanese?

Takesima: American soldiers wasn't there but America got DDT so they were provided in order to protect all of the soldiers from all of the boat.

Interviewer: Was the ship Russian or was it Japanese?

Takesima: Japanese ship

Interviewer: Where did you go back to where was the port that you landed?

Takesima: In Japan?

Interviewer: Yes

Takesima: It called Cioto.

Interviewer: Were you able to go home when you got to Cioto?

Takesima: They had to take a bath and again they put the DDT, shot injection. We started to eat with rice. The same amount they provided to all the soldiers same amount. Very delicious.

Interviewer: And then you came home?

Takesima: And then came back home.

Interviewer: Now your parents had not seen you for two and a half years.

Takesima: My parents already gone so.

Interviewer: Where were they?

Takesima: Died

Interviewer: When he went to war?

Takesima: My parents died before I enlisted.

Interviewer: So did he have family or friends to come back to?

Takesima: He was I have my own house and I work and my brother also had captured in Siberia too and he came back later than I.

Interviewer: What did you do after you were finished with the war?

Takesima: And I started to work in the department store in the city and started to arrive as usual before war.

Interviewer: And then you met your wife and then you had your children.

Takesima: Yeh got married and got a son.

Interviewer: Your book you wrote your autobiography about your experience in the war.

Takesima: I loved the memories when I was in I wrote about it how I made it in Siberia all about it in this book. \$5.00 a piece so please buy one. After he got home GHQ called him to come and give some information about Siberia. GHQ General Headquarter after the war and it was in Tokyo and General Mikoso up there and there were some kind of information intelligence department and they want to have information for Russia and maybe call to hear about what's going on in Russia. So he told them about what he knew while he was in Russia. So the American can know about Russia. There is no American soldiers in Siberia they take some information from Japanese soldiers so the Americans can have some information.

Interviewer: So now what is your opinion of the Russian soldiers?

Takesima: I don't have any feelings about Russia it has been a long time ago so everything has changed so much. If some boss of cap a Captain boss maybe he stay around to find and talk about it.

Interviewer: If you have something else you want to share you can.

Takesima: I think that's all the war past already.

Interviewer: Thank you very much

Takesima: So I can be patient now I had been patient in the camp prisoner camp. So it is good for me maybe you can bare the things I don't like.