For the WAR CRIMES OFFICE

CIVIL AFFAIRS DIVISION, WDBS

United States of America

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In the matter of experience as a \* Perpetuation of Testimony of Mr.

Prisoner of War of the Japanese \* George Lawrence Falk, formerly

Imperial Government \* Corporal U.S. Army, ASN 6578116

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Taken at: 612 Union Street, Rockford, Winnebago County, Illinois.

Date: October 3, 1946

In the Presence of: Lt. Col. Charles C. Buckley, Infantry, 0-319496, O.I.C.

Rockford Military Sub-District, Room 212 Post Office

Building, Rockford, Illinois.

Questions by: Lt. Col. Charles C. Buckley

Q. State your full name, permanent home address, occupation and former status with the United States Army.

A. George Lawrence Falk, 612 Union Street, Rockford, Illinois. Presently employed by the Highland Lumber and Fuel Company, 602 – 18th St., Rockford, Illinois. I was formerly a corporal in the United States Army, ASN 657116

Q. State the date and place of your birth and of what country you are a citizen.

A. I was born in Cadillac, Michigan, September 9, 1908 and am a citizen of the United States.

Q. What educational institutions have you attended and for how long?

A. Grade school in Cadillac, Michigan for eight (8) years. I have also done some home study of mechanics.

Q. At what placed were you employed as a civilian and what was the nature of your occupation.

A. Prior to going in to the Army, June 1939 to January 1946, I was unemployed. Since I have only had temporary jobs and have been on my present job since September 18, 1946 working in the lumber yard.

Q. What is your marital status?

A. I am single, no dependants.

Q. When were you returned to the United States from overseas?

A. I was liberated on September 17, 1945 and returned to the United States about October 15, 1945.

Q. Were you a prisoner of war?

A. I was a prisoner of war, I was captured by the Japs on April 12, 1942 on Bataan, P.I.

Q. At what places were you held and state the approximate dates.

A. I was at a Camp O'Donnell for a few weeks, after capture, then I was in a prison farm, Camp number one Cabana Tuan, Luzon from about June 1942 until about July 1944. From there I was taken by Jap freighter to a prison camp about five hours train ride from Nagasaki, Japan. I can't remember the name of the place but the name of the camp was something like Camp Fukuoka, I'm not sure how it was spelled. I stayed there until liberated, about 13 months.

Q. What unit were you with when captured?

A. I was with the 12th MP Battalion, attached to a Filipino Division on Bataan.

Q. Describe in your own words your own experiences, and atrocities or mistreatment of American citizens you witnessed or any stories you were told.

A. I was on the Death March. We started out in trucks, chow trucks, to Marivales then they made us walk. We were fed a little rice and water, barely enough to keep us alive. One guard jabbed me with a bayonet while I was waiting my turn to get some water – I was forced to go on without it – just an empty canteen. We were only allowed to stop once in the morning and once in the afternoon to relieve ourselves and get what water we could. They did not march us at night, fearing that we might try to escape on the march. They didn't provide for any sanitary measures at night, we just slept on the ground where others had urinated and defecated – the place stunk. We walked from Marivales – about eight or nine days walking – to San Fernando where they did give us a few days rest and a little better food. They then piled us in box cars, jammed in tight, suffocating, some guys just passed out, only a small door for ventilation. Outside of seeing some guards poke lagging prisoners with bayonets and firing at men, but not hitting them) who broke ranks to try to get water, I did not see any undue violence or atrocities on the march. I did hear many stories but I don't recall any names or specific instances. We were taken by box cat to Camp O'Donnell for a few weeks. Conditions were tough, open latrines, place was lousy with flies and many prisoners died from Dysentery – as high as 70 in one day and an average of about 30 or 40 a day. I heard that 1500 died in the three weeks that I was there. Conditions were bad but I did not witness any cruel or inhuman treatment, but I did hear of some beatings though. At Cabana Tuan I saw one guard, that we had nicknamed "Beetle Brain", a Jap private whose name I do not know, force a prisoner to kneel down on his hands and knees and then kick him in the testicles from behind for sitting down while he was pulling grass. The prisoner passed out and other prisoners carried him away to his quarters, I did not see him again or find out who he was. We were forced to walk barefooted on gravel roads, sometimes with glass in the gravel, and guards would strike laggers with their rifle butts, I was struck several times myself. A colonel Mori or Mory (I don't know how his name was spelled but I would recognize him) later promoted to General, was our first camp commander who told us, when he left, that we should call our camp Paradise Camp because we were better treated than any other prisoners before and better than Japanese prisoners were being treated by the Americans. He warned us against trying to escape. I saw, from a distance, three of our men were recaptured – they were forced to dig their own graves and then were shot on the edge of the graves and fell back in. I heard of one prisoner who had been beaten to death for trying to escape. The Japs made American officers look at one prisoner who had been beaten to death for trying to escape – he had his arms and legs broken, his jaw broken and just a bloody mess, one of the officers told me it was a terrible sight. The new camp commander was an old Jap Major, about 60 years old, gray hair and about 4 feet 8 inches in height. I don't remember his name but would recognize it and I would also recognize him if I saw him again. We noticed worse treatment and less food and more work after he took over. The worst part was the hard work, shortage of food, shortage of medicine and general living conditions. I consider I was mistreated but no inhumanly so. I heard the Japs used our Red Cross medicine and supplies for their own soldiers. I know for a face that 20 or 30 a day died, they were carried past us on liters, from dysentery, lack of food, lack of medicine and overwork. Later on we got more medicine, quinine, and the death rate decreased somewhat. I got Diphtheria and almost died but they finally gave us some shots and I pulled through. I heard from some American officers that of about 1500 officers shipped to Japan, only about 500 survived the trip. On our trip to Japan we were just jammed down in the hold of a Jap freighter, many passed out from the heat and lack of air but only a few died. When men hollered for more air, the Japs would let us all go a whole day without any food, which was very poor and scarce as it was. We only had buckets for latrines and we could only dump them out twice a day so they were usually full – many had dysentery and many got sick from the stench. There weren't even enough buckets as it was, we had to wait in line. After about a week they did let us have about two salt water showers a week for just a few seconds at a time – just enough to get wet and cool down a little. We stopped at Formosa for a few hours to take on some supplies but we couldn't see what they were doing. Camp Fukuoka was a little better, pretty good barracks and fairly clean at first but lots of flies and bed bugs. Food was also a little better than the other camps. We had to work about 50 times harder than we did in the Philippines. We had to walk about three miles each day where they loaded us in small rail cars and took us to our work in factories and machine shops. I never did find out what they made there but they were working with red hot metal and cutting out metal discs and things. My job was to bundle up scrap cuttings where two Japs were working just as fast as they possibly could. I was struck, had, several times by Jap workers when I couldn't keep up with them but I later told one of the guards and the workers didn't bother me any more but I had to work as hard and as fast as I possibly could. The Japs had many and very strict rules and as long as we obeyed all of them, I don't think we were overly mistreated but we were very much overworked. Some of the men got so run down from overwork that they got sick – we had about 40 or 50 TB cases at one time. My leg was continually getting cut from the scrap metal and got infected. The Japs made me work on it for several weeks before they would let me get it treated. We had a Dutch doctor, some American doctors and aid men and the Japs did finally let them hospitalize me and work on my leg. I was laid up for about three months in the hospital.

Q. Did you witness any killings or brutal treatment other than what you have mentioned>

A. No.

Q. Do you know the names of any former American prisoners, any victims or the names of any who were responsible for atrocities?

A. I can't think of any names of fellow prisoners, any of the victims of mistreatment or the names of any of the Japs other than those I have mentioned before.

Q. Have you anything further to add concerning this testimony?

A. Nothing that I can think of. Oh yes, later when there were air raids, they kept us on working and wouldn't let us take shelter even though some of our prisoners were hurt from our own bombings. One of my buddies got a direct hit from one of our bombs (I think they were fire bombs) and was killed, another had his right arm blown off, but still the Japs wouldn't let us take shelter. They kept right on working themselves. Another thing, when I was first captured I weighed 190 pounds and when I was released I weighed about 98 pounds. I am 5 feet 11 ½ inches tall. I do have a picture, taken by the Japs shortly before I was released which shown my condition.

Note: The interrogator was the picture and could only note a faint resemblance to Mr. Falk, His condition was so bad.

George Lawrence Falk

State of Illinois )

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County of Winnebago )

I, George Lawrence Falk, 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.

George Lawrence Falk

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 8th day of Oct.1946.

Charles C. Buckley

Lt. Col.Inf.

Summary Court

I, Charles C. Buckley, LtCol.INF. 0-319496, O.I.C. Rockford Military Sub-District, certify that George Lawrence Falk, personally appeared before me on 3 October 1946 and testified concerning war crimes; and that the foregoing is an accurate transcription of the answers given by him to the several questions set forth.

Place: Rockford, Illinois

Charles C. Buckley

Lt.Col.Inf.

Rockford Military Sub-District

Date: 3 October 1946