

EXHIBIT No. 3089

(32)







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2. It was mid September 1944 that General KIMURA, Heitaro, arrived at his post as Commander of the Burma Area Army. Our Army there had suffered a crushing defeat in the Imphal campaign with its fighting strength weakened considerably, and since about August 1943, supplies had almost ceased to come from Japan.

3. General KIMURA, who arrived when things were in such an unfavorable state, issued a set of instructions to all the troops under his command enjoining them strongly to maintain military discipline and to try to win the confidence of the natives. When we had meetings in late October and in the middle of December 1944, and in late January 1945, the General summoned to the Army Headquarters the staff officers and unit commanders under his command and reminded them most carefully of the instructions he had previously given, (the draft of the instructions and other documents related to the same are not extant, having been either lost or burnt while retiring). While in office, General KIMURA constantly endeavored hard to see his instructions obeyed thoroughly by his troops, so that the Burmese people came to place a good deal of confidence in him.

The General met the Burmese State Ministers at least once or twice a month for the purpose of exchanging free and outspoken opinions. He welcomed the complaints against the Japanese and in the cases that he thought proper had the requested improvements made. Meanwhile the war situation had been developing unfavorably from day to day for us, entailing



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increasing hardships and suffering on the part of the natives. The General felt sorry for their plight. When he had occasion to meet the Burmese high-ranking officials he always expressed his gratitude for their good will and at the same time showed sympathy for their delicate circumstances. General KIMURA instructed his men to contribute to the stabilization of living conditions of the Burmese at the expense of the strategical requirements.

General KIMURA always took pains to promote good feeling and harmony between Japanese and Burmese. In order to prevent misunderstandings likely to arise because of the difference in the manners and customs and language, he had a two-volume booklet compiled, entitled "The Attitude to take toward the Burmese" and distributed copies not only among our men, but also among the greater part of the Japanese residents for their guidance and observance. (I tried to get a copy but so far haven't been able to lay hands on one.) At the same time he asked the Burmese Government to tell their people plainly of our readiness and desire to act in concert with them. The government on their part distributed the summarized translation of the general's request among the prefectural governors for their information. The result of the general's efforts was reflected in the fact that the friendly and harmonious relations between the army and the populace were notably improved and



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our men, appreciating their commander's spirit and intention, did their best to realize his wishes.

I used to attend the Japanese-Burmese Cooperation Conference as a representative of the Burma Area Army, and so I had ample opportunities to come in contact with the high governmental officials. Mindful of the general's care and the Burmese official thoughts and opinions, I took care to cooperate with the government in their undertakings in all ways, and to ensure the stabilization of the livelihood of the populace.

4. The general war situation during General KIMURA's tenure of office was:

His arrival at his post coincided with the concentration of the main force toward the River Irrawaddy following the crushing defeat we had suffered at Imphal. He had hardly assumed his new duty before he advanced to Maymyo, 18 September, 1944 and he devoted himself there to the conduct of military operations until around the 20th of October. The Japanese Army in Burma could barely manage to make preparations for the Irrawaddy battle by moving forward all the available troops to replenish the remaining strength of the 15th Corps that had taken part in the Imphal battle, though we were so circumstanced that it was next to impossible to leave behind any part of the general fighting troops requisite for the preservation of peace and safeguarding of the rear area. On the 3rd of February 1945,



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General KIMURA and his army advanced as far as Kalow where the General conducted the operations himself. He remained there 16th of February. Owing to our inferiority in fighting power, especially in equipment such as planes, tanks and fire-projectors, the Japanese lines were pierced all along, and again we were forced to retreat with heavy losses. The 15th and 33rd Corps managed somehow to set about the concentration operation to the Tanasserim area mid-May 1945, and completed the movement by their main bodies in June. The fighting strength of these armies was sadly diminished, with the best part of the arms

being lost, and the soldiers physically were most seriously deteriorated; in fact, more than ten thousand of them had to be invalided to Thailand. The 28 Corps had its retreat cut off and was obliged to stay in the Pegu district for about three months isolated from the others. In late July 1945, when the rainy season was at its worst, this disjoined army desperately charged into the enemy force, losing thereby the better part of its strength and the whole of its major arms. When the war came to an end the troops were still retreating without having met the main body.

The withdrawal of the Burma Area Army Headquarters from Rangoon to Moulmein commenced at the end of April 1945, the complete concentration being effected at the beginning of July. The headquarters, however, could not function as it should; its hasty retreat to Moulmein, the loss of communication and trans-



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transportation equipment and the important documents, the transference of many skilled staff-officers, the unsatisfactory replacements among the administrative personnel, frequent air raids by British-Indian planes and the fact that it was at the peak of the rainy season -- all these factors interfered with the satisfactory functioning of the Army headquarters. Above all, the air raids by the British-Indian planes which were conducted in the daytime and on moonlight nights as well, frequently compelled the headquarters to seek shelter in the outlying villages of Moulmein and attend to its duties there. And most of the soldiers, too, not to speak of the invalids, had to seek shelter in the jungles both day and night.

At the end of March 1945, with the state of things prevailing so unfavorably, the national defense army of Burma, numbering 6,000-8,000 rose against the Japanese and the guerrillas started a campaign of harassing our rear lines and were greatly menaced.

The Burma National Defense Army had seemed favorable to the Japanese, as an agreement was arranged at Rangoon with the Japanese army for united operations. The revolt was an unexpected one for the Japanese. Afterwards, it became clear that a secret declaration of war against Japan had been made and signed by Major General Onsan on 14 March 1945. For this purpose they had previously stationed numbers of men in the rear of the Japanese army, at the key strategic points, such as



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Toungoo, Pegu, and Thaton. The main body in Henzada, with the outbreak of the uprising, destroyed the means of communication and transportation at several places, assaulted the sentry-guards, squads of soldiers and gendarmerie squads at various places, murdering most of these officers and seizing the money and stores kept in their custody. Espionage was engaged in by the guerrillas so that the Headquarters of the Burma Area Army and the 28th and the 33rd Corps headquarters were subjected to serious bombings with heavy losses to us, and the Japanese officers in charge of the national defense militia were for the most part killed. Of the 200 odd Japanese nationals, including the interpreters and the commercial clerks who were in the Delta region, only a few were found safe at the end of the war and the rest are still missing.

However, General KIMURA sought no revenge. On the contrary, he stressed the importance of the friendship hitherto kept up between Japan and Burma and met the situation from a strategical point of view only. There were left no forces to meet the emergency. A small amount of troops and part of the 55th division which had been dispatched for aid in the quarter of Bassein and Meiktila were used for the purpose of making a false show of strength.

From January 1945 there began to be formed one after another guerrilla parties of Karen and Kachin tribes in the



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mountain regions south of Kemapew and Kaukareik area and in the regions south of Papun. What with the entry of the Indian educated Burmese, the arrival of Indians and British officers by means of parachutes and the replenishment by air of arms and munitions, the guerrillas grew rapidly in strength till the groups were scattered far and wide, working most actively in collusion with the rebels. The 31st and the 33rd Divisions were offered resistance at several places on their retreat from Kemapew and sustained heavy losses.

In the strategical areas in general and Tenasserim Province in particular, we were constantly harassed till the end of the war by the activities of the rebels and the guerrilla groups. They sprang surprise attacks upon the Japanese armies inflicting heavy losses to the latter. And this was especially the case in the rainy season when small Japanese parties of troops, weary and exhausted, were in retreat. Then these troops were assaulted and deprived of their arms or of their lives. In late July 1945, as the 28th Corps, while trying to cross the Sittaung River, met with a stout resistance from the guerrillas and their associates on both banks of the river. In a nameless village on the western bank of the river, 40 or 50 kilometers to the northwest of Swe-gyin, ten Japanese Red Cross were assaulted and not one of them came back alive, (this, according to the report of the soldier who was with the



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victims at the time of the incident). For all of these cases of resistance on the part of the Burmese, General KIMURA always warned his troops against taking retaliatory measures.

Such being the case while General KIMURA was commanding, there was no chance whatever for us to take British-Indian troops as prisoners. Thus the situation of the Burma Area Army for the few months before the end of the war was a succession of defeats. In consequence of the defeats and the subsequent decline in the army's fighting strength, our men were demoralized; they were both physically and morally in a state of exhaustion. The Japanese troops who were scattered in small groups all over the operations areas were overpowered by a sense of defeat, and had their minds occupied only with the question of how to defend themselves against the Burmese rebel army and the guerrillas.

The harassing activities that these hostile groups were carrying on in the rear of our army, the loss and destruction of the means of communication, the lack of fresh supplies of dry cell batteries, traffic disturbances caused by British planes, the interruption of communications during the highest rainy season -- all these factors combined to all but paralyze the entire working system of the Burma Area Army, thus rendering it very difficult for the officers to lead and supervise their men properly. As the Burma Area



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Army Headquarters had been scheduled to break up before the end of August 1945, the retrenchment, reorganization and transference of the Army was planned, part of which was actually being executed. Meanwhile most of the Army Staff officers had been transferred, therefore we were obliged to make-shift with non-career staff officers for the time being. Naturally, the Army Headquarters which was busily engaged in making preparations to meet the intended attacks by the Allied armies by land and sea in the near future experienced much difficulty and inconvenience in attending to their business. It was while we were laboring under these difficulties that the war was ended. Unfavorably circumstanced as he was, Commander KIMURA had been endeavoring all this while to maintain and improve the discipline of his troops and also to win and keep up the trust of the populace.

5. Not one single instance of unlawful conduct allegedly committed by his men was ever reported to the Army Headquarters. I am certain that no orders were ever issued by KIMURA for the perpetration of the atrocious acts, evidence of which has been brought before the court. Such acts would not have been tolerated. As for the Kalagen village affair, the British Army Headquarters, several months after the close of the war, questioned General KIMURA about it; the general and I and the other staff officers as well had not known



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anything about it. It was in March 1946, if I remember right, that I heard about the affair for the first time and it was from Lt. General TANAKA, Nobuo, ex-Commander of the 33rd Division (He had been transferred to Thailand before this time) who happened to come to the Insein Camp in order to attend the Joint Anglo-Japanese War History Research Institute held at Rangoon.

6. As far as I know, the conditions of the prisoner of war and internment camps while General KIMURA was in office in Burma are as follows:

(1). The Burma-Siam Railway was under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief of all Imperial Armies in the Southern Area, and it had been completed about one year before the arrival of General KIMURA. And so the Burma Area Army had no part in the construction, maintenance and operation of the railway in question.

(2). The prisoners of war camp in Rangoon, which was the 6th Detachment of the Malayan P.O.W. camp, was under the jurisdiction of the Chief of the Malayan P.O.W. camp, who was under the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Expeditionary Forces. And the Commander in Chief of the southern Expeditionary Forces ordered the Chief of Malayan P.O.W. camp to set up one Detachment of Malayan P.O.W. camp in Rangoon and put it under the direction of the Commander of Burma Area Army.



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The Commander of Burma Area Army put that detachment of the 73rd Supply corps who was also the Commander of the Rangoon Rear Communication Headquarters.

(3). For about three months and a half after General KIMURA's arrival at his post, the Tavoy army internment camp was in charge of the commander of the Independent 24th Mixed Brigade. In December 1944, the Tavoy and Mergui army districts were, by orders from the Commander-in-Chief, of the Southern Expeditionary Forces transferred to the jurisdiction of the Thailand Area Army, and were placed under the direct control of the Tavoy unit under command of the Thailand Area Army commander.

(4). The Rangoon prisoner of war camp was originally the Rangoon Central Prison, where, if I remember right, about 600 persons were interned. The camp was a permanent building, fairly well fit to live in, being equipped with medical rooms, sick rooms, recreation hall, bath and wash rooms, kitchen, water supply, playground and so forth.

(5). For comfort and recreation the camp was provided with pianos, phonographs and books, and exercise was encouraged with many sorts of sport equipment being utilized. The military band was occasionally invited to afford the inmates entertainment.

(6). The depot supplied lots of cows, pigs, goats and ducks in several installments for the prisoners to tend to help supply nourishment.



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(7). The prisoners were permitted to lay out farms, both inside and outside the compounds, so that they might be interested in making themselves self-supporting. The result was that after a time they were able to produce more than enough and sell in the Rangoon market what was left over. The proceeds of the sales was used for themselves. The prisoners did not have their rations of staple food reduced; they were in fact better supplied than the Japanese in general, and therefore they were very grateful for this.

(8). Milk, tobacco and other daily necessities could be had at the canteen in the camp, for which convenience the inmates expressed themselves highly gratified.

(9). Sundays and prisoner's national holidays were set aside to be observed by the prisoners as days of rest on which occasions they were sometimes allowed additional rations.

(10). Working hours were gradually shortened, the average being six hours. The kind of work that they were required to do was, I was told, unloading ships, conveyance, and other general jobs.

(11). No news was ever brought to my ears that atrocities of any kind were ever practiced by the Japanese soldiers on the prisoners during General KIMURA's tenure of office, though I was told that punishment was meted out several times at the request of Brigadier Popsen to those British-Indian soldiers who had shown themselves disobedient to him.



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(12). In June 1944, before General KIMURA's arrival, cholera broke out in the camp, which however was soon stamped out.

Since August 1943 medical supplies from home had almost ceased to arrive and even the Japanese troops themselves had to do without their rations. Medical treatments, therefore, left much to be desired, I was told. Despite these shortages, they did their best.

Captain TAZUMI, the then chief of the prisoner of war camp at Rangoon, who everyone agreed was the most excellent of the chiefs of the institution, received from Brigadier Popsen and Major Bellins letters of thanks on several occasions. This is what the captain told me himself.

When the Army Headquarters evacuated Rangoon, it was at first decided that the prisoners whose health would be impaired by removal and some whose services would be needed would be left at Rangoon, preparatory to their release, and that only those who were well and strong would be removed; but owing to the war situation the whole of the prisoners were released on the spot toward the end of April 1945.

About one hundred persons were accommodated in the military internment camp at Tavoy where the management in general was directed fairly and properly, so that the institution was favored several times with letters of thanks. These letters



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were attached to the reports and other documents submitted to the British Army after the surrender.

It was the practice for the Japanese Air Force in Burma to take charge of all allied airmen who were captured for the purpose of interrogations. The Burma Area Army had no command over the Air Force.

On this 13th day of January, 1947  
At Defense Counsel, International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

Deponent: ICHIDA Jiro

Subscribed and Sworn to before me this 13th day of January, 1947, at Tokyo, Japan.

Witness /S/ TATSUMI, Koroetsuno

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

/S/ ICHIDA Jiro