

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al



AFFIDAVIT

DEPONENT: Sister Mary
Mercedes

RUTH G. DOWNING

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

I was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, under the name of Ruth G. Downing, and am an American citizen over 21 years of age. Since being converted to the Catholic faith in 1943, I am known as Sister Mary Mercedes. I reside at the Convent of the Missionaires of Our Lady of Mercy, 558 - 4 Chome Koenji, Sugininiku, Tokyo.

I first came to Japan as a Protestant missionary in 1929 and except for a furlough in 1935-1936 I have continuously resided in Japan carrying on my missionary activities in and about the city of Tokyo.

I was so engaged in my work in Tokyo when war broke out in December, 1941. Nevertheless, the police and other Japanese authorities permitted me to continue my missionary work, i.e., carrying on religious services, teaching English and Sunday school classes, etc., in the same manner as before the war until September, 1942. During that time I had no unpleasant experiences or untoward incidents.

In September, 1942, I was requested to go to an internment camp for civilians in Denenchofu, Tokyo, Japan, and I stayed there for one year until September, 1943. There were about 70 female and 25 to 30 male internees, most of whom were missionaries and their families, both Protestant and Catholic. Men and women were kept in separate quarters and at first the police and the camp guards were in constant surveillance over us. But in so doing, they stated that it was not because the authorities suspected the internees of any act inimical to Japan but because they desired to protect us from any untoward incidents as much as possible. There were American, British and other internees from other enemy countries. I can state that the treatment we received in the said camp was very kind and very good. We were allowed to go out for shopping, accompanied by civilian guards. They were very

courteous and solicitous of our well being in going in and about the various shops and districts of Tokyo. I observed, during these shopping tours, the attitude and reaction of people toward us and I can state that we had no untoward incidents but rather the people seemed to maintain the same reaction to us as before the war and nothing unusual happened. Our food was about the same as that provided to the Japanese people as a whole and we were treated on the same basis. Whenever any sickness occurred, proper medical attention was provided and the sick were well cared for. As time went on, the number of guards and police were decreased. They were very friendly to the internees and I know that many of the guards, notwithstanding that charcoal was rationed, saved as much as they could from their rations and gave it to us so as to give us more heat during the winter. We also received some Red Cross supplies during our stay in this camp, which lasted until September, 1943.

The Japanese authorities permitted us to carry on our religious activities in the camp. We held masses, communion, etc., as well as the usual Sabbath services. We were also allowed to have Japanese visitors who came to see us.

About September, 1943, owing to the fact that many of the internees were sent home for repatriation, we were moved temporarily to the Franciscan Monastery in Denenchofu, Tokyo, for about 2 weeks; thereafter, to the compound of Archbishop Doi in Sekiguchi. Those of us that remained behind moved into the Sekiguchi camp. There were about 50 internees of American, British, Irish nationalities and one Russian later. Archbishop Doi's compound comprises of a school, cathedral, seminary, convent and the Archbishop's house. The school was converted into an internment camp. Later on German internees were brought in. We all stayed in this camp until May 25, 1945. During our stay in this camp, the treatment we received was also excellent. We were permitted similar activities as above described. During our stay at this camp in Tokyo we received about one Red Cross parcel per person per month. We were also allowed visitors, as well as to go to the dentist, etc. The treatment we received was considerate and kind and I often wondered whether the Japanese in America were being treated as well as we were.

This Sekiguchi camp was burned as a result of Allied bombing on May 25, 1945, and we all moved to the Franciscan Hospital in Tokyo, known as the Seibo Hospital. Here we were not attended by any police but only few civilian guards. We stayed there until the surrender on or about August 15, 1945. Thereafter, the camp authorities said we were at liberty to go anywhere we liked but it was suggested to us that in view of the damaged condition of the city and the general disorder, it would be better for us to remain in the said camp. Also they suggested our remaining in the camp until the American troops arrived so that we would not be dispersed. All in all, I state that the treatment we received was very considerate and kind in every way and while the food given us deteriorated in quality and quantity as the war progressed, we nevertheless were given rations equal to if not better than that allowed to the Japanese people.

On this 3rd day of September, 1947, at Tokyo.

(signed) Sister Mary Mercedes

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Sworn to and subscribed before me on the above-mentioned
date and place.

(signed) Capt. Roland Schwartz
Summary Courts Martial

Witness

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the
whole truth, withholding nothing and adding nothing.

(signed) Sister Mary Mercedes
Ruth G. Downing