28 August 1946.

STATEMENT OF TECHNICAL SERGEANT NORMAN JAMES BERG (264339) USMC

Subject: War Crimes Affidavits of Repatriated American

 Prisoners of War of Japan

Reference: (a) Ltr Comdt 12th NavDist ND12-02-hy-1jj

 Serial 33356, dated 15 August 1946

My name is Norman James Berg 264339). My present rank is Technical Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps. I am stationed at Depot of Supplies, U.S. Marine Corps, 100 Harrison Street, San Francisco, California. I was formerly a sergeant serving with the Embassy Guard, Peiping, China, and was captured there the first day of the war.

The first weeks the Japanese kept us in our barracks in Peiping and then moved us to the Marine Barracks in Tientsin, China. Thereafter we were taken to Woosung, China, near Shanghai and stayed in that camp until November 1942, when a group of seventy sailors, marines and civilians were sent to Fukuoka Branch Camp Number three, Yawata, Japan.

I do not know the actual name of the Commander of the Fukuoka Branch Camp Number Three at this time, although I remember well the 'Second in Command' and who spoke English fairly well for Japanese – and according to his own words he was a Harvard Graduate. His name was First Lieutenant Takada. This Lieutenant Takada did keep me in from the 'Rock Gang' for two weeks during December 1942 to typewrite rosters of the Prisoners of War. My complaint against the Lieutenant Takada is this: An American civilian from Wake Island by the name of John Henry Riffel became very sick from Dysentery. It was a very pitiful case and I took the chance of asking Lieutenant Takada several days in a row to let the prisoners buy (from their own money) eggs, soya bean milk or some other substance of which at that time there was much of in Japan, in order to feed this man Riffel something which he could eat. Lieutenant Takada listened to me very politely the first few days but soon he let me know that those things were not for Prisoners of War, sick or not sick and made no effort whatsoever to feed him anything but the standard ration of rice and barley. At the time of this incident the Japanese were throwing away and wasting the type of food which Riffel could well have used and also the barracks which we were living in was merely a wing of a hospital and with only a word from Lieutenant Takada he could have been given some adequate hospitalization which easily could have saved his life. Lieutenant Takada did willfully in my mind, and the mind of other prisoners at that camp, keep food and treatment away from Riffel and caused him to die. Lieutenant Takada was transferred from Branch Camp #3 on 1 January 1943 and went to Area headquarters for Prisoners of War. He was seen occasionally by prisoners in and about the Yawata Factory Yards for several months afterwards.

My next major complaint is against a Medical Doctor, Hada, a fat, slobbering individual who fattened himself well on British and American Red Cross Supplies and a Japanese Major Urata commander of Fukuoka Branch Camp #3 from 1 January 1943 until about April 1944. Doctor Hada came to the above camp about May 1943. Together these two individuals set banquets up through the generous use of Red Cross Food Supplies as I well know as I had to pass by the room where a long table topped with cans of butter, dried fruits, cans of corned beef and other plainly marked Red Cross Supplies stood as I marched in after 10 hours in the Steel Mills. I personally saw this at least a half dozen times. There were several loaded trucks of Red Cross Supplies sent into our camp on the 23rd of December 1942. I do not know the amount but I do know that 150 men unloaded these trucks packed them up to a storeroom on the roof and out of all these supplies the average man got a half can of corned beef and half can of Vegetable and Beef Mix. I believe that Major Urata and Doctor Hada did either (1) sell or use these goods or (2). Did give them away to his men. Technical Sergeant C.D. Pierce, USMC., did actually, in the presence of Major Urata, see Red Cross Supplies carried out of the building by the civilian guards partially camouflaged by a large Japanese handkerchief. One of the recipients of these Red Cross supplies was Menino (Water Snake) who was a subordinate of Major Urata.

Next during the winter of 1943 and 1944, Doctor Hada did hold his sick calls out in the open. Men with bad cases of influenza and pneumonia, many of which had to be helped outside of their barracks by less unfortunate POWs were forced to stand out for two to three hours in the morning which he, Doctor Hada, went up and down the line of Prisoners with a stick asking if they could go to work or not. If they answered in the negative he immediately cracked them over the head with his stick. This went on all winter. I was one of the men who had to make this type of sick-call for ten days. I also want to state that during this period from about December 1943 to May 1944 men were dying on the average of one to two each day – a direct cause of the inhuman method of handling sick men. Doctor Herbert A. Markowitz (Lt jg) U.S. Navy, was present during this time.

NORMAN JAMES BERG

State of CALIFORNIA )

Country of San Francisco )

 I, Norman James Berg, 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 JAMES BERG

Subscribed and sworn to before me at San Francisco U.S.A., this 29th day of August 1946

June R. Doberstein

Personnel Assistant CAF-5

Depot of Supplies, U.S. Marine Corps

(Authorized to Administer Oaths

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