

ED/JAG/FS/JC/97

IN THE MATTER OF JAPANESE WAR CRIMES AND  
IN THE MATTER OF ILL-TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR AT MIYATA CAMP, FUKUOKA  
FROM THE 26 JUNE 1945 TILL THE END OF  
HOSTILITIES.

A F F I D A V I T

I, No. 113054, Lt. Cyril Edward BUCKE, Royal Corps of Signals, at present attached to Depot Bn, Royal Signals, THIRSK, Yorks, and with permanent home address at "Gayes", Rowberron nr. WINSCOMBE, Somerset, make oath and say as follows:

1. I was taken Prisoner on December 25, 1941 at HONG KONG and spent nearly a year there in various PW camps, until 27 September 1943 when I was shipped to Japan. On arrival there I went to OSAKA and stayed till the middle of 1943 when I was moved to ZENSUJI. There I stayed until 25 June 1945 when I was moved to MIYATA.

2. I was moved to MIYATA camp with 44 other PWs, including Wing Commander G. MATTHEWS, RAF, who became the Senior British Officer at MIYATA camp. When we arrived at this camp there were already about 800 PWs there, mainly Dutch. Some of the PWs at MIYATA had come from FUKUOKA No. 1 camp and from TAIWAN. When these two camps had broken up their personnel scattered.

Conditions at MIYATA camp generally were very hard. There was much ill-treatment of PWs at the hands of the camp Comdt. Lt. SAKAMOTO, aided and abetted by his 3 i/c SGT. KURIHARA. They instituted in this camp a reign of terror, details of which appear later in this affidavit. Even after hostilities had ceased and SAKAMOTO had received strict instructions to treat the PWs well, several cases of beatings took place after August 15, 1945.

3. MIYATA was a mining camp. All the Allied ORs worked down the mine and officers were employed working in the fields, planting rice or sweet potatoes or opening up new ground. So far as officers were concerned, the work started at 5:30 a.m. when we went out to the fields on the mine railway, and we did not get back to camp again until 6:30 p.m. Not only did officers have to work in the fields, but we also had to unload sacks of rice and coal for the camp, move pit-props and empty latrines. Elderly officers (one was as old as 59) were selected for this work. Much of this work was supervised by boys of 16 and upwards who carried sticks and were using them. The work was carried on almost invariably at high pressure. The only English that was spoken by some of the guards was "Hurry up". Work in the water of the paddy fields often caused cuts and sores, which took weeks to heal up.

4. The food which we were given was utterly insufficient to maintain health, let alone do the work which we were compelled to do. Officers were allowed 360 grams of rice and 190 grams of flour per day. During

No 1932



our first fortnight at MIYATA camp officers lost on the average of about 6 lbs in weight. No extra food could be obtained and there is no doubt that the work we had to do could have been reduced. Several applications to the Japanese interpreters for this to be done were ignored. An example of a day's meals would be rice pap in the morning. We were given a small box with our midday meal in it, which we ate out in the fields. This box usually contained a very limited quantity of rice. We used to pick up on the road side or in the fields some green stuff to go with it and we even used to collect frogs and small snakes which we boiled up and ate. In the evening we came back to either flour pap or some rice. To my knowledge we never had any meat or dried fish at any time we were at MIYATA. I personally had lost 7 stone in weight by the end of hostilities.

5. Out accommodation consisted of lathe and plaster huts, with 14 men to a hut. This was not grossly overcrowded but we only just had room to lie down in reasonable comfort. There were no recreation huts provided except a library hut into which we rarely, if ever, had any time to go, our working hours being from 5:30 in the morning to 6:30 in the evening.

6. Medical arrangements were very bad and very limited. There is no doubt in my mind that the Japanese could have made things very much better for us if they had wanted to. We were looked after by Dutch MOs who used to take the sick parades and give us what medical treatment they were able to. Even so, any Japanese 'medical' NCO who knew next to nothing could override the orders of the qualified Dutch MOs. Consequently, if the MO said that you were not fit to work and the Japanese NCO said that you were, off you had to go.

We used to get a limited quantity of Red Cross supplies, but it was common knowledge to most of us that SGT. KURIMARA stole a good deal of our Red Cross Food supplies. Food for hospital patients and sick, was only 13 oz of rice per day.

7. As regards the general ill-treatment which we received at this camp, the following are the most serious cases, most of which I saw myself. We were informed on arrival by the commandant, Lt. SAKAMOTO, through his interpreter, that, if we failed to obey orders, we would be bayoneted to death. [During the first 3 or 4 days in the camp all the officers who had arrived with me were subjected individually to a series of beatings by the guards with rifles, fists, sticks and feet for the most trivial offences or for no offences at all, doubtless on the instructions of SAKAMOTO with the idea of licking the new officers into shape.] The guards were drawn from the 195 Regt; some of them were of the lowest type who welcomed a chance of beating the PWs, knowing that they could not retaliate. [We never saw any order which set out the rules and regulations of the camp, so that we never knew whether we were offending against them or not.]



In spite of protests to the Japanese interpreters, all Japanese, military and civilian, were allowed to administer corporal punishment for any offence, real or fancied. One rule was that all Japanese, including boys of 16 had to be saluted at all times, even in the dark. On one occasion 5 officers received contradicting orders regarding falling in for a work parade. They arrived a few minutes late on parade and Lt. WOODCOCK, Royal Engineers, was attacked by KATSUKI a civilian member of the staff, who struck WOODCOCK so hard that his chin was cut and he had to have two stitches in it. Another man, called COWLING was then attacked with a saw and his cheek badly cut. I did not witness these assaults, but I saw the injuries immediately afterwards.

8. On 6 August 1945 SAKAMOTO attended the sick parade of the Japanese doctor and ordered 46 men to be discharged from the hospital. Some of them could hardly stand. They were all called out on work parade in the camp the following day. I saw them on the parade ground.

9. Just prior to 7 August 1945 the camp suffered a reduction of 10% in the rice ration. The Senior Officer prisoner made every effort to see the Camp Commandant to point out that the food was insufficient, but all efforts failed. On roll-call on the evening of 7 August 1945 all British officers, with a few exceptions were ordered to remain behind. Between 90 - 100 officers were involved. We were given a long harangue by Sgt. KURIHARA on the sins of Britain, e.g., slavery in India, China, and were informed that we were all to be beaten because the senior officer had attempted to see the Camp Commandant (SAKAMOTO) to make a complaint. A request was made that the sick and elderly officers (two of 59 years of age) should be allowed to fall out. This was refused. All officers were then ordered to assume the "on the hands down" position and they were beaten on the posterior with bamboo sticks and poles by KURIHARA assisted by some of the guards. The whole affair lasted about 40 mins. It is the general opinion that this was carried out by orders of SAKAMOTO, so that he would not be worried by complaints from the prisoners. One sick officer was struck on the base of the spine and he fainted. He was carried into the bathroom by the guards and they revived him by throwing buckets of water over him. During the talk the officers were made to hold their hands above their heads for a prolonged period during which they were belaboured by the guards if their hands dropped an inch or so. Officers received 3 - 10 strokes each and some received severe bruises on hip-bones, spine and buttocks. I was present during the whole of this incident and received numerous blows myself from the guards and KURIHARA.

10. Numerous other incidents and assaults on officers took place. For example on one occasion I saw Major P. W. WILLIAM-POWLETT, MC, being severely beaten with the flat of the butt and the butt-end of a rifle for failing to salute a guard a day after arriving in the camp. I also saw the same officer being beaten on the head and body with a pick-helve by the guard commander when reporting a number of officers leaving the camp as a working party. His report was perfectly correct, nevertheless, he had his head split open behind his ear and a rib cracked.



11. On 5 July 1945, Capt. J. H. WALSH, while naked in the bathroom was attacked by the same guard commander who had attacked Major WILLIAM-POWLETT. Capt. WALSH was struck with a pick-helve 3 times across the head and twice across the mouth. He was badly bruised and lost a good deal of blood as a result of this attack. The only reason given was that this officer had not saluted quickly enough. I witnessed this incident myself. On the same day this same guard commander assaulted Capt. LAMBERT who was sick in his room. The guard kicked him the stomach and inflicted other injuries to him. For a good many days after this occurrence, Capt. LAMBERT was in some pain and it was some time before he recovered. I did not personally witness this assault, but I saw Capt. LAMBERT shortly after it.

12. Lt. SAKAMOTO, whom I regard as personally responsible for all our ill-treatment in this camp, was obviously consumed with hate for the Allies and was therefore the last person to be in authority over PWs. He had, I believe, been promoted from the ranks for bravery in the field and had a reputation for getting things done. He was ill-educated, a boor and completely ruthless. KURIHARA on the otherhand, was better educated, but was a complete hypocrite. He often used high-sounding phrases about protecting PWs from dangers out-side the camp, but he himself made no attempt to control his violent temper which he vented so frequently on the PWs. Though the treatment which these two men inflicted through their staff on the British PWs was bad enough, the Dutch PWs in this camp were, on many occasions treated even worse.

SWORN By the said Cyril Edward BUCKE  
at 6, Spring Gardens in the City of  
Westminster, this 24th day of  
January 1946.

/signed/ Cyril Edward BUCKE

BEFORE ME

/signed/ A. M. BELL MACDONALD,  
Major,  
Legal Staff.

I certify that this is a true copy of the original affidavit.

R. D. L. Kelly, Capt. Legal Staff,  
Office of the Judge Advocate General.