

Cx 1569

Evidentiary document # 5072.

IN THE MATTER OF JAPANESE WAR CRIMES AND IN THE MATTER OF CONDITIONS AT SUNGKRAI CAMP, THAILAND, AND IN THE MATTER OF AN ASSAULT UPON PRIVATE RODRIGUES AT SUNGKRAI CAMP, THAILAND.

A F F I D A V I T.

I, 7261114 Serjeant CHARLES BERRY of the Royal Army Medical Corps with permanent home address at 12, Prospect Terrace, Withwell, Chorley, in the county of Lancashire, make oath and say as follows:-

1. I was taken prisoner at SINGAPORE on 15th February 1942. I was in prison camps as follows:-

- (a) Robert's Hospital, CHANGI on SINGAPORE Island from 15th February 1942 to 26th April 1943.
- (b) In transit by rail and road from CHANGI to SUNGKRAI from 26 April 1943 till about 23 May 1943, stopping for one night at BANGPONG, THAILAND.
- (c) At SUNGKRAI, THAILAND, from 23 May 1943 to 12 September 1943.
- (d) At TAMBAYA, BURMA, from 12 September 1943 to 12 December 1943.
- (e) At CHANGI, SINGAPORE, from 12 December 1943 to August 9th, 1944.
- (f) At KRANJI, SINGAPORE, from 9 August 1944 to about 9 February 1945.
- (g) At CHANGI from 9 February 1945 to 22 July 1945.
- (h) At a rubber state in JOHORE supplying labour for tunnelling nearby under the new Johore Police Barracks. The senior officer was Captain HOLMYARD, 1st Battalion, The Manchester Regiment, from 22 July 1945 until 21 August 1945.
- (i) At CHANGI until liberation on 15 September 1945.

2. When at SUNGKRAI I was at No. 2 Camp (Death valley) and was forced to work on the road during my first nine days. At SUNGKRAI there were bamboo buildings without roofs or sides. There was mud on the floors which had no foundations whatever. Above the floor there was bamboo matting. The first night 1680 prisoners of war were put into two huts about 200 metres long and about 24 feet broad. It was raining when we arrived and it continued all night. There was no cover whatsoever and the monsoon rain came down and no one had groundsheets or other protection. It soon became absolutely impossible to lie there. The only alternative was to light fires and keep warm by standing around them. Some of them crawled underneath the officers' sleeping quarters and also under the officers' living quarters.

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We stayed there all night until 0500 hours the following morning when everybody paraded prior to going on the railroad the first day. We were given no opportunity of cleaning up or making the camp inhabitable. We were divided into groups of fifty and positions were allotted four miles on each side of the camp. My particular party was marched about three miles from the camp. It was raining very hard and we were very cold, only getting half a pint of rice for breakfast, which was served at 0530 hours. Each man was issued with a spade, a basket and a pick. We started work immediately digging the road and we stopped for ten minutes every five hours. Half a pint of rice was issued at a quarter to one and then we continued. We marched back to the camp at 1830 hours. This was the daily routine.

3. After two days of rain the camp was nothing but a sea. No protection was afforded against the rain. Every man in the camp had to line up in the dark for a further quarter of a pint of rice and vegetable stew at about 1915 hours. During the day's work nobody was permitted by the Japanese to leave the party if they were ill or hurt in any way. After eight days, during which period it rained steadily, palm branches were placed on the roof as a protection and also on the sides of the huts. Nothing was done about the floor and below the bamboo mats the water rushed through. The men had to lie down on the bamboo, in the damp.

4. On my second day there, cholera broke out. No preparation had been made for an isolation hospital and the cases could not be segregated. After approximately a week from the time of my arrival, the Japanese provided a hut for cholera cases and the following day I was sent as a medical orderly for duty at the hut. This hut was only partly roofed against the rain and the centre of the hut coincided with the course of the water escaping down the hillside. There were bamboo mats on the sides of the wall of the hut but there was nothing in the centre where the major part of the water came through. There were so many casualties that there was insufficient room by the walls and some had to lie in the water. The holes in the roof were so large that the rain came through on to the men who were lying beneath. We had no water other than water from the roof, which we had to boil. There was no accommodation for the orderlies, who had to sleep among the patients. No cholera inoculation was possible.

5. The casualties were carried to the hospital by the fit prisoners of war on ground sheets. Cholera being highly contagious, these men were frequently infected and died. There was no lighting whatever and when I was on night duty it was impossible to remove the dead, who in consequence had to remain among the living until daybreak. On the first day thirty-eight men died and were left outside the hut, no provision being made for them to be removed. There was a cremation party of prisoners of war but these could do nothing because the Japanese refused to give them shovels or other implements with which to bury the bodies. There were any number of tools because they had to be used for digging the road. These thirty-eight men were left outside the hut for two days, only some of them being covered. Eventually after two days the Japanese gave facilities for burying them.

6. Another hut was made available for dysentery cases. The Japanese used to test all prisoners of war for dysentery by putting either a piece of bamboo or a piece of wire or a glass tube up the rectum. This was a painful operation for those who were fit. They would take out persons who were extremely ill or dying of dysentery and would carry out this test and this in bad cases definitely precipitated death by reason of the pain and the fact of their being moved.

7. Convalescents were forced to carry bamboos long distances in the rain with bare feet, with the result that their feet were torn and resulting in ulcers, for which there were no facilities for treatment, and many of them died.

8. On or about 30 May 1943 I was in a working party, of which private Rodrigues of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force was a member. When I got back to the camp I saw private Rodrigues tied to a tree and badly bruised about the face, which was very swollen. His legs were also bruised and cut, giving the appearance that he had been dragged. I was told (I forget by whom) that a Korean guard, whose name I do not know, had attempted to strike Rodrigues with a hammer, that Rodrigues seized the hammer to prevent its being used against him, but that he was forced to let go and subsequently he was beaten up by this guard and the other guard. I did not witness the occurrence but Captain (padre) DUCKWORTH, Royal Army Chaplains Department, would be well aware of the circumstances because he is sure to have interviewed private Rodrigues. I do not know which guards were involved. There were about six guards and they were all Koreans. I do not know any of their names. Private Rodrigues was tied to the tree with wire and there he was left for forty-eight hours. It was raining throughout that period. He was wearing shirt and shorts with nothing else over him. He was tied to the tree immediately in front of the guardroom and in view of it and anybody coming in or going out of the camp must have seen him. Lieutenant ABE, the Camp Commandant must have seen private Rodrigues there as his home was immediately behind the guardroom. He was given medical attention afterwards but I do not know by whom.

9. The medical personnel at the camp consisted of Major HANBURY, Indian Medical Service, Captain SILMAN, Royal Army Medical Corps (Malaya), Lieutenant TURNER, Straits Settlements Volunteer Force, Royal Army Medical Corps, and a Captain who was a keen botanist; Serjeant O'Grady and Corporal Cawthra, and others whose names I cannot remember.

10. The senior officer in the camp was Colonel HINGSTONE, Royal Army Ordnance Corps (?).

11. Lieutenant ABE, who was in charge of the camp, was about five feet eight inches tall, well built and about ten stone in weight. He was always well dressed, usually wearing riding boots. He used to ride a

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horse. I do not know the names of any of the Korean guards, who were all bad men, nor any distinguishing marks about them.

SWORN by the said CHARLES BERRY)
at Headquarters, Southern)
Command, Wilton, in the county)
of Wilts this Third day of)
January 1946)

(Signed) C. BERRY, Sgt.

Before me,

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Captain.

Military Department.

Judge Advocate General's Office.