

STATE OF CALIFORNIA :

: ss

95C-WC-2784

City and County of San Francisco :

[JOHN BROWN LESLIE ANDERSON, Radioman 3/c, United States Navy,] Serial No. 375-97-33, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

My permanent address through which I can best be reached is Route 1, Box 1003, Beaverton, Oregon. I am 33 years of age and had two years of high school education.

[I was taken prisoner of war by the Japanese on Wake Island on December 23, 1941.] We remained on the island and had good treatment there until January 12, 1942 when we were moved to Shanghai via Yokohama. All of the prisoners on Wake Island, which consisted of approximately 500 civilians and 400 service personnel, were shipped on the Nita Maru, a large Japanese passenger liner. The prisoner passengers were placed in various holds of the ship. I happened to be placed in hold #3. We had sleeping accommodations and toilet facilities were available. The trip was very uncomfortable and the food and water was very poor. Various beatings were administered by the Japanese guards to the prisoners for very little or no reason. These beatings consisted of hitting a prisoner with rifle butts, clubs or billies or whatever else might be available. However, insofar as I know, these beatings did not result in permanent injury to anyone.

Upon our arrival at Shanghai we were moved to Woosung, China, which is about seven or eight miles from Shanghai. The camp we were placed in at Woosung had formerly been a Chinese camp and we were housed in the old Chinese wooden barracks. These barracks were very crude. We slept on the floor with some of us having straw mattresses. The water was quite polluted and it was necessary for us to boil all our water before drinking it. There was a very primitive galley in which we could boil our water and do some cooking. The toilet facilities were practically non-existent, consisting merely of a hole in the floor. The commander at this camp was a Colonel YUSEI who died just before we were moved from the camp. The guards were mostly Formosan with some Japanese. We received some rough treatment from the guards but insofar as I know, I saw nor heard of no torturings, extreme beatings resulting in permanent injury, or deaths.

[On December 5, 1942 we were moved to Kiang Wang, China. The commanding officer there was a Colonel OTERA. At this camp the treatment was poor. The food was also very poor and the work very hard. All of the prisoners suffered great losses in weight. I, personally, lost about 40 pounds while at this camp and most of the prisoners lost much more than that. In fact, several of the prisoners died because of malnutrition. One of the reasons we were short on food was that a Japanese guard named NAKAGAMI, the mess steward of the camp, stole a great deal of food from our mess. However, we were powerless to do anything about it. Also, the Japanese refused to give us the International Red Cross boxes which were sent to us. They were held up by the Japanese until just before we left the camp and the only reason we got them then was because the American officer who was in charge of receiving them refused to sign for them until they were actually delivered to us for our use. While at this camp we were forced to work on the building of a large rifle range. This range was located a few miles out of Shanghai and took approximately a year and a half to build. It was being built for the Japanese army to use in rifle practice. Also, we were given work shining and polishing shells and burying gasoline drums. We were also made to work in a garage repairing tanks and trucks.]

[In May 1945 we were moved to Feng Tai, China, awaiting transportation to Japan. Our commanding officer, Colonel OTERA, went along with us. While at Feng Tai we were housed in large warehouses there. It was necessary for us to sleep on the floor and we got very little food. The food consisted merely of a cup of rice or flour and a cup of watery soup three times a day. Our work consisted of digging foxholes for the Japanese.

From Feng Tai we were loaded into boxcars. There were about 50 of us in each boxcar and the boxcars are much smaller than American cars. It was so crowded that only about half of us could lie down. We had buckets which were used for toilet facilities. The train made a 12-day trip northward through China and down the peninsula of Korea to the port of Fusan. The food on the trip was not bad. At Fusan we were placed aboard a small Japanese passenger ship. About 400 of us were put in a small hold. We were jammed in so solidly that it was necessary for all of us to stand. The trip lasted twelve hours. We were given no water but did have our own food which consisted of a hardtack which we had previously baked and taken along with us. After the ship arrived in Japan we were held aboard for one day and during all this time got no water. All together, we were on the ship from the time we left Fusan, Korea, until we arrived in the port in Hokkaido, a period of two days.

We were taken to Hokkaido camp #3 on July 5, 1945. The barracks we were placed in were wooden barracks of fairly good construction. However, it was necessary for us to sleep on the floor. It was quite cold and we were sleeping with from two to four blankets each. While there we received the smallest ration that we had had in any of the camps. We were given one teacup of rice three times a day, and also one teacup three times a day of soup. This soup was usually made of fuki grass or seaweed and had practically no nourishment. Because of the diet a large number of the prisoners at all times were suffering from diarrhea, beriberi, ulcers and other dietary deficiency diseases.

On September 12, 1945 we were liberated. I do not know the name of the commanding officer at this camp or the names of any of the guards. The treatment was rough, but again, as in the previous camps, I do not know of any instances in which the Japanese administered beatings which resulted in permanent injury to or death of any of the prisoners.

This information covers all the pertinent details of these incidents which I am now able to remember.

/s/ JOHN BROWN LESLIE ANDERSON  
JOHN BROWN LESLIE ANDERSON  
Radioman 3/c, U.S.N.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23rd day of January 1946  
at San Francisco, California.

/s/ ALBERT T. COOK  
ALBERT T. COOK  
Lt. Comdr, USNR

Interviewed by: Lt. Comdr. Albert T. Cook, USNR

C O N F I D E N T I A L