

498th CIC Det.,
Hq 2d Mar. Div.
APO 929
22 October 1945

SUBJECT: SAKAMOTO, Yuhichi
Ex-Captain, Japanese Army
Nagasaki Ken, Kita Takaki-gun,
Moriyama Mura, #2204

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

On 21 October 1945 Yuhichi SAKAMOTO, ex-Captain, Japanese Army, residence Nagasaki Ken, Kita, Takaki-gun, Moriyama Mura, #2204, was interviewed at 498th CIC Detachment Headquarters, Nagasaki, and stated in substance as follows:

He was discharged from the Japanese Army on 26 September 1945 at Fukuoka at which time he held the rank of captain in the Infantry and concluded 17 years and 9 months service. His service included the following periods overseas:

Shanghai - 7 Feb 1942 to 25 March 1942
Manchuria - 16 April 1936 to 7 December 1938
North China - 8 May 1939 to 12 August 1942

SAKAMOTO stated that he had served at the following stations in Japan subsequent to 12 August 1942 and made the statements indicated regarding his activities at each station.

Kagoshima, Kyushu - 15 August 1942 to 25 November 1942. He was in a combat organization.

Kumamoto, Kyushu - 26 November 1942 to 19 November 1943. In a PW camp. After 29 December 1942 SAKAMOTO was the commanding officer, relieving Capt. Soguro TAKAYAMA. There were 266 PW's, all British, who had been captured at Java and Timor. Thirty-six of the prisoners died during the period. On 19 November 1943 the camp was closed and the prisoners were transferred to Fukuoka.

Fukuoka Kashi, Kyushu - 20 November 1943 to 17 May 1944. SAKAMOTO was the commanding officer of a PW camp. He estimates there were 300 prisoners, all British. These prisoners had been transferred to Fukuoka from Mogi and had been captured in Java and Timor. He said that none of the prisoners died during the period.

Mushirora, Fukuoka, Kyushu - 17 May 1944 to 20 January 1945. He was commanding officer of PW camp. The 658 prisoners included 300 British, 204 American, and 154 Dutch. The British prisoners had been transferred from the Fukuoka Kashi camp. Of the total 5 or 6 died during the period.

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SAKAMOTO Interview cont'd

Hakozaki, Fukuoka ^{Chi}, Kyushu - 20 January 1945 to 8 May 1945. SAKAMOTO was the commanding officer of a PW camp. In addition to about 650 prisoners who were transferred from the camp at Mushirora, there were 197 Americans. The Americans consisted of 167 officers and 30 enlisted men making a total for the camp of about 850 PW's. There were four American Lieutenant Colonels but SAKAMOTO said that he could not recall any of their names. He said that he spoke to the prisoners through interpreters. He estimates that 70 of about 850 prisoners died during this period and the period from May 1945 to 2 September 1945, when the prisoners were released. Part of the deaths were due to dysentery and some died as the result of injuries they had received when the PW camp in Formosa had been bombed. He denied that any of the prisoners had died as the result of any physical violence inflicted by the Japanese.

Miyada Machi, Furate-gun, Fukuoka ^{Ken}, Kyushu from 8 May 1945 to 2 September 1945 when the prisoners were released. SAKAMOTO was the commanding officer and the prisoners had been transferred from Hakozaki. There was one Jap doctor for the prisoners, SAKAMOTO received his orders regarding food, clothes, and the treatment of the prisoners from Col. Manjiro FUKUMOTO, Fukuoka ^{Chi}, who was in charge of all prison camps in Kyushu. SAKAMOTO said that at times the prisoners were beaten and slapped by the guards when the guards lost their tempers, but said that the guards had been instructed not to mistreat the prisoners. He could not recall any instance of a guard being punished for having mistreated prisoners. SAKAMOTO admitted that he had slapped prisoners. He said that he did this when he found prisoners stealing from each other. He said that the prisoners stole from each other and sold the stolen articles to Koreans who worked in the same mines.

He also admitted that at times he kicked prisoners. He recalls kicking a Dutch prisoner at the P.W. Camp in Kumamoto in September 1943. He said that the prisoner had stolen corn from a farmer near the camp and that upon being interrogated regarding the act he denied it.

He said that it was not necessary to use force to make the prisoners work in the mines at Fukuoka. This mine was Ayima Tanko, Onoura, Kogyosho.

He said that no intelligence agencies interviewed the prisoners at any of the camps he was in. This had been done before the prisoners were sent to the camps. He denied that any American Air Force personnel had been in any of the camps and said that he did not know where they had been imprisoned.

Superior Private Takeo KATSURA, address Kagoshima ^{Ken}, Ushima-gun, and Chozo HARUYAMA, a civilian who can be located through the P.W. Headquarters at Fukuoka, were his interpreters. He thought that they might recall the names of some of the prisoners.

SAKAMOTO said that he is planning to return to Fukuoka, where he can be located at Keigo Kokumin Gakko Fuku ^{Ku} Hombu, Daimiyo machi. He said that he would see Col FUKUMOTO upon his return and that he would also know his whereabouts.

Previous Distribution:

None

Evaluation

Source

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Information

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VII
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CIC METROPOLITAN UNIT NO. 94
APO 929

28 October 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE:

SUBJECT: SAKAMOTO, Yuhichi
Nagasaki, Kita Takaki Gun, Moriyama, Mura 2204

RE : Preliminary report of Interrogation.

1. At the direction of the Commanding Officer, 468th CIC Detachment Yuhichi SAKAMOTO, former captain of the Japanese Army and director of Prisoner of War Camp #9 at Miyata machi, Kurate gun, was apprehended on 25 October 1945 for interrogation regarding his alleged mistreatment of allied Prisoners of War.

2. PERSONAL DATA:

- a. Address: Nagasaki, Kita Takaki Gun, Moriyama, Mura 2204.
(Mailing address: Fukuoka-shi, Kego, Kokumin Gakko, Fukufu Hombu)
- b. Date of birth: 17 February 1907
- c. Marital status: Married to YAMAGUCHI, Emi, 32 years old, in August 1938. Two children--one boy age 7, one girl age 2.
- d. Education: Grammar school, 8 years, Torishima Jinjo Koto Shogakko.
- e. Military history:
 - Entered Japanese Army as private in January 1928.
 - May 1939 to August 1942 - service in North China.
 - Received field commission on 13 July 1942.
 - Aug 1942 to Nov 1942 - in Kagoshima with 45th Inf Regt.
 - Nov 42 to Nov 43 - Asst C. O. of POW camp at Kumamoto-shi, until 29 Dec 42 when he was made C. O., succeeding Capt Sogofo TAKAYAMA.
 - Nov 43 to 17 Apr 44 - C. O. of POW Camp #1 at Kashi machi, Fukuoka ken.
 - Apr 44 to 20 Jan 45 - C. O. of POW Camp #1 at Mushiroda Airfield, Fukuoka-shi.
 - Jan 45 to 8 May 45 - C. O. of POW Camp #1 at Hakozaiki machi, Fukuoka-shi.
 - May 45 to 2 Sep 45 - C. O. of POW Camp #9 at Miyata machi, Kurate gun (This camp had been POW Camp #12 until 15 Aug 45.)
 - 26 Sep 1945 - Demobilized.

3. SAKAMOTO admitted that as Commanding Officer of Pow Camp #9 he had beaten allied Prisoners of War on at least ten different occasions. He stated that he had received orders from Colonel Iju SUGAZAWA, Western Army Headquarters, and also from his successor, Colonel Manjiro FUKUMOTO, not to mistreat and not to pamper Prisoners of War. SAKAMOTO passed these orders on to his subordinates at each camp at which he was in command. Among his subordinates at Kumamoto-shi were the following men:

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Sgt Major Sadao KAKUYAMA
Sub-Lt Satoru MARITA (Medical Officer)
Sgt Major Kensaku TOMIDA

Lt Kazu DANNO was medical officer at the Hakozaiki-machi camp.

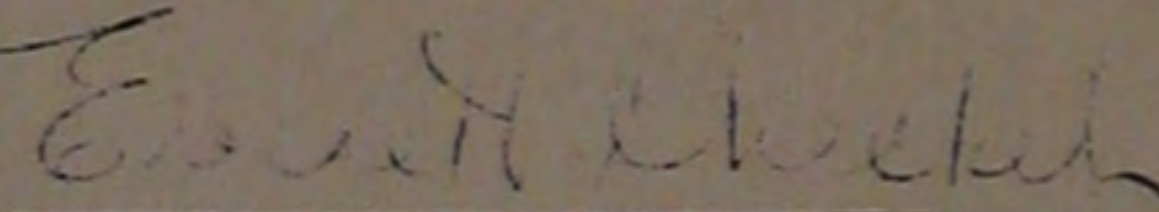
SAKAMOTO stated that he himself had beaten prisoners for disobeying orders and in cases of thefts. He admitted that he beat prisoners with his hands, fists, clubs, and swords, but insisted that the punishments were administered as examples to the other prisoners, and not administered with malice. Subject declared that he never beat a man seriously enough to require medical attention. Although three prisoners died during Subject's tour of duty as commanding officer of Camp #9, Subject insisted that these men died from natural causes--tuberculosis and fever.

4. Subject stated that the officers and enlisted men were segregated at the POW camps. The officers were required to do farm labor, the enlisted men were required to work in mines, lumber mills, and in various menial occupations. On 28 March 1945, according to a report received by SAKAMOTO, an American plane was shot down near Noogata. Ten days later, and before SAKAMOTO had been assigned to the Miyata POW camp, the Kempei Tai at Iizuka called the commanding officer of the Miyata POW camp and told him to pick up a box containing the ashes of three (3) of the flyers. The ashes were buried beside the dead POW at the Miyata Camp, and were marked "unknown", and were still at the camp when Subject was relieved on 2 September 1945.

5. In an interview on 26 October 1945 SAKAMOTO was asked to make a statement regarding his treatment of Prisoners of War. His signed statement is appended hereto as Exhibit I.

6. SAKAMOTO also stated that on at least one occasion his orders not to beat prisoners of war were disobeyed by one of his subordinates, Sergeant Hichio KURIHARA. The circumstances of KURIHARA's disobedience are described in a signed statement appended hereto as Exhibit II.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:


EVERETT CHECKETT
MAJ. INF.

MARLIN V. BORDNER
Special Agent, CIC

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26 September 1945 -- Separated from service.

3. SAKAMOTO stated that there were 18 Prisoner of War Camps on the Island of Kyushu and listed them according to number and location:

- # 1 -- Hokozaiki
- # 2 -- Nagasaki
- #3 -- Tobata
- # 4 -- Moji
- # 8 -- changed to #5 on 15 August 1945 -- Omine.
- # 9 -- changed to #6 on 15 August 1945 -- Takamatsu.
- #10 -- changed to #7 on 15 August 1945 -- Futosi
- #11 -- changed to #8 on 15 August 1945 -- Yamano.
- #12 changed to #9 on 15 August 1945 -- Miyata.
- #14 -- Nagasaki
- #17 -- Omuta
- #21 -- Nakama
- #22 -- Hirayama
- #23 -- Fukuoka Ken.
- #24 -- Nagasaki Ken, Kukaision, Senryu machi.
- #25 -- Fukuoka Ken.
- #26 -- Fukuoka Ken.
- #27 -- Fukuoka Ken.

4. When first interrogated as to his using force on Prisoners of War, SUBJECT became visibly excited and stated that he had received ^{orders} from Western Army Headquarters, through Col. Iju SUGAZAWA and his successor, Col. Manjiro FUKIMOTO, not to mistreat and not to pamper Prisoners of War, which orders he passed on to his subordinates at each camp which he commanded. He stated that having been a POW camp commander for so long a time, he could not recall the exact number of occasions on which he had beaten prisoners. However, he admitted that he had done so on at least 10 different occasions. These beatings, he insisted, were administered only for disobedience to his orders and in cases of thefts, but admitted that he administered them with his fists, hands, clubs, and swords. SAKAMOTO claimed that he handled the prisoners in a fatherly way, reprimanding and punishing them as a father does a child--to prevent a recurrence of the wrongdoing and as an example to the other prisoners. He declared that there was never a time when the prisoners whom he had beaten required medical attention. While he was Commanding Officer of POW Camp #9, three prisoners died, but he insisted they had died from tuberculosis and fever.

5. At the various camps which SUBJECT commanded, the prisoners were mainly English and Dutch, although there were about 37 Americans among those at POW Camp #9. The officers and enlisted men were quartered separately.

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The officers were required to do farm work, and the enlisted men were forced for work in mines, lumber mills, and at airfields. SUBJECT stated that he had the greatest difficulty with the Dutch because of their stubbornness and admitted having beaten several of them while at the ^{Mushiroda} ~~Mashiroda~~ Airfield, Fukuoka-shi. However, he refused to relate the circumstances surrounding those beatings, claiming that he could not recall them. He admitted having beaten two Dutch Prisoners of War at Camp #9 with a stick wrapped in leather when they became involved in a theft of a pair of trousers. His signed statement regarding the beatings of those Prisoners was taken on 26 October 1945. The signed statement is appended to the Preliminary Report of Interrogation of SAKAMOTO, Yuhichi, dated 28 October 1945, and a true copy of the statement, marked Exhibit I, is attached hereto.

6. On at least one occasion, SUBJECT stated, were his orders not to mistreat Prisoners of War disobeyed by one of his subordinates. That disobedience occurred on 18 August 1945 when Sergeant Kichiro KURIHARA, outraged over the fact that Japan had lost the war to the Allies, beat 5 or 6 British Officers before a group of their fellow prisoners. The circumstances surrounding that incident are described in a signed statement also appended to the Preliminary Report of Interrogation of SAKAMOTO, Yuhichi, dated 28 October 1945, and true copy of which statement, marked Exhibit II, is attached hereto.

7. In addition to the above named Kichio KURIHARA, SUBJECT named the following men as his subordinates at the Kumamoto and Kakozaki POW Camps:

MAKITA, Satoru -- Sub-Lieutenant -- Kumamoto
KAKUYAMA, Sadao -- Sergeant Major -- Kumamoto
TOMIDA, Kinsaku -- Sergeant Major -- Kumamoto.
DANNO, Kazu -- Lieutenant (Medical Officer) Kakozaki.

8. With regard to the treatment of Allied airmen and the disposition of their remains, SUBJECT disclaimed all knowledge of the matter, stating that he had never had any fliers in his camps. He related the following story regarding a box of ashes reportedly containing the remains of 3 American airmen, which story he learned through rumor. On 28 March 1945, while Captain Saichiro YOSHITSUGU was Commanding Officer of the Miyata machi POW Camp, an American plane was shot down in the vicinity of Noogata. Ten days later, the Kempei-Tai at Iizuka called the Miyata Camp and told them to pick up a box of ashes containing the remains of 3 fliers. The box was brought to the POW Camp, marked "Unknown", and burned beside the deceased Prisoners of War. According to SUBJECT, the box was still in the camp when he was relieved of his duties as Commanding Officer of POW Camp #9.

VICTOR W. ARNOLD
Captain, U.S.A.

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AGENT'S NOTES:

During the entire interview, SUBJECT appeared reluctant to divulge any information which would incriminate any of his associates or superiors and very little definite information regarding his own treatment of Prisoners of War. The only specific instances about which he talked freely were the last instance on which he beat a prisoner and the beating of prisoners by Sergeant KUPIHARA, both of which were recent events. After he did reveal the circumstances surrounding these incidents, SUBJECT willingly agreed to sign statements regarding them, even though he stated that he had been expecting to be arrested and tried as a war criminal ever since the termination of the war.

Oddly enough, and in spite of his admissions regarding beating prisoners, SUBJECT felt that he should be praised by the Allies for his handling of Prisoners of War. He knew, he stated, that they were underfed, but so were Japanese soldiers, and he did all in his power to give them extra rations. When reminded of the beatings, he repeated that he beat them as a father does a child--with no malice, but rather as an example for other prisoners and to prevent a recurrence of such incidents--and that it was not uncommon for a Japanese officer to beat the men under him for disobeying an order.

It is the opinion of this Agent that SUBJECT has withheld a great deal of information regarding his acts of brutality toward prisoners and that he is going out of his way to protect others who might have knowledge of mistreatment of Prisoners of War. It seems unlikely that he could recall so well all the circumstances surrounding the last beating of prisoners and none of the circumstances surrounding any of the other admitted cases of mistreatment of prisoners.

MARLIN V. BORDNER
Special Agent, CIC

APPROVED:

VICTOR M. AITKEN
Captain, M.I.

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