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INTERROGATION OF Lt.Col. NAGATOMA Yoshitada at CHANGI JAIL, SINGAPORE, on 9 May 1946 by:

- Colonel C.H.D. Wild, War Crimes Liaison Officer,  
Malaya Command, Singapore District.
- Lt. Col. Damen, Netherlands War Crimes Liaison Section.
- Captain Beattie, 1 Australian War Crimes Section.

Col. Wild interrogating:

- Q. Will you give me your name, and confirm or correct the details which I have given you regarding your service in Burma?
- A. My name is NAGATOMA Yoshitada, Lieutenant Colonel. I was commanding No. 3 group of PWS in Burma, and was at the Hq in Moulmein in August 1942, at Thanbyuzayat September 1942 to September 1943, and at Mazari, 70 kilos from Thanbyuzayat October to November 1943.

General Information

1. My superior officer during this time was Colonel SASAKI of the 5th Regiment of Railway Engineers. I have drawn the attached plan showing the chain of command in No. 5 Railway Regiment. I have forgotten some of the names but will let you know them tomorrow x Exhibit A.

2. a. As commander of No. 3 Group of PWS, I was responsible for their administration and control and supplied working parties to No.5 Railway Regiment as required. The responsibility of the No.5 Railway Regiment consisted solely of directing the work of the PWS. This was the position until June 1943, after which No.5 Railway Regiment took over control of medical supply, etc, and I was under their orders in regard to these until 25 October 43 when the construction work was finished. This was because of the need for haste to complete the railway.

b. Location of camps and accomodation for PWS in them was decided by the Railway Regiment commander. Once the PWS moved into the camps, they were under command of my officers and I was responsible

c. My Hq used to indent on the Railway Regiment for rations, which were received from the depots of the Railway Regiment along the line in my transport and were distributed to the camps.

d. Until the Railway Regiment took over in June 1943, medical supplies were the responsibility of the medical officer of my Hq. His name was Captain HIGUCHI.

e. It was the responsibility of each of my camp commanders to select a suitable building in the camp as a camp hospital. In addition there was a Base Hospital at Thanbyuzayat until Allied bombing in June 1943 caused me to move it to Reppo (30 Kilo). Another Base Hospital was established at Konkan (55 Kilo) as the work went forward and the Reppo Hospital was closed up. These were special hospitals, distinct from the working camps.

f. Boots and clothing were also my responsibility. In December 1942 I went by air to Singapore and procured 10,000 pairs of boots (leather and canvas and rubber types) and 10,000 shirts and shorts, which I brought back by sea in January 1943 for the PWS, who totaled 5000, however all the boots and hats were lost at sea when one of the two ships was wrecked and sunk, later things were replaced from the supply Depot at Rangoon.

10000 hats  
10000  
blankets.



g. I arranged canteen supplies, eggs, fruit, etc. and these were sold in each of the camps.

h. No Red Cross supplies whatever arrived for the PWs up to the date of completing the railroad i.e. October 1943.

i. Discipline of PWs was under me. Their discipline was good and it was well maintained by their own officers.

j. Similarly, the discipline of the guards was my responsibility.

k. Orders for the provision of labour for the railroad came from Hq 5th Railway Regiment, in general to me, and in detail to my officers commanding the various camps.

3. Except where otherwise stated in 2 above, all these matters were my responsibility.

4. I was in daily contact with Brigadier Varley, the commander of PWs. He used to bring to me complaints, such as the following:

- a. Insufficiency of food.
- b. Lack of medical supplies.
- c. Over working PWs.
- d. Sending sick PWs out to work.
- e. Shooting of men who had escaped.
- f. Accommodation and sanitation of camps.
- g. The sending of mail.

Regarding these I took the following actions:

a & b. I spoke to my subordinate officers responsible to try and improve the situation. The food was generally good throughout, the scale of rice being 750 grammes, which really reached the PWs, but it did fall off in the rains owing to difficulties of communication, but even then not below 500 grammes.

c & d. I had to explain to Brigadier Varley that owing to the war effort the importance of the railway was such that the overworking of PWs could not be helped. I tried to prevent sick PWs being sent out to work, but I know that the commanders of the working camps could not always arrange this owing to the very strict and severe demands from the Railway Regiment for labour.



INTERROGATION OF LT. COL. NAGATOMO was resumed on 10 May 1946 at Changi Jail Singapore, all of the personnel who were present at the close of the previous hearing being present. Colonel Honan and Captain Schneider of the U.S. Army were also present.

Colonel Wild interrogating:

- Q. Have you the details of the plan showing the chain of command of No. 5 Railway Regiment which we referred to yesterday? - (Ref. par. L, page 1.).
- A. (Col. NAGATOMO produces the plan in question which is translated in his presence by Colonel Wild.) Exhibit A.
- f. (Ref. 4 f page 2) I made frequent representations to the Railway Regiment Hq. to improve the accomodation of the camps. I also supplied planks to cover the open trench latrines.
- g. I supplied the PWs on three occasions with post cards with brief printed messages on them below which they were allowed to write a few lines themselves. No inward mail was received for distribution.
5. Once every month I toured all the working camps by car accompanied by Brigadier Varley and his S.W.O. Lt. Col. Hamilton. When I found anything wrong I gave immediate instructions to the camp commander to put it right. Owing to difficulties of communication I could not make reports to higher authority but I frequently conferred with the commander of the Railway Regiment.
6. I will give written details tomorrow of the organization of my Hq. Staff and of POW Group 3.<sup>x</sup> I ordered my officers to ensure that the prisoners complied with all the regulations but that within those regulations they should treat them as kindly as possible. I drew up a code of regulations and had them translated into English. I received reports from my officers from time to time during my monthly tours or at conferences at Thanbyuzayat and did my best to improve matters if these reports were adverse. X Exhibit B.
7. There were two mobile camps. No. 1 Mobile Camp was responsible for laying the track and No. 2 Mobile Camp for collecting and assembling the materials. The rest of the PWs were engaged on the preliminary work on construction of embankments, cuttings bridges, etc.
8. The Railway Regiment planned and controlled the work of the PWs but had nothing to do with the control and administration of the working camps.
9. The officers of the Railway Regiment were not permitted to give direct orders to the working camp commanders. The system was that the Railway Regiment made demands for labour on Hq 3 PW Group, which were passed out by this Hq to the officers of the working camps.
10. The area for which No. 3 PW Group was responsible extended from Thanbyuzayat towards the Burma/Siam border at Changaraya and from January 1943 No. 5 (Burma) PW Group was responsible for a stretch on the Burma side of the frontier, and No. 5 (Malaya) Group was responsible for the stretch from Changaraya to Nike from May to December 1943, but as the work progressed No. 3 PW Group extended through No. 5 (Burma) Group and through No. 5 (Malaya) Group until they reached Nike in October, when the work was completed. I remained responsible for the discipline of the PWs of No. 3 Group wherever they were right up to the end. However, from July 1943 I was under the orders of <sup>the</sup> Commander of the Railway Regiment. Until July 1943 I was solely responsible for discipline administration and supply of No. 3 Group.



11 & 12. I will submit tomorrow details of the camp commanders and quartermasters showing the places and periods that they were in charge.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>x</sup>Exhibit C.

13. I had under my command approximately the following number of PWs:

American . . . . .	200
British . . . . .	300
Australian . . . . .	4,000
Dutch . . . . .	<u>4,500</u>
TOTAL . . . . .	<u>9,000</u>

Quoting from memory, I believe that approximately the following number of PWs. died:

American . . . . .	10
British . . . . .	20
Australian . . . . .	450
Dutch . . . . .	<u>350</u>
TOTAL . . . . .	<u>830</u>

I will give the figures more accurately tomorrow after consulting Captain HIGUCHI who is in the prison and was my senior medical officer in No. 3 Group. Among the POWs who died, 30 were killed by bombing at Thanbyuzayat.

14. I had under my command approximately 8 Japanese officers, 30 Japanese NCOs, 8 Japanese medical orderlies and 325 Korean guards, altogether about 361. Of these, one Japanese NCO and 3 Korean guards died. Of these five, the NCO (Sgt. SHIOTANI) committed suicide and one of the Koreans was killed by bombing at Thanbyuzayat, so that the losses from natural causes among my men during the whole period was three, two of whom died from malaria and the other from dysentery. Of these one died after evacuation to Thanbyuzayat Hospital.

15. Cases of sickness among the Japanese and Koreans were few. There was much sickness among the POWs.

16. Lt. NAITO returned to Japan in January 1944. He went mad and I personally disarmed him and sent him to Hospital at Moulmein. I believed he has recovered from his illness. I believe the cause of his illness was drunkenness. He became rough and violent when drunk. I myself punished him for this on one occasion. I believe he was discharged from the Army. His full name is NAITO Tomoji. He was an officer of the Infantry Reserve. His home is somewhere in Yamamuchi Ken.

17. My batman's name is ARAI Shoko. I heard in Changi that he had escaped after the war near Bangkok.

18.



INTERROGATION OF LT-COLONEL NAGATOMO Yoshitada  
at Changi Jail, Singapore, on 11 May 1946.

Interrogated by: Colonel C.H.D. Wild, War Crimes Liaison Officer,  
Malaya Command, Singapore District.

Assisted By: Colonel H.H. Honan, Theater Judge Advocate,  
India-Burma Theater, United States Army.

Lt.Col. Damen, Netherlands War Crimes Liaison Section.

Captain Beattie, 1 Australian War Crimes Section.

Captain Schneider, War Crimes Branch, United States Army

1. Colonel C.H.D. Wild, certify that I have now duly warned the  
accused, Lt. Colonel NAGATOMO Yoshitada, in the following terms:-

"Do you wish to make any statement or to give evidence  
on oath. You are not obliged to say anything or give  
evidence unless you wish to do so, but whatever you say  
or any evidence you give will be taken down in writing  
and may be given in evidence."

The accused, Lt. Colonel NAGATOMO Yoshitada, states that he will  
make a statement upon oath.

Signature: C.H.D./WILD Rank Colonel

(Name in Block Capitals) C.H.D. W I L D

Date: 16th. May 1946

1. NAGATOMO Yoshitada, Lt. Colonel, make oath and say as  
follows:

I have been duly warned that I am not obliged to make any  
statement, but that whatever I say will be taken down in writing and  
may be used in evidence. I wish to state voluntarily that .....

1422  
On 7th and 8th July I attended a conference at Tokyo at which  
the representatives of the FURYO JOHOKYOKU (PW Information Bureau)  
and FURYO KANRIBU (PW Administration Office) were present. The officer  
presiding was the FURYO KANRIBU-CHO, Lt. General UEMURA Wikie. At this  
conference we were ordered to obtain a parole from all POWs. A specimen  
of the parole form was supplied by Lt. Gen. UEMURA. His orders were that  
all POWs without exception must sign this form. In the event of a POW  
refusing to sign such a parole, Lt. Gen. UEMURA said that he must be  
regarding as intending to escape and must be strictly confined.

At Thanbyuzayat in October 1942 Brigadier Varley and Major  
Green, Australians, and a Dutch officer, Major Hazenberg, refused to  
sign the parole form. Therefore in accordance with my orders, I confined  
these three officers in the guard room for some days until they agreed  
to sign under protest. I visited them two or three times a day in the  
guard room and they were not ill treated in any way.

At this Tokyo Conference, Lt. General UEMURA was acting with  
full authority as head of the PW organisation, following out the general  
intentions of General TOJO. I cannot say whether he had previously  
consulted General TOJO in the matter of these parole forms. At this  
conference Lt. Gen. UEMURA distributed a printed pamphlet concerning the  
rules and regulations governing the treatment of POWs. Field Marshal  
Count TERAUCHI was not present at this conference as he was in Singapore  
at that time. Those present were:

Lt. General UEMURA, Presiding  
Colonel YAMAZAKI  
Lt. Col. HODA  
Major YAMANOUCHI  
Lt. YOTSUMOTO (Navy)



all of the PW Bureau. Also present were the heads of the various PW Areas, Malaya, Siam, Java, Borneo and the Philippines<sup>x</sup>, with their staffs. Altogether about 50 persons were present.

<sup>x</sup>Major General Marimoto  
Ichiro

At this conference a question was asked concerning what action should be taken in the event of a PW escaping after he had signed the parole form. Lt. General UEMURA replied that in such a case the prisoner could be shot on the spot, either during his escape or after his re-capture and with or without court martial. The decision in such a case was to be left to the HONSHO-CHO, the commander of the area, i.e. the GOC PWs, Burma, Siam, Borneo etc. In my Area Commander was Major General SASSA. I had general instructions from Major General SASSA to shoot PWs who escaped, but in addition I used to consult him on each occasion that a PW escaped and received his specific instruction to shoot him.

On 30 November 1942 the three escaped Dutch officers, Captain Harterink, Captain Rochemont and Lt. Hermans were re-captured. On 7 December 1942 I flew from Moulmein to Bampong and on 11 December 1942 I consulted Major General SASSA there. He ordered me to have them shot. I therefore sent a signal on 11 December 1942 ordering the execution, which was carried out on 13 December 1942. While still at Bangkok, I received a signal to the effect that Sgt. Van Haasen and Pvt. Vredevoogd and Pvt. Neilssen had been re-captured. I consulted Major General SASSA at a conference of PW Group Commanders at Bangkok on 20 December 1942 and he again gave orders that they should be shot. Again I sent a signal to this effect and the execution took place on about 28 December 1942.

I left Bangkok for Singapore by plane on about 25 December 1942. On 30 December 1942 I left Singapore for Bangkok by air. I then left Bangkok by air for Rangoon and went on by ship from there, arriving back at Thanbyuzayat on 9 January 1943. On my return to Thanbyuzayat I heard for the first time that Lt. NAITO had given orders for another escape prisoner Pvt. Whitfield to be shot on the strength of my orders regarding the execution of the three Dutch officers. Pvt. Whitfield was shot on 14 December 1942, i.e. the day after the execution of the three Dutch officers. Lt. NAITO did this on his own initiative without orders from me. However, I expressed my approval of Lt. NAITO's action. I myself ordered the execution of Gunner Dickinson AIF, on 2 March 1943 and of Pvt. Bell, AIF, on 16 March 1943. I gave these orders without consulting Major General SASSA because he had given each of the Group Commanders full authority to shoot re-captured PWs who had escaped at the conference at Bangkok on 20 December 1942.

The orders which I gave to my camp commanders on my return to Thanbyuzayat were that in the event of a PW escaping and being re-captured he was to be brought to my Hq where he was placed in the guard room. I then received a report on the matter from the responsible officer, and on the strength of this report I ordered the execution. There was no court martial. This was the procedure followed in the execution of Gunner Dickinson and Pvt. Bell in March 1943.

I did report the re-capture of Gunner Dickinson and Pvt. Bell to Major General SASSA's Hq. but no reply came back so I ordered their execution. As no reply had come from Major General SASSA, I assumed that he intended me to act on his previous orders and I thought, in view of these, that he would have thought it odd if I had sent another signal asking if I should shoot these two men. However my action, was heartily approved by Major General SASSA when he came to Moulmein on an inspection tour on 8 April 1943.

On my visit to Singapore in December 1942 I visited the Judiciary Department of the Hq at Singapore and asked whether it was in order to execute PWs for escaping. The reply which I was given by a Major of the Judiciary Department was that PWs must not be executed for escaping unless they had signed a parole form, if they had signed



such a form, they should be executed if they attempted to escape and were re-captured.

- Q. On this occasion, did you mention to the Judiciary Department that these parole forms had been signed under duress and that the PWs had complained of this at the time of signing them?
- A. No. I did not raise this point.

At Thanbyuzayat there was bombing by Allied planes on 12 and 15 June 1943. Prior to this I had ordered air raid shelters prepared, which were sufficient for all the PWs and there had been air raid rehearsals during which the PWs entered these shelters. The PW Camp at Thanbyuzayat was near the railway junction and station and I was worried about this proximity and had considered moving the camp, but the bombing occurred while I was still considering this. I had given no special orders to the guards not to fire from the PW Camp Area. I was worried when I heard that they had fired at the planes at a height of about 4000 meters. On second thoughts, I do not remember hearing that they did fire. I did not know that some firing took place from the locality of the PW Hospital. I thought that there had been no firing. During this bombing, in the places the PWs had entered the air raid shelters but in one place they had not done as - they were getting water from the well outside the camp. Here about 5 PWs were killed, the remaining 25 or so were killed in air raid shelters inside the camp. The reason that the others were not in the air raid shelters was probably because everyone had become accustomed to Allied planes passing overhead and were not expecting any bombing.

I am aware of the circumstances in which the sick were moved from Thanbyuzayat to Retpu during June, July and August of 1943. I saw them during this move and their conditions were far from good. The stiffening of the Japanese measures towards PWs at this time was due to the bombing which had taken place at Thanbyuzayat. I agree now, that I should have taken more care.

On the march of the prisoners from 75 Kilo Camp to 105 Kilo Camp in May 1943 I now consider that I should have taken greater care.

I also recall the evacuation of the sick from Working Camps to 55 Kilo Khonkan Hospital. Transport (trains and trucks) should have been supplied by the Railway Regiment but I knew that these were not sufficient. If the requests of PW doctors that very sick men should not to be moved was not complied with, that was the responsibility of my medical officer, Captain HIGUCHI. However Captain HIGUCHI was a subordinate officer, subject to my orders, and the ultimate responsibility must lie with me. I have always tried to carry out the Rules of Bushido but I agree that on this occasion I fell short of them as I was aware of the conditions of the sick. I am sorry about this now.

There were many Burmese laborers working in the area of the No. 3 PW Group but these were under the direct orders of the Railway Regiment and I had no connection with them. There were as far as I know, no Indonesians laborers working there,

Field Marshal Count TERAUCHI was the highest responsible authority for the construction of the Burma-Siam Railway. Major General SASSA was under his order. Field Marshal TERAUCHI issued regulations regarding the treatment of PWs in Burma and Siam and Major General SASSA was responsible for reporting their conditions both to him and to FURYO JOHOKYOKU (Information Bureau) in Tokyo. Field Marshal TERAUCHI must therefore have been fully aware of the conditions of the POWs and must have known of the number of deaths from Major General SASSA's regular reports.

The above statement has been read over to me by an inter-



preter and is a true and correct transcript of what I have said, to the whole of which statement I now append my signature.

Signed at Changi Jail, Singapore, on this 16th day of May 1946.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name in Block letters) ))) NAGATOMO YOSHITADA.

Sworn before me

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Rank Colonel

description War Crimes Liaison Officer this 16th day of May 1946

An Officer detailed to examine the above by the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia (Authy ALFSEA War Crimes Instructions No.1 2nd Edition, para 19(a)).

CERTIFICATE OF INTERPRETER

1. Colonel C.H.D. Wild make oath and say that I truly and correctly translated to the accused, Lt.Col. NAGATOMO Yoshitada, the words of the above caution and that he thereupon elected to make a sworn statement, and that he then made a statement which I truly and correctly translated in English and saw taken down by Miss E.M. Blair. The whole of the above statement was read over to the accused in the Japanese language by Mr. KIM IL SUN, in my presence and the presence of Lt.Col. Damen of the Netherlands Army and Captain Beattie of the Australian Army, and he acknowledged it as correct and has now duly signed it in my presence and in the presence of Lt.Col. Damen of the Netherlands Army and Captain Beattie of the Australian Army. I certify that no inducement threat or promise was held out to the accused and that he made the above statement entirely voluntarily.

Signed this 16th day of May, 1946.

Signature C.H.D.WILD Rank Colonel

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) C.H.D. W I L D.

Sworn before me (Signature) B. DAMEN Rank Lt. Col.

(description) Royal Netherlands Indies Army this 16th day of May 1946.

An officer to examine the above by the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia (Authy. ALFSEA War Crimes Instruction No.1 2nd Edition, para 19 a).



Certificate of interpreter Continued.

The whole of the above statement was read over the accused in the Japanese language by Kim.II.Sun..... in my presence and the presence of Lt.Col. Damen of the Netherlands Army and Captain Beattie of the Australian Army, and he acknowledged it as correct and has now duly signed it in my presence and in the presence of Lt.Col. Damen of the Netherlands Army and Captain Beattie of the Australian Army. I certify that no inducement, threat or promise was held out to the accused and that he made the above statement entirely voluntarily.

Signed this.16th....day of May 1946

Signature.....Rank..Colonel..

Name in block Capitals..C..H..D..WILD.....

Sworn before me (Signature)...B..Damen.....Rank.Lt.Col.....

Description..Royal.Netherlands.Indies Army.....this ... 16th day. of May 1946.

An officer detailed to examine the above by the Commander-in-chief Allied Land Forces South East Asia.(Authy ALFSEA War Crimes Instruction No.I. 2nd Edition, Para 19a.

*For true copy  
Kendall*

*Lt Col. D.B. DAMEN*

