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by order of the Secretary
War-By/s/E. Checket, Major, II

A F F I D A V I T

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)

City and County of San Francisco)

SS:

ARTHUR M. BACLAWSKI, of lawful age,
being duly sworn deposes and says:

I am a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army
200 Coast Artillery, ASN 38012473. I am thirty-six years of age
and my permanent home address is 1064 E. 79th Street, Cleveland,
Ohio. I have completed four years of college and received a
Bachelor of Arts Degree at the Ohio State University in 1932.

I entered military service of the
United States 28 March, 1941, at Santa Fe, New Mexico; was sent
overseas in September, 1941, and returned from overseas 8 October,
1945.

I was captured on Bataan, Phillipine
Islands, 8 April, 1942, while serving in the Weather Section of
Headquarters Battery, 200th Coast Artillery. My duties included
surveying and drafting. I was held in custody as a prisoner of
war by the Imperial Japanese Government from 8 April, 1942, to
11 September, 1945, at the following places: Camp O'Donnell,
Phillipine Islands from 2 June, 1942, to 21 September, 1943; Los
Penos, Phillipine Islands, 21 September, 1943, to 30 September,
1944. From 1 October, 1944, to 8 November, 1944, I was enroute by
boat from Manila, Phillipine Islands, to Camp Engin (phonetic) to
Taiwan (Formosa). I left Taiwan on 12 January, 1945, aboard the
MELBOURNE NARU and arrived at Kozaka in the Sendai area, Japan
on 27 January, 1945. I was held in Kozaka until my liberation
11 September, 1945. I was appointed squad leader by the Japanese
at Kozaka and held this position for five months.

The only two Japanese in my places of
imprisonment whose names I can now recall were Supply Sergeant
Osani (phonetic) who was nicknamed the "Skull" and Corporal
Kurada, a Japanese medical corpsman. Both of these men were
stationed at Kozaka.

It is difficult to describe the
conditions on our trip from Phillipine Islands to Taiwan. We
travelled in a hold aboard a small collier which was very old
and had been reconditioned. Seven hundred American prisoners,
including myself, were loaded into the hold of the ship which
was approximately 40 or 45 feet long, 30 to 35 feet wide and
approximately 30 feet deep. Coal to a depth of 10 feet covered

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the entire floor of the hold. About 400 other American prisoners were loaded in the aft hold of the ship which was located immediately behind the ship's engine room. The heat in the hold was almost unbearable and I was told that the aft hold was even hotter. There was not room enough in our hold to lie down. The hold probably should have accommodated about 250 men. Thirty-two American prisoners in our hold died from suffocation and heat exhaustion during the thirty day trip. Many of the men were cut off their heads due to the intense heat. The hold was covered with wooden planking with about two inches spacing between the planks and, during air raids, canvas covers were pulled across these planks completely shutting out the air. After about six days, the Japanese laced cables into and around the planking covering the hold which would have made escape impossible in the event the ship was sunk. There were no lights of any kind in the hold. We were told by the Japanese at the start of the trip that we would receive one U.S. Army Canteen cup of water per man per day. However, we only received this amount on four or five occasions when we touched that many ports.

I received about two-thirds of a cup per day. However, on some days we were completely without water. We received two meals per day normally. However, between the weather and air raids, they often cut this to one meal. The Japanese tried to make up for this cut in our ration on the following days but this was never completely accomplished. According to the notes of the trip which I kept, on 13 October, 1944, we received 3/4 of a cup of cooked rice in the morning and 3/4 of a cup of cooked rice mixed with seaweed for our second meal on that day. On 20 October, 1944, when our boat was in the port of Hong Kong, I received 1/3 canteen cup of stewed greens and one canteen cup of steamed rice in the morning and in the afternoon I received about 2/3 of a cup of steamed rice. On some days we received less than these amounts. The food was prepared by the American prisoners and lowered to the hold in wooden buckets attached to ropes.

There were no latrine facilities in the hold and buckets and cans were lowered on ropes for the men to relieve themselves and then pulled back to the deck and disposed of. It was necessary for many of the men to dig holes in the coal to use as toilets. As a result of this, the floor was continually filthy and dirty. All of the men had severe cases of diarrhea at sometime during the trip. I was allowed on deck three or four times for fifteen minute periods during the entire trip. I believe that all the Americans managed to get on deck about that number of times.

There were some American Red Cross medical supplies on board the ship. However the supplies were

soon exhausted. At the start of the trip, our officers secured vitamin tablets from the Red Cross parcels and passed these out at the rate of two tablets per man per day and the supply was exhausted by the end of fifteen days. Medical facilities on the boat were practically nil and included small amounts of sulfa thiasole. The physical conditions of the Americans at the beginning of the trip were reasonably good but at the end of the trip all prisoners were in poor shape. The Japanese commander at our destination remarked that ours was the worst group of prisoners physically that he had ever handled. I lost approximately twenty pounds during the trip.

I do not know the names of any of the Japanese in charge of the ship. However, I learned that the ship's commander had recently been in charge of prison ships from Mindanao to Japan.

The following U.S. Army officers and enlisted men were my fellow prisoners during this trip and could possibly furnish further information regarding the trip:

Major Farris, 26th Cavalry, Phillipine Islands, Commanding Officer of No. 1 Company on board ship.
 Capt. Compton, 200th Coast Artillery, Commanding Officer No. 2. Company.
 Capt. Thomas Davis, 59th Coast Artillery, Commanding Officer No. 4 Company.
 Lt. Wyndell acted as Adjutant on the prison ship.
 1st. Sgt. Lawrence O'Hara, 21st. Pursuit Squadron, home address Dayton, Ohio.
 T/Sgt. "Buzz" Barton, ASN 6802132, 19th Air Base, home address 400 Flearview Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.
 Pfc. Lewis Celusniak, 200th Coast Artillery, home address Rt. 3, Marlin, Texas.
 1st. Sgt. Walter H. Lieb, 59th Coast Artillery, now stationed at Letterman General Hospital, San Francisco.

The above are all the pertinent facts I can remember regarding this incident.

(Signed) Arthur M. Baclawski, M/SGT

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of October, 1945

Interviewed by George G. Barker, Agent, S.I.C.

(Signed) Charles E Taylor, Capt.
 JAGD.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
 (Signed) EVERETT CHECKET