

Review
400

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AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA :
City and County of San Francisco :
: SS.

SIDNEY JOHNSON STEWART, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

I am a Sergeant in the United States Army, ASN 38021621. My permanent home address is Watonga, Oklahoma. While an American soldier, I was captured and detained by the Japanese as a Prisoner of War at several camps for 9 April 1942 to 18 August 1945.

On about 28 December 1944, I was made to board a Japanese boat, name unknown, with a large group of American prisoners of war. This boat had just been unloaded of horses and the hold where we were imprisoned was infested with lice and fleas. During the trip each man only received a small handful of rice and a few spoonfuls of water each day. The men were always crying for water and many died each day from starvation. The Japanese refused to lower the dead bodies into the water because they had nothing to weigh them with. They were afraid the bodies would float and disclose their course to submarines. As a consequence, the emaciated bodies were stacked about us like cords of wood.

During the trip from the Philippine Islands to Takao, Formosa, the boat was bombed many times by American planes. While in the harbor, the boat was bombed again and one bomb landed in a hold crowded with 500 men; 258 were killed outright. After this bombing, no one came near us for three days and the cries of the wounded and dying and the stench of the dead were merely adding to the existing horror. Colonel Olson, an American prisoner, though wounded, begged Mr. Wato, a Japanese interpreter, for a little water and medical treatment for the injured men. Wato only answered that the Japanese would fight us for a hundred years and as our planes had bombed us they were not responsible for our wounded. I myself was wounded during this bombing and after that was only able to crawl from place to place.

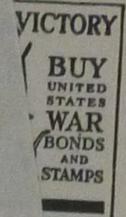
When we were at last allowed to remove the dead, the bodies were placed on five barges. The bodies were taken ashore and burned on the beach.

Original

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All the prisoners were loaded aboard another ship. On this boat the suffering was merely intensified by lice, the filth caused by dysentery, the extreme cold we experienced in our naked condition as the boat progressed north toward Japan and the lack of food and water. The only food we received each day consisted of a small handful of rice and three to four spoonfuls of water, more often than not it was briny ocean water. Thirty (3) to forty (40) men died each day from starvation and exposure.

The boat arrived at Moji on the island of Honshu on 30 January 1945 and we were made to walk or crawl through the streets of Moji naked during a cold sleet rain. Civilian men, women and children, along the route, threw rocks and mud at us. The guards at no time attempted to protect us. When the roster was checked when we arrived at an old theater building, there were slightly over 400 men left alive. When we left Manila there were 1619 of us.

To the best of my knowledge, the testimony I have given herein covers all the pertinent details of this incident.

Sidney Johnson Stewart
SIDNEY JOHNSON STEWART
Sgt., ASN 38021621

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of November ~~October~~ 1945, at Army & Navy Gen Hosp, Hot Springs, Ark

Margaret Nansen, 1st Lt, WAC
Asst Adj

INTERVIEWED BY: William E. Stewart, Jr., Agent, SIC

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