

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

No. 1

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND ORS.

- AGAINST -

ARAKI, SADA0, AND ORS.

I, CHRISTOPFER MONTAGUE BLACK, make oath and say
as follows:

1. I was NX7084, Lt-Col. Christopher Montague Black, H.Q. "Blackburn Force" when I was taken prisoner in Java on the surrender of the Blackburn Force in March 1942. I entered Bicycle Camp and remained there until October 1942.
2. I left Batavia with Col. Williams in about October 1942, about 1400 or 1500 men being in the party. We proceeded by sea to Singapore. From Singapore we went again by sea to Rangoon. We were then transferred to another ship.
3. We disembarked at Moulmein, where I left Col. Williams and proceeded to TFAMBAZIAT. I was then sent back to Moulmein to get nominal rolls, but I did not see what conditions were like there. The men had been placed in a gaol and I think they were given food.
4. I returned then to TFAMBAZIAT and remained at this camp for about 10 days. I was then required to split the force into 2 groups, one to be commanded by Col. Williams, and the other by myself. Col. Williams brought his force on to TFAMBAZIAT from Moulmein, and went out to 30 Kilo camp (TANYIN), and I was placed in a camp a further 10 Kilos out.
5. Conditions at this camp were shocking. There was an insufficiency of water and food was very short. The hospital was in a gully, and the camp had been occupied previously by Burmese and was generally in very bad condition. The sick rate rapidly increased and I think at one stage there were about 130 men in hospital, and about 90 to 100 had very bad diarrhoea out of a total strength of 675. Two men died from dysentery, but despite my representations to the Japanese lance-corporal, who was in charge of the camp, and to Brig. Varley we were unable to get anything with which to treat the sick at all. Later, we were forced to abandon the camp on account of its bad condition and lack of water.
6. When I left Bicycle Camp I was suffering from pellagrous

diarrhoea and my sickness continued in 40 Kilo Camp. I managed to get to TFAMBAZIAT to a conference with the Brigadier and I was placed in hospital. That was prior to the abandonment of the 40 Kilo camp. ^B

7. The camp was taken over by Major G.A.C. Kiernan while I was in hospital. We were given rice and a small quantity of vegetables. The food scale was so low that the Japanese commander himself used to try and buy at his own expense a dozen eggs to give to the most seriously ill. The hours of work at that time were in my opinion reasonable. Sick men were not forced to work. We had a medical officer, but no medical supplies at all. Beri Beri and Pellagra began to show up very badly.

8. I was in hospital for about 8 weeks and then resumed command of the force. In the meantime, the force had moved from 40 Kilo to 26 Kilo (KUM-NIT-KWAI) which had been a coolie camp and was in a shocking state of repair. I was informed by the Japanese guard, who took me back, that it had been abandoned some 2 days before because of an outbreak of cholera. The huts had been repaired slightly when I arrived, but conditions were still very bad indeed so far as accommodation was concerned. Major Kiernan, who had been in command, told me that he had found it necessary to burn a large portion of the camp for sanitary reasons; it had previously been occupied by Burmese natives.

9. The food again consisted only of rice and vegetables in small quantities. We did not receive anything like our scale of rations.

10. It was at this camp that I first met the Japanese quota system of work. The commander of the camp, who is now dead, used to enforce this system and made sick men go out to work. There was a lot of sickness but no medical supplies. Subsequently, the meat issue was increased when the camp was made a staging camp for cattle being driven along the line. The Sergeant who took the place of the officer in charge also used to buy us supplies of eggs.

11. During my stay in TFAMBAZIAT, Col. Ramsay brought his force to 26 Kilo and I joined him there. The hours of work were increased and became very long; men were made to work from 8 a.m. and did not get back to the camp until 10 or 11 p.m. The work was of an exceptionally heavy nature, but despite protests that were made to the Japanese no relief was given. As a matter of fact, Capt. BLAU was beaten by one of the guards out at the railway line for protesting.

12. From 26 Kilo I went to 75 Kilo but I was not there long enough to observe the conditions under which the men

were living. The guards began to beat the prisoners from the first day of arrival.

13. I was then returned to RETPU, 30 Kilo. I established a hospital which was subsequently taken over by a Dutch officer after 4 weeks.

14. I again went to TFAMBAZIAT and remained there until 12 June 1943. Here we were badly bombed by American planes, as a result of which there were between 25 and 28 deaths, and quite a number of wounded, including myself. There were no distinctive signs on the camp to show that it contained prisoners of war.

15. I did not see any great hardships suffered there, and the food was reasonable. Lieut. FAGUCHI was the Japanese medical officer at TFAMBAZIAT. Capt. Griffin informed me he had seen a large quantity of Japanese medical supplies in TFAMBAZIAT, but that there was great difficulty in getting them into camp. The Brigadier made many protests both verbally and in writing to NAGATOMO with regard to conditions, but he received no reply at all.

16. Whilst I was in the camp there were many executions, including that of Private Whitfield. This man had disappeared from the 4 Kilo camp and one morning it was reported to me that he had come into our camp at TFAMBAZIAT. I saw him and he asked me what I could do. I asked him how far he had got in his escape and he told me that he had reached Rangoon. He said that he felt he should give himself up and I said that I thought that was the best thing, and that I would discuss it with Brig. Varley. One of the most serious things in a Japanese prison camp was to have one man more than should be there because the Japanese always suspected that a spy was being hidden there. After a good deal of discussion and by arrangement with the M.O.'s, Brigadier Varley reported that Whitfield had come into the camp and that he was mental. This was supported by the medical officers. At that time Col. NAGATOMO had gone to Singapore, and the Group Commander was Lieut. NITO. He went and saw Whitfield and said he would leave him there to rest for a few days and that he would then send him back to his camp. Subsequently Lieut. FAGUCHI, the medical officer, came to see Whitfield and said that he was not mental at all. Next morning Whitfield was cooking over a fire when a number of Japanese soldiers rushed up to him, bound him, and took him over to the cemetery about 100 yards distant and shot him. I actually saw him bound up myself and taken away, and then heard rifle shots.

17. In cases of execution such as this, the Japanese usually took Col. Hamilton over to see the body and this was

done in the case of Private Whitfield. He was buried by an Australian party. The Japanese always allowed a burial service and I actually attended this particular one; a chaplain was also present. I think it was NITO who reported the death to Brig. Varley; I know that NITO told him it was as a result of a telegram received from Col. NEGATOMO that he gave the order for the execution. I was present during this conversation myself. There were also executions of Dutchmen, who had escaped, and altogether I think three Australians were executed, including Bell, Whitfield, and one other.

18. I was then sent to a camp at 18 Kilo, where Cpl. FUJIYAMA was in charge. I was taken very sick there with Major Fisher. Conditions were appalling; food was very short, and the accommodation was entirely unsatisfactory. There was no room to do dressings except in the passages of the huts, through which the rain water rushed inches deep, and the facilities provided for men with dysentery were absolutely shocking.

19. From 18 Kilo I was moved back to RETPU. The camp had been abandoned, and the roof of the buildings had fallen in; the whole place was in a state of disrepair. We had a large number of very heavy sick. Shortly after we arrived, Lieut. NITO came to take charge. He forced sick men to repair huts, setting time limits on the work which were entirely insufficient for the work which had to be done. Despite my protests, he persisted in his treatment of men at the revolver point. Lieut. Pealy was blamed for any trouble at all and he certainly would have shot him had it not been for my sending him away in time. Supplies, which were meagre, consisted only of rice and vegetables, and occasionally a little meat which used to arrive by train between 10 o'clock and midnight and which NITO forced very sick men to carry a kilo from the train to the camp in the rainy season. This applied, in fact, to all the food. Men used to fall down and injure themselves, as there was no track and mud everywhere between the camp and the railway station. NITO continued drinking and on many occasions he informed me that he would have to kill somebody. One night he caught Sgt. Major Coombes of 2/4 C.C.S. at the latrine. He took him to the guardhouse and the Japanese guard commander informed me later that he had been ordered by NITO to bayonet him, but that he had refused. NITO then called another member of the guard, took Coombes down to the cemetery and ordered him to shoot him. The guard again refused whereupon NITO said "Well, if you won't kill him I will". He then took out his revolver and fired two shots through Combe's back. Fortunately he was not killed. NITO had accused him of trying to escape and as a result, for the next six weeks, I had to patrol the camp at night with NITO, who was always

drunk, with a loaded revolver in my stomach. At that time I had just had an operation on my arm and I appealed to NITO to allow me to go to bed as I was ill, but he would not do so. He forbade me to report the matter, but I managed to do so.

20. At this time, even NITO's own guards allied with us against him. With the aid of the guard we managed to get a message through to Col. NEGATOMO and Brig. Varley and as a result NITO was removed.

21. I then went back to 105 Kilo camp where Col. Ramsay was in command. I remained there until just after Christmas 1943. Conditions were very bad.

22. From 105 Kilo I went to a camp called NAKOM PATOM, which was a very large hospital camp, very well built. Conditions were reasonable with the exception that a guard nicknamed "BUSTY" used to beat the prisoners unmercifully, including Major Williams Wynn, who was given a particularly severe beating; when I endeavoured to intervene I was also given a very bad beating.

23. The Japanese forced some of the sick to work at NAKOM PATOM and there were no medical supplies to treat those who were ill.

24. When Red Cross supplies arrived, large quantities were stolen by the Japanese guards and I am certain with the cognisance of Col. ISHII who was then the commander.

Taken and sworn at SYDNEY

on the Tenth day of

September 1946.

Black
/s/ G. Beach

Before me /s/ A.J. Mansfield
Judge of Supreme Court of Queensland