

P.I. - Atrocity
(U.S. GI)

DOCUMENT 2870

For the WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's Department -- War Department

United States of America

- - -

In the matter of torture methods employed by the Japanese at Pasay and Nichols Field, P.I., between 8 September 1942 and 14 July 1944.

Perpetuation of Testimony of James Edward Strawhorn, Sgt., ASN 6 398 230, CAC (Unassigned)

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Taken at: Greenville Army Air Base, Greenville, S.C.
(Base Intelligence Office)

Date: 16 July 1945

In the presence of: William A. Allen, Jr., Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Credentials No. 920 (PMGO)

Reporter: Mrs. Martha W. Cochran, Secretary, Base Intelligence Officer, Greenville Army Air Base, Greenville, S.C.

Questions by: William A. Allen, Jr., Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Credentials No. 920 (PMGO)

Q State your name, rank, serial number and permanent home address.

A James Edward Strawhorn, Sgt., ASN 6 398 230. Home address is RFD #3, c/o J. M. Strawhorn, Pelzer, South Carolina.

Q Are you married?

A No, I am single.

Q Where were you born and on what date?

A New Bedford, Mass., May 1, 1916.

Q What education did you have?

A I finished High School -- eleven grades.

Q What did you do before entering the Army?

A I was just out of school when I enlisted in the Army.

Q Have you recently been returned to the United States from overseas?

A Yes.

Q Were you a prisoner of war?

A Yes.

Q At what places were you held and state the approximate dates.

A We surrendered on May 5, 1942. There is a gap from that date to May 26, 1942 when we were sent to Cabanatuan. In the meantime we were, I believe, at Waw Waw, Batangas Province. We stayed at Cabanatuan until September 8, 1942 on which date we were moved to Pasay and remained there until July 14, 1944 when we were sent to Bilibid where we remained until February 4, 1945, on which date we were liberated by troops of the 1st Cavalry Division, Company C, 148th Infantry Regiment of the 37th Infantry Division.

Q Did you witness any atrocities or mistreatment of American citizens at any time?

A Yes. I would like to tell you about the torture methods employed by the Japanese at Nichols Field, P.I., between 8 September 1942 and 14 July 1944.

Q State what you know of your own knowledge about those incidents.

A The men were allotted a certain amount of work to be done each day. Due to physical conditions of the men and to weather conditions, it was in most

instances impossible to perform the required amount of work in the time allotted. If the assigned tasks were not completed within the time limit, the men would be lined up and flogged by Japanese armed with pick handles, rifle butts, etc. In such instances, many arms, legs and backs were broken and if a man fell to the ground, the Japanese would beat him over the head until he was unconscious. This was a common occurrence. It was amazing to me how men could take such punishment and still survive. I personally have been beaten unconscious.

Another form of torture was to make a person stand at attention in the hot sun with a bucket full of water on his head. If any of the water was spilled, the man was beaten as indicated above.

Another common practice was to tie a man to a board with his head lower than his feet and then pour salty water into his mouth. In that position, he had to swallow and the brine solution would cause his stomach to swell. The Japanese would then jump on his stomach with their feet. In like manner the Japanese often forced a water hose down a prisoner's throat and thus filled his stomach with water until he became painfully swollen and then they would jump on his stomach.

Still another form of punishment was to tie a man's hands behind his back and draw his hands up between his shoulders with a rope suspended over the limb of a tree and let him hang with his feet just off the ground. This usually pulled both arms out of socket. While at this camp, I personally hung as long as 24 hours in that position. No food or water was given during that time and I was under no shelter, exposed to the searing sun all day and to a heavy downpour of rain during the night. During this time, I was beaten with plaited rope and hit about the face and head with a pistol butt. This occurred in September 1943.

On one occasion, my hands were tied behind my back and I was forced to kneel on the ground. A piece of timber was placed behind my knees and I was made to squat on that piece of timber. This resulted, as a rule, in dislocation of the knee joints and cut off all circulation. I was forced to remain in that position for about three hours.

It was common practice for any and all Japanese to abuse prisoners of war by hitting them over the head with tent stakes, pistol butts etc., for any and all minor offenses and quite often for no offence whatsoever.

The above recounted torture methods were administered by W/O Kajuki and several of his aides. The aides are recalled only by the names of "Pistol Pete", "Saki Sam" and "Cherry Blossom". There was also a Warrant Officer at this prison camp who was known only as "Harvard" because he was a graduate of Harvard University. He spoke, read, and wrote English exceptionally well. He, too, participated in administering the above described punishments. The above torture methods, it is believed, were committed and witnessed by higher authority, including the Admiral in charge of Pasay Camps, without any interference.

/s/ James E Strawhorn
/t/ JAMES EDWARD STRAWHORN, Sgt.
ASN - 6398230, CAC (unassigned)

State of:)
) SS
County of:)

I, James Edward Strawhorn, of lawful age, being duly sworn on oath, state that I have read the foregoing transcription of my interrogation and all answers contained therein are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

/s/ James E Strawhorn
/t/ James Edward Strawhorn, Sgt.
ASN - 6398230, CAC (unassigned)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 31st day of July 1945.

/s/ Eugene J Twindlen, Capt MA
Notary Public, Summary Court
Moore Gen Hosp, Suannanna, NC

I, William A. Allen, Jr., Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Credentials No. 920 (PMGO), certify that on 16 July 1945, personally appeared before me James Edward Strawhorn, Sgt., ASN - 6398230, and gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth; after his testimony had been transcribed, the said James Edward Strawhorn read the same and affixed his signature thereto.

Place: Pelzed, S. C.

/s/ William A. Allen, Jr.
Signature
Special Agent, S.I.C.
(Rank and Organization)

Date: 19 July 1945

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY:

James P. Healey, Jr., 1st Lt. JAGD
JAMES P. HEALEY, JR., 1st Lt., JAGD

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, T. R. C. King, Major, Inf. (TD), Executive Officer, Legal Section, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, do hereby certify that the attached mimeographed copy of the affidavit of JAMES EDWARD STRAWHORN is a true and correct reproduction of the original affidavit; and that a signed and sworn copy of said affidavit is presently on file with this Section.

/s/ T. R. C. King
T. R. C. King,
Major, Inf. (TD)

Witness: /s/ John R. Pritchard

Sworn to before me this 15th day
of November 1946, Tokyo, Japan.

/s/ John R. Pritchard
Capt. Inf.
Summary Court