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WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General’s Department – War Department

United States of America

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In the matter of atrocities committed at camp No. 4, Moji Kyushu, Japan, from July 1944 to August 1945

Perpetuation of the testimony of William J. Burns, Civilian.

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Branch Office, Area Intelligence Division, 1270 Avenue of the Americas, (Room 804), New York 20, New York.

Taken at:

19 August 1946

Date:

Charles E. Goetz, Major, Cavalry 0-390101 Area Intelligence Division

AC of S, G-2, Headquarters, First Army

1270 Avenue of the Americas, New York 20, New York.

In the presence of:

Edward J. Corcoran, Special Agent.

Reporter:

Charles E. Goetz, Major, Cavalry, O-390101.

Questions by:

Q. Please state your name and permanent home address.

A. William J. Burns, 334 east 90th Street, New York, N. Y.

Q. When and where were you born?

A. 3 November 1913 in New York City.

Q. What is your marital status?

A. I am married.

Q. What formal education have you had?

A. I attended DeWitt Clinton High School for one and one-half years.

Q. What is your civilian occupation?

A. Counterman in luncheonette.

Q. When did you leave the United States?

A. 8 October 1940.

Q. When did you return to the United States?

A. 6 October 1945.

Q. Were you a prisoner of war?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were you held and what were the approximate dates?

A. I was captured on Corregidor 7 May 1942. I was held there until 14 October 1942 and was then sent to Bilibid until October 1943. From Bilibid I went to Cabanatuan until July 1944, thence to Moji Kyushu, Japan, where I remained until I was liberated.

Q. What organization were you assigned to at the time you were captured?

A. To the 60th C. A.

Q. Can you identify the picture of the Japanese in the attached photograph by name, rank, and position in the camp?

A. Yes. He is Cpl. Inue. He was in charge of the dispensary at the Camp No. 4, Moji. In civilian life I understand he was a chemist. He was the biggest louse in the Jap Army.

Q. Did you witness any beatings or atrocities while at that camp?

A. Yes. When we arrived at Moji on 4 August 1944 fifty of us were taken off the boat and assigned as stevedores. We unloaded ships and box-cars. We had no sooner debarked when we were told to pick up our gear which was thrown all over the dock. We didn’t do it fast enough to suit the Jap guards, and they belted everyone indiscriminately with rifle butts. We were then brought to a building and were given a bath. Before entering the building we stripped and left everything outside. When we came outside again everything of any value had been stolen from us.

That evening we were permitted to smoke, but had to keep within the area of a small charcoal fire. The Japs seemed very much afraid of fire. It was hard for a bunch of us to stand around one little fire. Suddenly three Jap guards came rushing in. Everyone was hit with rifle butts, fists, and kicked around the place. The excuse was that we had not been close enough to the charcoal fire.

Q. Do you know who the Jap guards were?

A. There were three of them. Pvt. Takana, nicknamed “Scarface” or “Chicken Neck”. He was short, stocky and powerfully built and walked with his head tilted to one side. He had a scar on the side of his face from the temple to the chin, and wore very thick glasses. I do not recall which side of his face the scar was on. I heard he had been wounded in China. He spoke a little English and drank like a fish. The second was Pvt. Ikedo, nicknamed “peg-leg”. He was about 5’2”, weighted about 120 pounds, had regular features and very clear skin. For a Jap, he was pretty good-looking. His right leg was as stiff as a board, from a wound received in China. He spoke English slightly. The third was Pvt. Yoshikawa, nicknamed “The One-Armed Bandit”. He was about 6’3” and weighed about 180 pounds. He was the best looking Jap I ever saw-regular features and clear skin. His right arm was missing and he spoke English well.

Q. What other incidents did you witness?

A. Around the early part of December 1944 I broke out in cysts on my face probably as a result of the bum food. I had on big one on the right side of my jaw. I reported to the dispensary for treatment. Cpl. Inue was there and looked at the cyst. He asked me if I wanted it opened and I said yes. He then hauled off and hit me right on the jaw and broke it (the cyst), making it worse, then laughed and walked away. A Dr. Doppert, a Netherland Indies native doctor, who was in the dispensary, advised me to go away and come back in a few days. I did go, and Dr. Doppert cut it with a rusty, dull, old scalpel, the only surgical instrument available.

Sometime in the middle of June 1945 I witnessed another incident. Navy cook 1st Class Johnny Cole was a cook at the P. W. Camp. Pvt. Okeda caught him with some sugar that morning. The same evening Cole and a Sergeant J. Kinder, 20th Pursuit Squad, Nichols field, were called out into the compound and questioned about the sugar. Cole had told the Japs he got the sugar from Kinder. The Camp Commandant, a Capt. Saito and a Jap sergeant-major did the questioning. After a short period Pvt. Takana and Cpl. Inue were called. One of them had a bamboo pole, about 5 feet long and 1-1/2” in diameter. The other had either a mahogany or oak pole, the same size. They proceeded to beat Cole and Kinder from the shoulders to the ankles for about two hours. Cole passed out once and was revived by a pail of cold water and the beating was continued. That same night they were taken out and beaten in the same manner for about twenty minutes. This occurred on a Thursday or Friday. On Sunday we were given a day off. Both men were brought to the compound and stripped so that all prisoners could see them. Their backs looked like pieces of raw meat. They received no medical treatment.

In July 1945 Cpl. Inue beat a Lt. Starkey, of the Royal Artillery, British Army. Lt. Starkey was the administrative officer. He did a great deal of work in the Japanese office and was in and out all day long. On this particular day he walked into the office while Cpl. Inue was there, and forgot to bow to Inue. Inue ordered him outside and made him stand at attention. He hit him and knocked him down and out, then revived him with a pail of water. He hit Lt. Starkey again and knocked him out and walked away. A. W. O. formerly F/Sgt. Charles Kidwell, RAF, ran out picked up Lt. Starkey and carried him into the barracks.

In July 1945 Charles Kidwell, referred to above, also received a beating from Inue. We had finished our days work and were standing in line. Kidwell was next to me and Inue was looking us over, picking out men for more work. Kidwell called Inue’s attention to his (Kidwell’s) feet, both of which were swollen from beri-beri. Inue looked at him, then hauled off and hit him in the jaw. He proceeded to beat him up, badly, and forced him to go to work that evening.

Q. What work did you do at night?

A. The camp commander was doing a little blackmarket business for himself. Every night after finishing our day’s work, a number of prisoners were forced to build air-raid shelters for the civilians in the nearby towns.

Q. What sort of medical treatment did you receive?

A. None. Nobody in camp ever was treated right. I heard they had medicine, blood plasma, etc., but never passed it out. This was entirely the fault of Cpl. Inue and a naval W. O. by the name of Dahl [DAUL, ARTHUR PERCIVAL], who was a skunk. This W. O. was Inue’s right-hand. He was a Chief Pharmacist’s Mate in the U. S. Navy. After we were liberated, he asked a bunch of us what he could do to redeem himself in our eyes. The unanimous opinion was that he could drop dead. I do not know WO Dahl’s address, but heard later that he was court-martialed by the US Navy as a result of his cooperating with the Japs.

Q. Do you recall any other incident?

A. Yes. A few weeks before the war ended there were plenty of American planes passing overhead. Every time they came over we were ordered to the air raid shelters, which were tunnels we had bored into the sides of a nearby hill. Some time in July 1945 a T/Sgt. Carpenter, Harbor Defense Hq. M. and S. B., hurt his leg when a bag of rice dropped on it. The leg swelled up badly. No treatment was given him. He, with other hospital patients, was brought to the air raid shelter. It was troublesome to move him back and forth and Cpl. Inue ordered him to be left in the shelter. Medical treatment was forbidden by Cpl. Inue. The hospital orderlies, Lance Cpl. Holtham, Sgt. Bedeman, and Pvt. Levy, all of the Royal Artillery, British Army, brought him food. They told us later they could hardly stand the smell of the leg. Gangrene had set in. Carpenter finally died from the gangrene. His body was placed in a wooden box and he was cremated. I helped carry the box out of the tunnel.

Q. Do you know anyone else who has any knowledge of conditions at the camp?

A. Benny Aquilina, a barber in Hackensack, New Jersey, who lives in Teaneck, New Jersey, knows more about this camp than I. He was formerly a private in the 803rd Avn. Engr. Bn.

Q. Do you have anything further to add?

A. No.

William J. Burns

William J. Burns

State of: New York )

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County of: Queens )

I, William J. Burns, of lawful age, being duly sworn on oath, state that I have read the foregoing transcription of my interrogation and all answers contained therein are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

William J. Burns

William J. Burns

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 10th day of Sept. 1946.

Charles E. Goetz

Charles E. Goetz

Major, Cavalry O-390101

Summary Court Officer

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Charles, E. Goetz, Major, Cavalry, O-390101, certify that William J. Burns personally appeared before me on 19 August 1946 and gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth.

Charles E. Goetz

Charles E. Goetz, Major, Cavalry, O-290101

AC of S, G-2, Headquarters, First Army

1270 Avenue of the Americas

New York 20, New York

Place: 2541 Broadway

Astoria, Long Island, N.Y.

Date: 10 Sept. 1946