PERPETUATION OF TESTIMONY OF NORMAN L. LONON.

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(Formerly Staff Sergeant, 20th Pursuit Sqdn., U.S. Army)

Nashville, Arkansas. Route #2

My name is Norman Lewis Lonon. My home address is Route 2, Nashville, Arkansas. I reenlisted in the military service 20 February 1946 and am new a XXXXXXX technical sergeant, unassigned, and will report to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, WDPC on September 15, 1946 for assignment. I am at the present time on furlough from the U.S. Army. I am 41 years old. My serial number was and is 6793489. I first enlisted in the army in July 1928. I reenlisted again February, 1940. I went overseas 30 October 1940 and returned to the states 4 November 1945 and was discharged from the army 20 February 1946. Up to the present time I have had more than sixteen years of military service.

I was captured on Bataan, P.I. 9 April 1942 by tank or ground forces of the Japanese, their organization not known to me. Guards were placed around the two or three hundred of us prisoners and the night of about 10 April 1942 we were marched from Marivelys to San Fernando, now known as the “Death March”. On this march the guards would be changed over ten kilometers or so and I cannot describe any of them for identification. Before beginning this march each of us was given a can of food, varying in size from 3 oz. can up to a 32 oz can. The large cans had to be split by two or more men. The cans would contain anything, milk, beans, sardines, etc. I got a can of sardines and the soldier near me drew a can of milk. We split the contents of these two cans. His name was Farrar from somewhere in the state of Maine. I do not know his first or middle name. He was a member of the same U.S. Army squadron I was a member of. This was all the food we had until we reached Labou four days later when we were given a hand full of rice. Some were not given rice for it run out and they stood with clubs motioning for the men to get back. Some of the fellows had malaria and had fever and chills during this March and would have to stop and hold to a tree or something for support, while having malaria rigor, and I saw two while so doing, get shot by the Jap Guards. In this march as above stated, guards would be changed about every ten kilometers and some guards would permit us to get water and some would not. Where we weren’t furnished water when we would break to get water at overflowing wells or any water that was in the road or right of way, a large number of us would be shot and bayoneted to disperse us and get us to going on the march. At Labou and American soldier and a Philippine soldier were pushing one another for a place at the well, which only a limited time was granted to obtain water, and both were taken to a tree and killed by two Jap guards with thrusts of bayonets. I don’t know their names nor cannot identify the Jap guards.

At Labou several fires were build in the enclosure we were put in and the fires were ordered extinguished. A Philippine was down on his knees putting sand on the fire putting it out and a Jap sergeant and officer came up that he did not see and the sergeant hit him a butt stroke with his rifle and bayoneted him through his back after he hit the ground, killing him. I was there a day and a half and when we left dead bodies of prisoners were laying against the fence, already bloated up, and there was hardly room for us to stretch out and sleep and these bodies were in there at the same time. Other prisoners were brought in while I was there and I managed to switch in with the new prisoners, not going on with the ones I arrived there with for I was not physically able to go on and not knowing how much further we were to be taken, and I got to stay there a day and a half before going on. Then I went on to San Fernando, about one days march from Labou. More shooting and killing of our men occurred on this last days march and this must have been because the men were worn out and unable to walk fast enough for the fresh guards. After a day and a half at San Fernando I went to Camp O’Donnell where I stayed until about 30 June 1942. A canteen of water a day was furnished each man here. Many prisoners died from exhaustion. There was no medicine. The Jap guards would take some of the prisoners out from this camp which we never say anymore and didn’t know what had become of them. Murder committed by the Jap guards of prisoners was a common occurrence. I had malaria prior to the march and I continued to have it for at least eighteen months. The Jap language was new to us and I do not recall any names if I ever heard any of their names called. There was no association between guards and prisoners and I always considered the further I could keep away from them the better off I would be.

On 30 June 1942 I walked about 12 kilometers and then rode a train to Cabanatuan, P.I. Camp #1, and was there until July 1944. I had Beriberi and in the hospital about eleven months, also had malaria, dysentery, scurvy and pellagra, practically no medical treatment; deaths were 30 or 40 a day out of about 2000 prisoners which were continually being replaced. On Jap guard nicknamed “Air-Raid”, one called “Donald Duck” his name was Oceanagga, one called “Smiley” and another called “Caribou Sam” and one called “Little Speedo”, all were constantly, including one called “Beetle Brain”, abusing and beating up prisoners without provocation. I have seen all the above mentioned Japs club American Soldiers. I avoided meeting these men face to face for fear I would get beat up. They would beat prisoners for no reason at all. Our officers would be placed in charge of our work details and a Jap soldier would slap our officers the same as enlisted men. Captain, I can’t recall his name, referred to as the “One man army of Bataan” was beat up by this man Smiley at Cabanatuan Camp #1. A club was used and he hit the Captain twenty five or thirty times. He beat him down. Other Jap guards helped Smiley beat him. They were a bunch of dogs, when one would start something the others would pitch in and help him do the job, especially if it was beating up a prisoner.

In July 1944 I was taken to Moji, Japan prison camp #3. The supply sergeant at this camp and the mess sergeant would abuse and mistreat prisoners without provocation. I had pneumonia in March 1945 at this camp and was sent out to work with a fever because one of my fellow prisoners, as I understood it, had more fever than I had and only a limited number could stay in on sick call which was just before work call. I had to be brought back from work to camp that day because of sickness. Civilian Jap guards were on duty that day at the steel mill where we were working and I was not beat up for not working. I was sick then with pneumonia for twenty five days.

I believe that the Japs eased up a little with their brutality on us as they realized their chances of winning the war were not so good.

Fish Face was a civilian guard at the steel mill near Moji (Yawata Steel Works). He took pleasure in beating up prisoners. I did not work in his gang but have been on the railroad car returning from the mill to camp (about a 20 minute ride) and have seen him strike with a club at various times several different American prisoners without any reason. I saw him beat a soldier almost to death before he got on the flat car next behind the car I was on. They were on the ground about twenty or thirty feet from me. He beat him all over unmercifully. The American soldier went to the ground and was picked up by other prisoners and loaded on the flat car. This was about April 1945, about five o’clock in the afternoon.

I was liberated from this camp in September 1945.

Norman L. Lonon

State of Arkansas )

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County of Howard )

I, Norman L. Lonon, of lawful age, being duly sworn on oath, state that I have read the foregoing statement consisting of three pages, and that it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Norman L. Lonon

Subscribed and sworn to before me at Nashville, Arkansas, U.S.A. this 22nd day of August 1946.

Jennie B Chesslie

County Clerk

Howard County, Arkansas