

Ex 1641

Doc. No. 5149*

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In the matter of Japanese War Crimes and
in the matter of the voyage from Amboina
to Java in May, 1944, and the murder of
Cpl. Taylor.

Affidavit.

I, No. 1008458, L.A.C. THOMAS WILLIAM
ADAMSON, 106 P.R.C. R.A.F., Conford, with permanent home
address at 61 Fifth Row, Ashington, Northumberland, make
oath and say as follows:-

1. On May 1st, 1944, I embarked with 200 other
British Prisoners of war for Java. We were all of us sick
as the result of privations and hard labour in Liang Camp,
and we were being taken back to Java. The ship was a
Japanese transport of about 3,500 tons. Although we were
sick, no proper accommodation was made for us. Some of
us were allowed to lie on the hatch covering one of the
holds, with a tarpaulin over us for cover, the rest had
to lie down where they could. Our food was two meals a
day consisting of rice and half a pint of water.
2. After about ten days we arrived at Macassar in
the Celebes. We stayed there about a day and left for
Java, on May 12th. Up to that time there had been no
incident on board. On May 11th Corporal Taylor had stolen
some fish and one of the guards had caught him and told
Serjeant Major Mitaraya who was in charge of us on board
the ship. This Serjeant Major was nick-named "Yellow
Boots". At the time "Yellow Boots" did nothing more than
hit Corporal Taylor a couple of times and then left him.
"Yellow Boots" was drunk at the time as he had come on
board from Macassar in that condition. During the evening
of May 12th, it started to rain and we were allowed to take
shelter in an empty coal bunker and although the door was
closed we were allowed to go on deck by a small hatch-way.
Corporal Taylor got on deck through this little gangway
but was stopped by a Korean guard who took him to the
Serjeant Major. Taylor explained that he was going to the
latrines but the Serjeant Major did not believe him. I
was on the hatch-way at the time and I saw the Serjeant
Major bring Taylor out on deck and begin to beat him
unmercifully. He used heavy sticks and for about half an
hour "Yellow Boots" beat Taylor up and down the deck,
whenever he fell down "Yellow Boots" kicked him on the
ground. Finally Taylor was left lying in the deck moaning
and half conscious. The Serjeant Major then got his sword
out and after pricking the prostrate Taylor once or twice

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he took a great swipe at him which partly severed his head from his body. We were not allowed to go to Taylor's assistance and he was left there for some minutes until "Yellow Boots" ordered us to throw the body over-board. We tied some big pieces of coal to him and then threw the body over-board.

3. I witnessed the whole of this incident. I cannot say whether "Yellow Boots" was drunk at the time, he certainly had been the day before when he came on board from Macassar. I cannot say whether he had been drinking since. During the beating up of Taylor the Dutch interpreter called Mollett tried to explain to "Yellow Boots" that Taylor was doing nothing wrong but it had no effect on the Sergeant Major who simply ignored him and went on till he finally beheaded him.

4. The following day the Serjeant Major got all the officers on parade, that is Flying Officer Heath, Warrant Officer Farvard, the Dutch doctor and the medical orderlies. He first beat the medical orderlies and Heath. After he had finally finished with them he started on Harvard. Harvard retaliated at first and the two of them began wrestling all over the deck. "Yellow Boots" was much stronger than Farvard and it was not long before it looked as though Farvard was going to be killed. Every now and again during the struggle "Yellow Boots" would break a medicine bottle over Farvard's head, he picked those bottles out of a crate which was on the deck. Finally Farvard who was a mass of blood broke loose and started to run away. "Yellow Boots" snatched up a rifle but luckily some of the guards took it away from him and then some of the Japanese Merchant Navy came along and took the Serjeant Major away. I would describe this man, Mitaraya, as being large for a Jap, about 5' 10" in height, 12½ stones in weight, very powerfully built, well made, upright and smart in appearance. He had the usual close cropped black hair and wore spectacles. He had a round face and otherwise was very much like a Japanese. We landed in Java on May 16, 1944, and I was sent to hospital.

(Signed) T. W. Adanson.

SWORN by the said THOMAS WILLIAM ADANSON, at
Ashington in the County of Northumberland
on the 1st day of March, 1946, before me.

(Signed) W. N. Craigs
A Commissioner for Oaths.