

During captivity, as a result of avitaminosis, neuropathies were, as well as other manifestations, common-place. Apart from the obvious effects on the optic nerve for instance, leading to atrophy and blindness, other effects such as burning feet and legs (referred to, somewhat incongruously by FEPOWs as "Happy Feet"), nerve deafness, ataxia and spasticity occurred. In the main, these effects appeared to be reversed on repatriation and return to a normal diet but in recent years, with advancing age, it has been appreciated that there has been residual, undetected, neuropathy which is brought to light by the degenerative effects of ageing. As with the other conditions mentioned above, peripheral neuropathy in a 70-80 year old without adequate explanation should lead to the individual being asked whether he is an ex-FEPOW.

December 1992