

Jones Journal

"A BETTER COUNTY THROUGH IMPROVED FARM PRACTICES"

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Three of 'em That Stayed Were With Me. Just Kids; We Called 'em Cheese Eaters, Sgt. James Williams Recalls After 33 Months As Communist 'POW'

Just under six months after the "police action" had begun in Korea with the sudden attack across the 38th Parallel by North Korean troops, shortly after midnight of December 3, 1950 the position of Cpl. James C. Williams, 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Division, was overrun by "Chinese Volunteer" troops and the start of 33 months of captivity began for Williams, a veteran of 13 year's service in the Army.

"We walked from that night until January 21st, 1951," Williams recalls. "There weren't any riding for anybody."

Sgt. Williams, apparently under some kind of Army order, did not want to talk much about that "walk." He did admit that a good many died. How they had died he would not say. He did point out that the Army will release the full story in 60 days after the beginning of the truce in Korea.

Finally, on January 21st, Williams and his fellow prisoners, including Turks, English, Frenchmen, Phillipinos, Australians and possibly others, arrived at Camp 5, on a branch of the Yalu River in the Northern Tip of Korea.

Eighteen men were assigned to "bunk" in a one room mud shack. The bunk was the frozen ground. There were no blankets. No heat except the little fire stoves.

and still shared a room in which the "quartered" was more than a 10 by 10 cubicle and it was impossible to lie down without lying on part of a comrade, but this still did not keep out the cold.

Food. For the first 18 months Williams was in the compound food consisted of 600 grams of dried, cracked corn per day. Roughly 21 ounces. River water was used for drinking and all other purposes.

Work consisted of dragging rocks and logs out of the mountains to rebuild the mud shacks around the prison compound where some 1250 prisoners were held. At all times during the 33 months Williams was a "POW" he was guarded by Chinese "Volunteers."

The particular compound in which he was kept when not at work held 247 men. Finally in April of 1951 they got a blanket a piece, after the worst of the winter had gone.

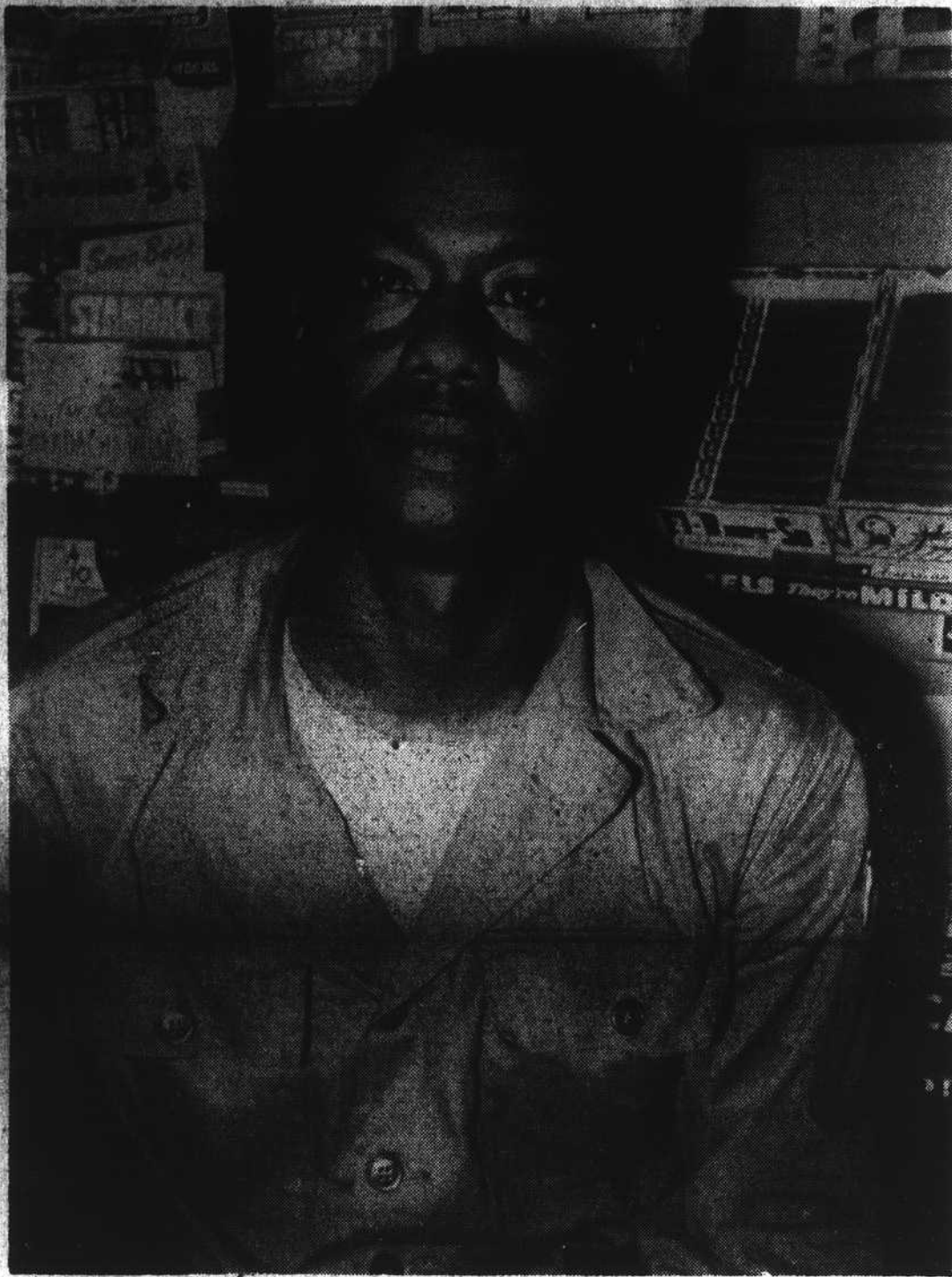
After 18 months on the 600-grams-per-day corn diet Williams says their food improved a little and was changed to soy beans which lasted for the other 15 months of his imprisonment.

When Williams was captured he weighed 184 pounds and upon release he weighed 132, a shrinkage of 52 pounds. Quite a few of his comrades at Camp 5 died from exposure but again Sgt. Williams did not want to talk much on the subject and admitted that he didn't want to go "back over there to any atrocity trials."

Williams says that some 30 or 40 of the 247 men in his immediate group were "pros" or progressives, who spent a good deal of their time attending classes while their buddies worked. Only three of that 247 who had nearly three years of "progressive education" decided to remain behind with the communists, Williams says.

"All three of 'em were young kids, about 20, 21 or 22," Williams recalls.

Williams was asked if they



Sgt. James C. Williams

were "brown-nosers." He said "Yes, only we called 'em 'cheese eaters' this time."

They and the progressive classmates were largely, in Williams' opinion just a bunch looking for a softer spot and if "cozying" up

to the Chinese meant a little better food and a little less hard work, they did it.

Some of that group that stayed behind were scared to leave with the others, Williams agreed and he expressed the belief that

all will want to come back to the states when they get another chance, away from the men that knew them for what they were in the camps.

"We never thought about escape," Williams admits. "There

wasn't any escape. We didn't look like them people and once we stepped outside our area, we were bound to be spotted."

The three men Williams knew who stayed behind were Clarence Adams, of Memphis, William White of Kansas City, Mo., and Larry Sullivan of "somewhere in California." Checking this list as remembered by Williams against the list released by Peking Radio, all three are found but Sullivan's name is listed as Lawrence, rather than "Larry", the name he was known under in Camp 5.

In those 33 months Williams says he received three letters no Red Cross parcels and the only news they had in that entire time of the outside world came in occasional issues of the New York Daily Worker, the London Daily Worker and another Communist rag from the west coast called the "Peoples' World". "They (these three papers) always hollered about the United States being wrong in picking on the Communists," Williams says, "So we never paid much attention to 'em and had just about had no news from the States as that kind."

Williams said he wrote home about every week. His family only received two letters in the 33 months he was a prisoner.

The only doctors Williams recalls seeing in his entire 33 months as a "POW" were American doctors who were also prisoners and who had neither drugs or equipment to work on the many who sickened and died in the Camp 5 compound.

Chinese discipline was "very sloppy," Williams says. "Not to us. They were plenty strict on us." But they were arguing all the time among themselves and he saw many fights between Chinese but it was impossible to tell their relative ranks, since they wore no rank of insignia, and all purported to be "volunteers."

Williams wondered at those few who might have swallowed the Communist party line. "Their story was too simple for me," he declared. "That kind of story sure wouldn't lead me anywhere," he added.

During his captivity he was promoted from corporal to sergeant and he is now waiting for the finance department to get all of his back pay lined up. Something between "seven and eight thousand bucks," Williams points out with an understandable smile.

Marine Corps Band One of Those in Kinston Parade on Saturday



Above is pictured the Second Marine Air Wing Band from Cherry Point which is one of the eight bands that will march in the LENOIR COUNTY VETERANS DAY celebration that is being held in Kinston on Saturday of this week.

A parade that begins at 2

o'clock Saturday afternoon will move down Heritage Street, from Vernon, to Bright Street, from there it will progress to Queen Street and then up Queen Street to Grainger Avenue, where it will turn east on Grainger and go to Grainger Stadium where ceremonies appropriate to the occasion will be held.

The eight massed bands, of some 500 pieces, will combine to play "THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER" under the direction of Lt. Paul L. Bley USMC director of the Cherry Point Band. Former National Vice Com-

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Unusual Crime Is Cleared Up With Saturday Confession

Jones County Sheriff Jeter Taylor announced Saturday that one of the most unusual crimes committed in his county in a long time was cleared up over the past weekend with a confession from 60-year-old Benjamin Franklin Bryant of Dover Route Two, who admitted placing a barricade of cross-ties on the Atlantic and East Carolina Railroad track about two miles west of Dover in the Northern tip of Jones County.

After complaints had been filed by the railroad company over such an incident on Wednesday night, Sheriff Taylor says he told the railroad folks that the crime was likely to be repeated the next night and for them to let him know as quickly as train crewmembers could get to a telephone so that he could get bloodhounds on a reasonably fresh trail.

Sheriff Taylor was right. With Continued on Page 5