

Ex 1564

SYNOPSIS OF EVIDENCE

BURMA and SIAM

C. P/W sent to Siam Sector of Burma-Siam Railway.

a. Prosecution Document numbered 5059A, the Affidavit of Lt. Col. C.H. KAPPE, is now offered for identification and the marked excerpts produced in evidence. This document states that in April, 1943, 7,000 P/W were moved from Singapore to Siam. The trains were overcrowded, food was irregularly supplied, water was inadequate and sanitary conditions either non-existent or revolting.

From Bampong the force was marched about 185 miles by night. There was no transport to carry heavy equipment. The men were beaten on the march by the guards and the sick compelled to go on. The staging camps en route were filthy. In May 1943 the men commenced work on the railway.

"In all the working camps on the Railway into which our party moved, the accommodation had not been completed and the buildings had no roofs. The Monsoon rains were then falling. The food in these camps was just rice and onion water or rice and bean water.

All the time our boots were falling to pieces, and there was no replacement of clothing or footwear. The work on the line was very hard on boots as we were in mud and water all day long. Later on we had to ballast the line with stones and the men had to walk across these stones and work in quarries without boots.

The hours of work varied from twelve to twenty per day. Twelve hours and fourteen hours per day were the most common. Normally the men would be out at 8 a.m. and back at 10 p.m. We had no days off. The first day off we had was when the Railway was through, and the line was joined near our camp about 19th or 20th September. We had started about 14th or 15th May, and we worked night after night right through to September, without a break. For months and months the men did not see their camp in daylight. Day after day and many times a day, I made protests, the Medical Officer made protests and the Adjutant made protests in an endeavour to get the numbers of men working reduced. Nothing would stop the Japanese. They said they would drive the men to work and if they wanted a

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thousand men for work they would get a thousand men, irrespective of their physical condition.

Rice with a few pieces of fish in it, was the food ration. In the early stages rice was fairly plentiful, but as soon as a man went sick the ration was cut down to one third of the amount given to a working man. Sick were then starved and it was impossible to build them up again.....

During the course of the building of the line I was told by the Japanese that it was a Military Railway, and as soon as the line was through I saw the trains loaded with horses, guns, trucks, ammunition, etc.

The Force I was with was called "F" Force..... Until July I was with Pond's Battalion....and then with a special party....at a general camp just south of NIEKE.

In June Pond's Battalion arrived at KONCOITA where the party halted for two days. The troops were billeted in huts which had been evacuated the previous day on account of cholera deaths. The huts were indescribably filthy and protests which were made to the Japanese only caused the force to realise that they were officially placed on the same level as Burmese Coolies. An application for tools with which to clean up the filth brought the reply that none was available, despite the fact that hundreds of shovels and chun-kels had been brought from UPPER KONCOIT.. Coolies walked through the huts, spat, defecated and vomited everywhere. Yak carts and yelling droves congregated at the entrance. Yaks were taken through the huts and they dropped their excreta where rice bags had to be stored.....

At UPPER SONKURAI Camp in August the latrines were flooded by incessant rain. One of them had broken its banks and a filthy stream oozed through the camp area and passed under the floors of the huts occupied by the hospital. Outside and even inside the huts was a quagmire. There was no reason for the hospital to be in the position in which it was as there was high ground where it could have been placed.

No provision for hospitalization of the force had been made



except a small hospital camp at LOWER NIEKE, which was soon abandoned. Requests to allow fit men to remain in camp to improve the situation were refused and all fit men were made to work on railway construction. Any attempts to get tools with which officers could do this work met with very little success. We even found it difficult to obtain a pick or shovel to dig graves for the dead.

In the same camp on the 10th August cholera broke out. The area selected by the Japanese for the isolation hospital was a small cleared space of low lying ground on the river bank, where the mud was ankle deep and the only fixed accommodation was a small hut capable of holding no more than thirty patients. The remainder of the personnel placed in isolation had to be quartered in tents and under tent flies which invariably leaked. No fit men were freed from engineer work to assist the sick in providing stagings to keep them from muddy ground, and all duties except nursing had to be performed by the personnel in isolation. Requests for more serviceable tents and the release of men from work to improve the area and even for a few additional tools all met with the same result. The Japanese did not occupy this hospital.

The instances I have given above indicate generally the type of accommodation in these camps, except that I have not stressed the terrific overcrowding which existed everywhere.

The men had nothing to wear except the clothing in which they were captured, and most of that had rotted or perished during the months of the monsoon. Many of the men were going to work with only a scanty piece of cloth around their loins.

Force Headquarters were constantly asking for medical supplies to be brought forward, but the answer always given was that the road to the south was impassable. However, war equipment and merchandise for the NIEKE shopkeepers were being brought forward in quantities by river boats. The result was that medical supplies were practically non-existent.

I have seen all the bones of a man's feet exposed by an ulcer of the foot. I have seen the bones of a man's leg exposed from the



knee to the ankle and I have seen a man's ribs exposed by an ulcer under his arm. The only treatment which could be given was scraping with sharp instruments.....

On the 7th July a protest against the maltreatment of the men was forwarded to GENERAL BANHO. This pointed out that on the 3rd July, the men marched out of camp at 0900 hours and after ploughing through mud for five kilometres they commenced work at 1030 hours. The task for the day for 135 men was 160 metres of corduroying. This involved the removal of the mud for a width of 6', laying the logs, and draining and reinforcing the track with earth and stones. Parties of ten to twelve men were forced to carry in the day seven logs 15 feet long and 10 to 12 inches in diameter a distance of one kilometre through the mud and slush. Four men collapsed. In one instance only six men were detailed to a log, these were driven along by an engineer who struck the men every ten yards or so with a bamboo stick. After a break of thirty minutes for lunch they had to work on until 2100 hours with one rest of fifteen minutes, returning to camp at 2230 hours. The working hours the next day were the same, except that there was no break during the afternoon. Instead of ten to twelve men being allotted to each log carrying party, there were only seven.

The majority of men who went to work would normally have been in hospital or on light duties.

On one occasion we were able after some difficulty to raise the required number of men for work for the engineers when the Japanese demanded another fifty for work inside the camp..... I refused on the ground that I had no more men who were capable of standing on their feet.....one of them....entered one of the hospital wards and commenced slashing at the men with a stick with the object of driving them out to work... After the Japanese had stated that, if the men were not forthcoming the whole camp ration would be cut in half, we decided that it would be in the interest of the men if we selected fifty, rather than have the camp literally starved. At this stage conditions in No. 3 camp were well nigh



desperate. The number of sick was above one thousand, out of a strength of 1680....."

In July 1943, when the witness had sent out less than the required number of men owing to sickness, one of the Japanese officers summoned him and stated that:

"The construction of the railway had to go on without delay as it was required for operational purposes, and had to be finished within a certain time at all costs, irrespective of the loss of lives of British and Australian prisoners. He said it was no use our quoting the articles of the Geneva Convention, as our own people had offended against it by the sinking of hospital ships and by running down civilian internees with steam rollers. If necessary, he stated, the men would be required to work three to four days on end without rest....."

I gained the impression that everything was to be subordinated to the completion of the line by the end of August, and when this was not fulfilled (The Japanese) became insane with rage. In the last days of its construction our men had to work from 0530 hours until 0200 hours the following day.

On the 13th September I was informed by Lieut. FUKUDA that the men must be prepared to work all through the night as the railway was only a few kilometres to the north, and it was necessary that the line should reach SONKURAI, three kilometres to the south by the 16th. Owing to the heavy rain, however, the work ceased at 2230 hours, the men having been out since 0530 hours that morning. On the 14th September reveille was at 0530 hours and despite heavy rain all day and throughout the evening the men were forced to remain out until 0230 hours on the 15th. Again they were roused at 0530 hours and were worked until midnight of the 15-16th September. On the 16th reveille was at 0530 hours and work finished at 2200 hours. By this time the men were completely exhausted. Conditions were approximately the same on the 17th. All the foregoing facts are set out in my diary which I kept at the time....."



Of the original 3,662 men who left SINGAPORE as members of "F" Force, 1060 failed to return, representing approximately 29% of the A.I.F. component. The losses in the whole Force was 44%. The British lost 59%....."

b. Prosecution document numbered 5064A, the Affidavit of Maj. B.L.W. CLARKE, a doctor, is now produced for identification and the marked excerpts therein offered in evidence. This document described the condition of some of the men of F Force who returned from the railway camps in December, 1943:

"These men were in a shocking condition, suffering from gross attacks of beri-beri, and its various types, malaria, tropical ulcers and gross debility. The loss of weight was simply appalling. The average loss of weight would appear to be in the neighbourhood of 70-80 lbs. per individual. Approximately 80 per cent of these men had to be admitted immediately to hospital."

c. Prosecution Document numbered 5013, the Affidavit of R.G. WILLIAMS, is offered for identification, and the excerpts marked therein now produced in evidence. This document describes the nightmare journey of P/W by cattle truck from Singapore to Siam. Men were overworked, underfed, lived in appalling filth, were beaten and forced to work when sick at camps in and near KINSIOK. Dysentery, malaria and cholera took their toll. Clothing hardly existed and after a day's work, some men actually were only able to crawl back to camp. Towards the end of the construction of the railway, men were forced to work impossible hours, and the Japanese recklessly disregarded the danger of landslides so that on one occasion six men were needlessly killed.

d. Prosecution document numbered 5067, the Affidavit of Lt. Col. E.J. BARRATT, R.A.M.C., is tendered for identification and the marked excerpts offered in evidence. This document treats of the conditions in CHUNGKAI Sick Camp between May, 1943 and January, 1944. The average number of Prisoners of War in the Camp was 8,000. They consisted of men sent from the railway camps suffering from various injuries and diseases. In seven months 1400 prisoners died, many from tropical ulcers which had been caused by injury at work or from the guards, and from deficiency diseases.



There were no anaesthetics, no instruments and a meagre supply of drugs. The witness states:

"One day 5 Japanese doctors came to see the camp. I asked them to watch an amputation which was being carried out on a tropical ulcer case. During the course of the operation one of the Japanese doctors fainted and another was sick. Thinking this was a good opportunity to request proper instruments and supplies of drugs, I made a request to them and their answer was that I must realize that these were prisoners of war and no supply could be made."

e. Prosecution document numbered 5072, the Affidavit of Sgt. C. BERRY, is now offered for identification, and the marked excerpts produced in evidence.

This document states that the witness was at SUNGKRUI from May, 1943 until September, 1943:

"When at SUNGKRUI I was at No. 2 Camp (Death Valley) and was forced to work on the road during my first nine days. At SUNGKRUI 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. We stayed there all night until 0500 hours the following morning when everybody paraded prior to going on to 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.

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.

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.

The casualties were carried to the hospital by the fit prisoners of war on groundsheets. 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 day-break. 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.

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. 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....."

f. Prosecution Document numbered 5031A, the Affidavit of Maj. R. J. CAMPBELL, is offered for identification and the marked excerpts thereof produced in evidence. This Affidavit states that the Camp at TAMKIN was close to bridges which spanned a river and these were reportedly bombed. Permission to mark the camp as containing P/W was refused, and in one raid 18 men were killed and huts set on fire.

At KINBURI Camp in June, 1945, a British officer, the Camp Interpreter, was beaten into insensibility by Japanese officers. He was then put into a covered slit trench, 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 ins. by 4 ft., which had six inches of water and mud in it and was infested with mosquitoes. The officer had only a pair of shorts. He was given water and one ball of rice per day. Later he was taken back to the guard room where he was threatened with torture as a result of which he endeavoured to commit suicide.



Two months later he was recovered by P/W doctors who said he would have been dead in a few more days. He was insane, suffered from blackwater fever and was terribly emaciated. He had not washed or shaved during the period and had not defecated for two months during the eighty days he spent in the trench.

g. Prosecution document numbered 5074, the Affidavit of C.Q.M.S. G. KNOWLES, is now offered for identification and the marked exhibits therein produced in evidence. This Affidavit relates the savage beating of prisoners of war at KANBURI. Men were beaten with teak poles on all parts of the body until in some cases the men were broken and unrecognizable and two officers were murdered.

h. Prosecution Document numbered 5075, the Affidavit of Sub-Lieut. J.O. CLUN, is tendered for identification and the marked excerpts thereof now offered in evidence. This Affidavit states that in July 1943, at KANBURI the witness on being told that some sick men had arrived there found them crawling about the 3 kilometre stretch separating the railway station from the camp. One orderly had been sent with 170 men suffering from beri beri, dysentery, tropical ulcers and cholera to this camp. It took five hours to find all these men.

The Japanese Adjutant of the Camp said he would open a new hospital for them. He ordered some P/W to break down the fence which separated the camp from that of a Japanese cavalry regiment which had left the day before. There were 20 empty huts in most of which there was animal dung and filth. The Adjutant ordered the sick men to be moved here within an hour.

It was two weeks before medical staff was gathered to look after the hospital. By this time there were over 1,500 patients and the daily death rate was between seven and twelve.

A month later, despite all efforts, dysentery patients were still lying on the ground in a hut without platforms.

The hospital came under the direct control of Japanese H.Q. An officer of the Japanese General Staff, P/W Command visited the hospital three days after its grisly opening, and saw the disgraceful conditions in which the sick were living.