

EXHIBIT No. 3312

(25)

D. Doc. # 1830

Exh No.
Translated by
Defense Language Branch

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

Sworn Deposition (Translation)

Deponent: AYABE Kitsuju
(Ex. Lieut.-Gen.)
53 years of age.

Having first duly sworn an oath as an attached sheet and in accordance with the procedure followed in my country I hereby depose as follows:

I. Outline of My Personal History.

1. At the end of October, 1943, I arrived at Singapore from Tokyo to take up the post of Vice-Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Southern Area Army (I took charge of affairs concerning operations.)

The then Commander-in-Chief of the Army was Marshal TERAUCHI. (He was in Singapore from 1942 until he moved to Manila in June, 1944).

2. In April, 1944, the Headquarters of the 7th Area Army was newly formed at Singapore and the Malay, Java and Sumatra areas were put under its command. General DOHIHARA

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came from Tokyo as Commander of the Army.

At the same time I was attached to the 7th Area Army Headquarters. (Due to a fracture sustained on the right shin as a result of an air-accident, I had been under medical treatment in hospital since February and not assuming my duties).

3. At the end of June, 1944, I was appointed Chief of Staff of the 7th Area Army and was on duty from 1 July. At that time my wound had not yet recovered and I was not quite equal to any work which required bodily action.

4. In April, 1945, General DOHARA was transferred to a post in Tokyo. General ITAGAKI was appointed Commander of the Army and arrived at Singapore from Korea.

My duty remained the same up to the termination of the War.

II. Statement in Reply to Inquiries.

1.

Q. Did you have chances to inspect the condition of war-prisoner treatment and billet accommodations at the camp?

A. About November, 1943 (I do not recall the exact date), I had an opportunity to inspect the treatment of the war-prisoners and part of the camp accommodations at Changyi in Singapore. The billets I inspected were wooden barracks, but were clean and the compound looked

comfortable, with flowers and vegetables growing in the surrounding area. According to the officials there, the prisoners were on the whole content with the treatment, though some were somewhat discontented with the food, which chiefly consisted of rice. I was informed that there was no serious question in the way of treatment.

Since I sustained an injury in February, 1944, I had no chance to inspect due to my difficulty in walking.

2.

Q. When did you make a trip to Burma, Siam, Malay?

What was your mission when you made this trip?

A. In December, 1943, I made a trip to Burma and Siam.

My mission then was to establish liaison in regard to military operations with the army headquarters in Rangoon, Maymyo and Bangkok.

About October, 1944, (I do not remember the exact date), I made a trip to Taiping in Malay Peninsula and Penang Island. My mission was to study the operation-plans of the 29th Army.

About April, 1945 (My memory of the date is not certain), I made a trip to the Taiping and Kuala Lumpur districts on the Malay Peninsula. The mission was to establish liaison with the 29th Army Headquarters in

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connection with operation-plans and also to inspect the troops and the topography of the spot.

3.

Q. What are the names of the Commanders of these areas when you travelled to Burma, Siam and Malay?

A. Burma: Area Army Commander Lieut.-Gen. KAWABE (Afterwards full general).

Siam: Commander of the 38th Army Lieut.-Gen. NAKAMURA.

Malaya: Commander of the 29th Army Lieut.-Gen. ISHIGURO.

Q. Did Gen. ITAGAKI ever inspect these areas? What was his mission?

A. Burma and Siam were not under the jurisdiction of Gen. ITAGAKI, and therefore he never inspected these areas.

I remember he inspected the Malay area twice, but I cannot recall the date. I think that the first inspection was made in about May, 1945. The purpose of these inspection trips was to inspect the condition of the discipline, training and preparations for operations among the Japanese troops.

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About May, 1945, I recall, he inspected the war-prisoners' camp and the internment-camp for civilians in Singapore in about May, 1945.

5.

Q. Was the treatment of war-prisoners improved after Gen. ITAGAKI's arrival at his post as compared with the period prior to it?

A. Gen. ITAGAKI is really a man of justice and a friend and champion of humanity. Therefore, he endeavored to give the best treatment possible to the war-prisoners and there was marked improvement, as explained in the following.

1). At the time of Gen. ITAGAKI's arrival there at his post, the Japanese steamer AWA-MARU, with full cargo of relief goods for allied war-prisoners came to Saigon, Singapore and Batavia from Japan. A large number of Japanese civilians unable to return home due to a tie-up then of sea-transportation between Japan and the Southern Areas were still there. With due permission, they sailed for Japan aboard the vessel. In spite of the guarantee made by the Allied Powers that the AWA-MARU would be perfectly safe, the vessel was attacked and sunk by an enemy submarine in the neighboring waters of Formosa. And when the

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sad report reached there that none of the members of the crew or of the passengers was saved (I remember they numbered two thousand and several hundred), the public opinion of the Japanese there was so much excited that many of them opined that under the circumstances distribution of the said relief goods brought over by the AWA-MARU to the war-prisoners be suspended. Gen. ITAGAKI, however, attempted to allay the aroused public opinion, admonishing that "The spirit of Japanese 'Bushido' cannot permit such a thing. From the standpoint of justice and humanity, we should distribute the relief goods to them with pleasure even under these circumstances. You people must calmly display real spirit of Japanese 'Bushido'." Thus he ordered the distributions of the relief-goods without delay. I believe that the war-prisoners at that time must surely admit that this was realized.

- 2). Since before the arrival of Gen. ITAGAKI, our land and sea transportation capacity in the surrounding areas of the Malay Peninshula had been considerably reduced by the enemy's air and underwater attacks, and as a result towards January, 1945 the supply of rice from the Siam area had decreased to less than one-third of the total amount needed and ever since

the supply was steadily on the decrease.

Meanwhile, there was no other alternative but to decrease rations, because, on the one hand, our military strength in the Malay and Singapore areas had been gradually increased due to a change in operation-plans, making the supply of provisions all the more difficult and, on the other hand, provisions had to be reserved in order to make preparations for the new operations. Namely, in the Japanese forces, the ration of rice as staple food per head a day which used to be 700 grams was cut to 600 grams in February, 1945, and further to 500 grams in March of the same year. The rice-ration for the war-prisoners and internees was 200 grams less than that for the Japanese soldiers, but the want of rice was supplemented by potatoes rations which were obtained by self-production on the spot, and thus, with the supplementary and additional supplies of potatoes, they were allowed to get the total quantity of 700 grams of rice and potatoes.

Furthermore, as to meat and vegetables, besides their regular rations, the additional supply of these foods which were obtained by self-supporting on the spot was granted to all of them. And in this way efforts were made to prevent the decline of their

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physical strength.

Gen. ITAGAKI gave special orders to his men to provide the war-prisoners, who engaged in the anti-airraid construction work since April, 1945, with the same staple-food rations as given to the Japanese soldiers, and furthermore added not only 100 grams of corn or 250 grams of Tapioca as substitutes for rice, but also such luxuries, though in small quantities, as coffee, sugar, milk, jam, oatmeal, etc. Under such circumstances, the war-prisoners were delighted to engage in this work. I heard that, when Gen. ITAGAKI visited the internment-camp in May, 1945, he specially inspected the rations provisions of the internees and desired the men in charge to increase them as much as possible.

3). In regard to labor, it was also unavoidable to make the war-prisoners work, when as mentioned before, the Japanese soldiers were all engaged in labor and even the Japanese civilians were rendering labor-service. But the labor, since Gen. ITAGAKI's arrival, was chiefly limited to the afore-mentioned anti-airraid constructions work, and, those who engaged in labor and their supervising officers as well were only chosen men who were specially healthy. Most of them

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lived and worked together with the Japanese soldiers. And in regard to the supply of food and other rations, they were given the same treatment as the Japanese soldiers. Such being the case, the treatment was much improved, as compared with the previous period.

- 4). In respect to sanitation also, any medical supplies or medicine, which the Japanese Army possessed, except the special articles which were not in the possession of the Japanese, was given them immediately in compliance with their requests. No discrimination was made because they were war-prisoners. Especially, the war-prisoners who engaged in the above-mentioned work were allowed to undergo medical treatment by Japanese medical officers like the Japanese soldiers. So there was no case of airing their grievances at that time.

From the above, it may be seen that it was unavoidable from the standpoint of the general conditions at that time, that in the treatment of war-prisoners, especially rations had to be gradually decreased. These rations were uniformly reduced among the Japanese Army forces too. But special consideration was given to those who were engaged in labor in providing them with increased rations, which were the same as given to the Japanese soldiers, and also in adding to these rations other luxuries. It is a fact that an improvement,

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though in part, was achieved in the treatment of war-prisoners. All this, I believe, serves to show Gen. ITAGAKI's leadership based on his respect of humanity.

6.

Q. How were the natives treated by the Japanese forces at that time?

A. Gen. DOHIHARA Commander of the 7th-Area Army, and his successor, Gen. ITAGAKI are both men of experience in the field of civil administration in the Manchuria and China Areas. They always instructed and guided their men to educate the natives with benevolence and treat them with love. Gen. ITAGAKI established his administrative policy, paying special attention to the improvement of public welfare. The cardinal points of his policy may be outlined as follows:

1). Food Policy.

During the period from April, 1945, to the end of the war, supplying food to other areas became totally impossible among the Malay, French Indo-China, Siam, Sumatra and Java areas, and import of food from the home country was also entirely suspended. And communication between Malay, Java and Sumatra became extremely dangerous, and consequently each area was obliged to find a means of self-support with regard to

food. But on Singapore Island and the southern part of Sumatra, it was difficult to produce or obtain food for the native population. Consequently, attempts were made, in the face of great danger on the sea, to import rice from Java and Siam, and during the period between April and August rice was shipped from these areas in the following way:

From Java to Singapore ... About 20,000 metric tons.

From Java to South Sumatra ... About 5,000 metric tons.

From Siam to Malay (Singapore) ... About 23,000 metric tons.

Thus public demands were met. On account of this, the reserve and supply of rice for the army forces had to be limited.

2). Policy of Dispersion for Singapore populace.

Since it was expected that with the development of the war situation ravages of war would cover Singapore, they felt the necessity of dispersing the inhabitants chiefly to the Malay Area, in order to prevent or minimize the ravages of war and the dispersion was already under way. After Gen. ITAGAKI's arrival at his post, this policy was greatly accelerated and was put into practice without delay. As mentioned before, the food situation at that time was already very serious, but they distributed to the evacuees provisions

for 3 months, and besides this gave them subsidies and thus endeavored to prevent or mitigate the disaster that might be inflicted on the people and to improve their welfare.

3). Relief Policy for the Bombed Area in Singapore.

The Japanese armed forces quickly despatched a relief party to damaged districts whenever Singapore or its vicinity was bombed and the residential districts were damaged. The relief party was in charge of fire-fighting, rescue work, medical treatment, restoring order, etc. at the spot where damage was done. The military administrative authorities did their best to relieve the citizens there, distributing special relief-food to the sufferers. The Japanese residents also volunteered to render their services in this relief work. Such being the case, the inhabitants there were very grateful for what the Japanese did over there, ever so much their kindness.

4). Treatment of the Native Laborers.

In respect to the treatment of native laborers, the Area Army paid much attention to it since during Gen. DOHIHARA's tenure of office as commander, Gen. ITAGAKI, after his arrival at his post, also gave necessary instructions from time to time to the troops

under his command concerning their treatment. When an important construction work was to begin, he would never fail to ask that stipulations be drawn up in its plan in regard to the treatment of native workers. Moreover, he often dispatched officials to inspect and lead the construction work on the spot and helped to set up the medical relief-party, contributing much to the improvement of medical care, sanitation, or provisions. Furthermore, he tried to encourage and accelerate the improvement of the treatment, taking measures to reward the army units or associations which showed good records in the treatment of laborers. Above all, in such cases of construction of alumina works in Bintang Island and the Oil-plants in Palembang, improvement of sanitation, provisions or other welfare for the laborers concerned was under direct control of the Headquarters of the Area Army and remarkable progress was achieved in its improvement.

7.

- Q. Some Chinese or Chinese soldiers (some in uniform, others in plain clothes) are said to have committed piracy or robbery, publicly imputing it to the Japanese. Do you know anything about this?
- A. I heard that there were some Chinese who committed piracy

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in the South Sea area. But I don't know of any concrete fact which can be taken as an actual example.

8.

Q. Did you know Gen. MATSUI, Iwane? Did you ever hear that he was unable to direct the future operations due to his illness at Nanking?

A. I met Gen. MATSUI once or twice, but I am hardly an acquaintance of his. I remember, when Gen. MATSUI was in Nanking, I was a Colonel and was staying in Tokyo. I heard that the General was not well, suffering from consumption.

On this 6th day of February, 1947,
at Singapore.

/S/ AYABE, Kitsuju (seal)
(Lieut.-Gen.)

Sworn to and subscribed to before the undersigned officer by the above named AYABE, Kitsuju, at Changi, Gaol, Singapore, the 6th day of February 1947.
David W. Parsons, Capt., Inf., Investigating Officer.