

E-1806

AUSTRALIAN WAR CRIMES COMMISSION.

Evidence taken on the 24th September, 1945, before His Honor Judge Kirby, at the POW and Internee's Reception Camp, Morotai.

EVIDENCE OF CAPN. S. N. PAUL

(Makes an affirmation)

(This witness gave his evidence without the aid of the Interpreter)

CAPN. S. N. PAUL, being duly affirmed by Judge Kirby, states:

My name is Capn. S. N. Paul. My Army No. is 17932 ICRO/Z. I belong to the Indian Medical Service. I was a Doctor before the war. My home address is 110/20 Bidyut Nagar, Dayal Bagh, Agra. When I was captured I was in 17 Combined General Hospital Singapore. The surrender was on the 15th Feb. 1942 and I was taken into captivity on the 18th.

I was in the following camps during the periods mentioned:

- (1) Neesoon Camp, 15 miles from Singapore, 23/2/42 to June 1942
- (2) Kranji Camp, 13 miles from Singapore, June 1942 to Oct. 1942
- (3) Buller Camp, about 5 miles from Singapore, Nov. 42 to Dec. 42.
- (4) Kranji Camp, 12th Jan 1943 to 31st Jan 1943
- (5) Selleter Camp, 12 miles from Singapore, 1st Feb 43 to 24th August 1943.
- (6) Adams Road Camp, about 7 miles from Singapore, 25th August to 27th August 1943.
- (7) Boarded on Okanamaru. Landed at Halmaheras 25th Sept 1943
- (8) Kockku Camp, 25th Sept, 43 to July 1944.
- (9) Tijku Camp, July 1944.
- (10) Camp, name unknown, about 1½ miles from Tijku, Aug. 1944
- (11) Teragan Camp, Sept. 1944 to August 31st, 1945

HIS HONOR: Q. I understand that so far as crimes by individual Japanese officers or guards are concerned you have nothing to complain of until you were at Teragan?

A. Other than the withholding of medical supplies and medical treatment, and minor slappings, there was nothing to complain of until Teragan Camp.

When I first arrived at Tijku Camp Lt. Kobuta was the Japanese officer in charge. There were also there Cpl. Ikai and 1st Class Pte. Kowana. Kobuta was a member of the No. 6

Transport Unit. During the period I was in this camp I saw Lt. Kobuta act as the officer in charge and issue orders, both to Japanese staff and to the Indian prisoners of war. I shifted from Tijeku Camp to the unknown camp about 1½ miles away. This was in August 1944. The Japanese officers and NCO's mentioned above came with us to this camp and shortly after our arrival there Lt. Ito and L/C Tanaka arrived. I saw from my own observation that Lt. Kobuta remained the officer in charge of the camp but L/C Tanaka acted as his second in command in spite of the fact that there were others there higher in rank. L/C Tanaka in my presence took orders and discussed orders with Kobuta and gave orders to other members of the Japanese staff and Indian prisoners of war.

Tanaka said to me and other Indian prisoners that we were going to be part of the Japanese Army. In February 1945 Tanaka told me and Sub Mahomed Akrum and Mahomed Hussein IWO that we were no longer prisoners of war but by Japanese order formed part of the Nipponese Army. He told us that in conversation in our own room. He said it was an order of the High Command and it had to be carried out. I protested and the two others also protested. We said it was not according to the rules of war and we said we did not want to be part of the Nippon Army. Tanaka said "You have just got to be". Tanaka spoke in the Japanese language and I understood what he said. The three of us understood enough of the Japanese language to know what he said. The IWO acted as an interpreter in translating our protests into the Japanese language to Tanaka. Tanaka then started putting us on parades. He started to teach us the Japanese procedure and customs. We started fatigues early in the morning, about 7 a.m. and finished about 6 p.m. That was the regular procedure. The fatigue was lifting heavy boxes of medicine or food stuff and carrying it about 2 or 3 miles and making three or four trips each day. A whole lot of the Indian prisoners were in the fatigue party. Some were sent to a garden whilst others did the work above referred to.

HIS HONOR: Q. Did you have any meal time between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m?

A. The first meal of the day, when we had any, was about 6:30 a.m. During the last three months or so of our captivity we were given no meal before starting work for the day. We had our own cookhouse and we managed to obtain our own private supply of tea and sugar and salt. We were only able to have something to drink before starting work, but nothing to eat.

At 12 midday we got our first meal of the day. We generally carried rice with us which was supplied by the Japanese. At first the amount of rice given to us was 10 ozs. Later the supply diminished until it was about 5 ozs. They gave us some dried tinned vegetables but mostly we lived on jungle leaves. One hour was allowed for the midday meal. We stopped wherever we happened to be working.

The next meal was when we came back about 7 p.m. If it was dark at this time we were not provided with lights. All we could eat was the rice ration per man left over from the midday meal. Before the evening meal we were given half an hour's military training. Tanaka was always in charge of this training. Kobuta at times would come along and watch what was happening.

I saw Tanaka on a great many occasions beat the Indian prisoners on these parades. Sometimes he would slap them with his open hand and sometimes hit them with sticks about the head and body, but generally about the head. I saw him beat men so consistently that every prisoner would have received a beating and generally about 20 prisoners would be beaten each day at the training period. Mostly the slaps administered with the hand were severe enough to knock men to the ground. This generally happened when he slapped with his hand. I often heard him say to a prisoner "Your brain is not alright so I am going to fix it up", and he would then hit him on the head with a stick. The stick was generally a long walking stick about an inch thick.

I will deal now with ill-treatment and the withholding of medical supplies and give particular instances and when I have finished describing those I will describe beheadings and killings.

About March 1945 three of our soldiers, Mahomed Shafi, Ali Haider and Tufail Mahom d were illtreated by Tanaka as well as Kobuta. Tanaka told me that these three men who were then working in the garden were bad workers and he asked me to examine them. I examined them and I told Tanaka they were sick from beri-beri and general debility. I told him this myself in the Japanese language, using my hands to supplement what I told him.

I then saw him beat them one by one, first of all by slapping them with his hands until they were knocked to the ground. He then got them to their feet again and beat them with a stick on the knuckles and knees and about the head until the three of them became unconscious. The beating lasted for about half an hour. After the beating I saw that Ali Haider was very sick and I gave him such medical attention as I could until his death about a week or ten days later. Although I told Tanaka that he was very sick Tanaka said he would have to work on the fatigue carrying vegetables from the ground. I saw that Ali Haider on this occasion did not return to the camp and the next morning he was brought by other Indians into the camp. I saw him then. He was unconscious and in a very feeble condition. I gave him injections to try and keep him alive but an hour and a half later he died.

I had been practising in India as a Doctor for three years. As Medical Officer I worked for three years and from my medical experience and my examination and observation of Ali Haider after the beatings I have described I can say that he died as the result of those beatings. I was present when he was buried.

Shafi and Tufail were ill from the beatings and were put on light work. Their condition was bad but not so bad as Ali Haider's

I saw that Tufail was in a very weak condition and in fact he was so ill that he asked me to give him poison so as to make him die. Of course I did not do so and eventually he recovered. I have seen Shafi in the 2/9 AGH on this Island and he is in that hospital now. I also saw Tufail in this hospital. Sub. Akrum and IWO Mahomed Hussein were present and saw the beating of Shafi, Haider and Tufail.

The next case of ill treatment was the case of Munshi Khan. I saw him beaten by Tanaka and Kowana and later tied to a tree. He was kept there for 24 hours without food or water. His hands were tied behind his back; he was tied up with rope to the trunk of the tree, the rope stretching around his body and the trunk of the tree. This was about July 1945. Whilst he was tied to the tree he actually passed water and defecated standing up whilst tied to the tree.

He was beaten for more than 15 minutes before he was tied to the tree. I saw him receive this beating from Tanaka and Kobuta who used firewood sticks about the length of my arm. They beat him about the head and knees. Jem. Abdullah Khan was present at the beating of Munshi Khan; IWO Mahomed Hussein was also present.

I can also speak of the beating of Mahomed Shafi of the Jat. Reg. This was about the month of July 1945. Tanaka and Kowana beat him with heavy sticks over the head for more than half an hour. I saw them do this and I saw Kobuta standing watching at the time. I did not hear him say anything; he did not interfere in any way. I saw him become unconscious and Tanaka or Kowana would revive him by throwing water on his face and he was then beaten until he was unconscious again.

Immediately after the beating was over I saw Tanaka and Kowana force Shafi to kneel on firewood sticks with a piece of firewood behind his knees. I saw them tie Shafi's hands behind his back and I saw them beat him on the head and body with sticks. In the position he was it was impossible for him to remain upright and they would beat him when he fell down and then lift him back to the upright position again. This happened several times. This particular beating took about another half an hour. Whilst Shafi was in this position and being beaten by Tanaka and Kowana I saw Kowana pour petrol on Shafi's feet and set alight to it. Tanaka was still beating him whilst this was being done. When this beating was finished I saw Shafi tied with his hands behind his back to the trunk of a tree and he was left there all night. I and others supplied him with food and water secretly during the night.

The reason given by Tanaka for the beating of Shafi was that although Shafi admitted stealing food himself he refused to implicate others. Tanaka told me he would torture him until he implicated others but Shafi did not do this in spite of the beatings. I heard Shafi say from time to time whilst being beaten that he alone was responsible for any theft.

Shafi said in Industani that he intended to die by himself and he would not implicate anybody else. I translated this into the Japanese language and told Tanaka that this was what Shafi said.

The next morning after the beatings Tanaka and Kobuta called me, Jem. Abdullah Khan and Mahomed Hussein over and said they wanted to behead Shafi and asked our opinion about it. I said that many beheadings had already taken place, so many that it was no use beheading Shafi and suggested that he should receive some other other punishment. They did not behead him. Tanaka and Kobuta told me that they would leave the punishment to myself and the other Indians. We blackened his face with soot and hung his shoes around his neck on one parade. He had to promise that he would not steal in future and he gave this promise.

The next incident I can speak of is the ill treatment of Jem. Mohan Singh. He suffered badly from dropsy. That was in April 1945. He had dropsy and eventually died of this condition about 13th or 14th August. I was looking after him. I saw that he was in intense pain as his abdomen was swollen with fulness of water. It interfered with his breathing and it was necessary for the water to be taken away from his abdomen to ease the pain. I had no proper instrument to do this. I asked both Tanaka and Kobuta several times for medicine and an instrument to take the water away. They said "You cannot get any medicine or instruments. I asked Tanaka and Kobuta would they admit the patient to hospital. They said "No, Indians are not allowed to go into hospital. Later a Japanese soldier, a medical orderly, supplied me with a 20 CC needle (like an injection needle) a very small one and using it I took 8 to 10 hours to get part of the water away. This caused the patient great pain because he had to sit all this time. I say from my medical knowledge and my observation and examination and treatment of Jem. Mohan Singh that had I been allowed to give him proper treatment and medicine his life might have been saved.

The next incident I can refer to is the ill treatment of Mahomed Akrum. About February 1945 I heard Lt. Kobuta tell Akrum that he had been disobedient and he ordered him to make two camps and a garden. I heard Akrum and Tanaka and Kobuta arguing about whether Akrum should continue work in the garden. I heard Akrum tell them that he wanted to appeal to a higher authority. I heard Tanaka say "You will get severe punishment, I have friends in the Military Police and they might cut your head off later on if so needed." I heard Akrum say that he would not go to the higher authority and then Kobuda said "I am not angry with you, I excuse you and you will go on working as you were before. Later I was present when a Military policeman came with an interpreter. Akrum was there also Jem. Abdullah Khan. Akrum was sitting down in his civilian clothes. The policeman said in Japanese "Why are you sitting like this in those clothes?" I started to translate what was being said but before I could finish the Military policeman started slapping Akrum with his hands. It was a very severe beating. Akrum was sitting down when he was beaten and was knocked to the floor from time to time. The beating lasted for 10 to 15 minutes. The beating took place in the prisoner's room.

I was mess secretary. For ten days Akrum was put on half rations. Tanaka came daily during the 10 days and made many statements to me and other prisoners that Akrum had committed various crimes. Tanaka told me that he wanted Akrum to sign a statement confessing his crimes as otherwise he would behead Akrum. He asked me would I tell Akrum this and persuade him to sign. I did so and Akrum did sign.

During the period that Tanaka and Kobuta were associated in control of the prisoners I actually saw almost every day one or both of them slapping and beating prisoners severely with sticks.

I will now deal with the beheading and death of prisoners. The first case is that of Mahomed Din about March 1945. He confessed that he took a tin of fish from the store. He was brought in and tied to a tree in the compound. I saw Mahomed Din whilst he was tied to the tree and I heard coming from the vicinity of the tree signs of blows and cries but I did not actually witness the beatings. I saw him whilst tied to the tree about 4 p.m. Some time after 10 o'clock he was not there. I searched for him and could not find him. A few days later Tanaka told me that Mahomed Din had been captured and that he had had Din beheaded by the Military police.

I never saw Mahomed Din after the night he escaped.

At the time of the Japanese surrender Tanaka asked me and other prisoners to sign the nominal roll that Din had died from natural causes. This was about 28th or 29th August. Tanaka at this time was armed with pistol and sword and said that his record showed that Din died from beheading following a conviction for stealing and that he, Tanaka, wanted to change that and show death as having taken place from natural causes. He said it would be better for the soldier's people if it was not recorded that he had been beheaded for stealing as that would cause dishonor and shame to Din's people. Akrum and I said that the true facts should be stated. We were unarmed whilst Tanaka was armed with pistol and sword. I signed because I was afraid that he would shoot or behead us.

The next case I can speak of is that of Chinadury, Said Gul, Miraj Din and Karim Ilahi. This happened about the 10th April. I was told something by Mahomed Hussein and I know that those four prisoners were taken away from our camp and kept away for three or four days. I saw them when they returned and they were all very ill. I saw Said Gul and Chinadury spitting blood. I saw that the four prisoners all had bruises and swellings on the head and that they were in a state of exhaustion. I saw them brought back by the Military police. Kobuta told me that he was going to have those four prisoners beheaded to set an example as to what would happen to prisoners who were guilty of theft. Later I saw the four prisoners being taken away by Japanese Military Police whose names I do not know. I saw them taken to an area where I had previously seen other prisoners go with spades

accompanied by a Japanese guard. After I saw the four men being taken to this area I did not see them again. The following morning at the morning parade Kobuta told me and the other prisoners that he, Kobuta, had had the four men beheaded and that that should be an example to the rest of us not to steal.

The next matter I wish to deal with relates to Mahomed Afsar and Yakub Khan. This was about July 1945. Tanaka told me that they had stolen a phial of medicine and that he had decided to have them beheaded. I saw them tied up without food or water from 4 o'clock one afternoon until 10 o'clock the next morning. They were not freed to obey and call of nature and did so whilst tied to the tree.

The next morning I saw them untied by Japanese guards and stripped naked and taken away. Tanaka was present at the time. I saw him go away with Afsar and Yakub Khan and the guards and I never saw those men again. Tanaka had his sword with him. There were two Japanese guards with them and they also had swords. Tanaka later told me that those two prisoners had been beheaded but he did not say who had done the actual beheading.

The next matter is that of Mahomed Ramzan. This was in August 1945 some weeks before the surrender. I saw Ramzan tied to a tree all night. Tanaka told me that he was taking Ramzan away and was going to behead him. He said that Ramzan had stolen a tapioca plant and had told lies to Tanaka about it. Tanaka said that Ramzan would not admit to him that he had taken the plant. I did not see Ramzan again after he had been taken away with Tanaka. I saw that Tanaka had his sword with him when he took Ramzan away and later Tanaka told me that he had himself beheaded Ramzan.

The next matter deals with Mahomed Hussein and Umer Din. Tanaka told me that they had escaped and had been caught and that he had had them beheaded by the Military police. I never saw either Hussein or Umer Din again after they escaped. This was shortly before the surrender. I am not certain about the month that these men escaped and were beheaded according to Tanaka but I think it was shortly before the beheading of Mahomed Afsar and Yakub Khan.

In September 1943 after we were taken to the Halmaheras dysentery broke out. Capn. Ushida was in charge of us. I went to the hospital and asked for medicine to cure the dysentery. They would not give it to me, they only gave me creosote to ease the pain.

Tanaka and Kobuta were responsible for us not getting a full supply of food. Every month when the rations were drawn the rations for the prisoners were put in the same store as the rations for the Japanese guards. They only issued us out of the store rice, salt and dried vegetables but would not give us biscuits, sweet biscuits or green peas, although I saw these latter items brought in every month for the No. 6 Transport Unit. About every two or three days I saw Tanaka and Kobuta taking boxes of biscuits for eight Japanese guards or police. Out of 40 bags of rice that would be brought in about 15 of them would go to them and 25 to us. This was for the whole month. There were eight of them to feed and about 190 of our men. I saw Tanaka and Kobuta giving biscuits and cigarettes to some of their friends, members of the Thaiwan force and to the Kempetai (Jap. Military Police).

I have heard Tanaka on many occasions say that he had friends in the Kempetai and therefore he could get anything done to us that he wanted in the way of punishment without getting permission from headquarters.

As the result of food being kept away from the men they contracted beri-beri; they suffered from debility and some died from it. A lot of the men were sick and needed hospital treatment and needed drugs that I could not procure. Tanaka would not allow the men to be taken to hospital. I said to him "The hospitals are admitting your men, why not the Indians?" They were also admitting Indonesian members of the auxiliary forces. Tanaka said "No Indians can go to hospital."

During the last six months Kobuta and Tanaka were very harsh in their treatment of the sick at the morning fatigues. Irrespective of how sick they were the men had to attend the morning parade and stand to attention whilst they listened to a lecture from either Kobuta or Tanaka for about 10 or 15 minutes. Some of the men were too sick to do this and collapsed on the parade. When they collapsed and fell they were left lying where they fell and at the finish of the lecture the rest of the party would be marched off by Tanaka or Kobuta. We had to supply men to take the place of those who had collapsed and this had to be done from the other men available, mainly sick people who I knew were not fit to work. I told Kobuta and Tanaka on numbers of occasions that numbers of men were too sick to work.

After the parade Kobuta and Tanaka went over to those who had collapsed and who were still lying there. They used to hit

them over the head or knees or kick them to test whether they were malingering or not. A few may have laid down to get a rest but most of them were genuine sick cases. Tanaka and Kobuta would then select from the sick ones those who were to be given an injection. They would point to one man as being no good as a worker because he was too sick and ordered that he was not to have injections. Tanaka and Kobuta said that they were the ones to pick and choose who amongst the sick were to get the injections. They would not allow injections to be given to the very sick because they said they would be no good for working. The injections that were given were given either by myself or the Jap. medical orderly. The injections were of vita camphor or oilum camphor; they give strength to the heart for an hour or so, otherwise a man might die if he is in a very collapsed condition. Some of the men had to be lifted by Indian prisoners back to the barracks. The supply of camphor injection was obtained from either Tanaka or Kobuta or the medical orderly. Often I was able to give injections to those who were very sick and really needed it, but this was given from supplies which we had stolen. Of course I was unable to give those injections in the presence of Tanaka and Kobuta. I was only allowed to give injections to the men they picked out. The men they would not let me inject would have died if orders had been carried out, but in many cases I was able to save their lives by giving them secret injections.

Many of my men badly needed extractions of advanced carious teeth; I would report to Tanaka that those men were urgently in need of dental treatment but Tanaka would not let them go to the Japanese dental people. I did not have any instrument myself to perform extractions. Tanaka would not give any reason for not letting them go to the dentist but would say "They cannot go, we want them for work." Tanaka would not issue passes which were necessary to get dental care.

Earlier there were only six guards as well as Tanaka and Kobuta; in the last fortnight they put on another five, making eleven in addition to Tanaka and Kobuta. Kowana was one of them, Khagi Shima was another, Adachi was another, Otake was another, and the medical orderly, Okama, was another.

I often saw Kowana, Khagi Shima and Adachi administer severe beatings with hands and sticks.

I can identify Kobuta and Tanaka. I can also identify all the guards I have mentioned by name.

Two Indians, Shakien Peg, 2/9 Jat. Reg, and Ghulam Yasin, 36 Ord. Workshop, died of dysentery - amoebic dysentery. This was about March or April 1945. I told Tanaka that they were suffering from this complaint and I asked him for emetine to cure this condition. He said "You are not going to get this medicine, it is not available." I know that some had been available ten days before because I had been given a supply of it from another unit in the vicinity. I told Tanaka that they would die unless I could treat them with this medicine. I asked him if he would not give me the medicine would he allow them to go to hospital in order to try and save their lives. He refused both the medicine or to allow them to go to hospital. They both died at the end of March or beginning of April 1945. I say from my medical experience and my observation and treatment of these men that I would have been able to cure their complaint and save their lives if I had been given this emetine.

When we arrived in the Halmaheras about two thirds of the Indian prisoners did not have any footwear and had to work in bare feet. This resulted in the men with bare feet getting sores on the feet and legs. The infection spread quickly and resulted in the permanent disability of many of them, and some deaths. The officer whom I asked for these supplies and who refused to give them was a Staff Capn. of the Thakeda Tai. I could not identify him as I only saw him once or twice.

I, Somnath Paul do solemnly and sincerely declare that the evidence given before this Commission and contained on this and the preceding six pages is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

s/ S. N. Paul
CAPT., IMS

Declared before me this 25th day of September 1945.

s/ R. C. Kirby