

185
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IN THE MATTER OF JAPANESE WAR CRIMES AND IN THE
MATTER OF THE ILL-TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR
AT KAWASAKI CAMP BETWEEN AUGUST, 1944, AND AUGUST,
1945

A F F I D A V I T

I, Frederick Owen HALTON, private no. 3855805, 2nd Bn. The Loyal
Regiment, with permanent home address at 42, Frenchwood Avenue,
Preston, make oath and say as follows:

I was taken prisoner by the Japanese on the 15th February, 1942,
at the fall of Singapore.

I was a prisoner at the Kawasaki Camp, Japan, from August, 1944, to
August, 1945. The Camp consisted of wooden huts, with wooden
floors, and there were 9 men to a hut, 15' square. Bedding was
adequate during the summer, but we were very short of blankets and
cold in the winter. The sanitary conditions were normal. Medical
attention was provided by British and American doctors and orderlies,
but where a man was reported as unfit for work by one of our Doctors,
he had to pass a Japanese doctor afterwards, and he often stated that
he was fit, and sent him to work. There was a shortage of medical
supplies, and after the capitulation, we found large quantities
of American Red Cross supplies in a store in the Camp, together
with plenty of clothing, of which we had been short during the
winter. The drugs we found contained a lot of Vitamin B tablets
which were used for the treatment of beri-beri, and which had been
short during my stay in the Camp. The Camp Commandant in charge
for most of the time was a reasonable man, who treated us fairly,
and the Sergeant in charge was particularly good, and gave us what
consideration he could. The guards, however, were brutal, and
prisoners were struck and ill-treated for little or no reason. Men
were also put in the Guard Room for trivial offences, such as smoking
in the rooms, and were kept for periods of up to 3 and 4 days without
any clothing, and only one blanket during the winter. There were
no beds or bedding in the Guard Room, and men had to stand to attention
for long periods, and were not allowed to sleep for more than an hour
or so at a time. They had to do their ordinary shift in the mine,
and return to the Guard Room, where they had only half rations. The
Food was provided by the Ormine Coal Company, who ran the mine where
we worked.

The mine was under the control of a civilian we
nicknamed "KOKA", who was very brutal, and appeared to hate the
British, saying so on many occasions. There were three other
civilians under him, who were forced by him to treat us harshly, and
work us hard. At first we did 8 hours a day, but this grew as time
went on, and we were finally doing 14 hours and more in a single shift.
We had to load 80 trucks with 1 1/2 tons of coal in each per shift, and
stay at work until we had done this. Sick men were sent down the mine
to keep up the numbers of the shifts. If "KOKA" caught a man taking a
rest, he would make him stand with a length of iron railway line over
his head for a period of half an hour to an hour, and if the man dropped
it, he would beat him. He frequently kicked men in the stomach, and
beat them. Two of the worst guards in the Camp were known as "The
Brown Bomber", and "The Air Force Guy", whilst another who struck
prisoners with his belt was called KARASINKI, who left the Camp
shortly before the capitulation.

The worst incident in the mine was one in which
I was involved with 6 or 7 other prisoners, including Corporal
HUBBERSY and Privates WHITTLE, BARRON, and HANDLEY, all of the Loyal
Regiment.

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36
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18

VOLUME 1

A-V

EN-6

Serial No. 17090.
British Camp 8.

185

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Affidavit of Private Frederick Owen HALTON - Page 2.

36
35
37

We had been working in the mine for a long period on this particular occasion, and were very tired. We decided to have a short rest, as we were nearly dropping with exhaustion. "KOKA" came along and caught us. He went off into one of his violent tempers, in which he was capable of doing anything. He ordered us out, and got a length of dynamite cable. He tied this round our necks, and attached one end to the plunger used for detonating charges in the mine. He then gave us each a stick of dynamite to hold, and threatened to blow us up. I was afraid that in his temper he would carry this out. He raved and stormed at us, and continued to threaten us, when another official of the mine, also a Japanese civilian came along. He was apparently superior to "KOKA", and when he saw what was happening, he ordered him to release us, which he did, on promising to go back to work.

109
308

16

When we got back to the Camp, we laid a complaint to our interpreter, R.S.M. CLAPP. He saw the Camp Commandant, and ~~we~~ we heard later that although "KOKA" had said it was only a joke, the Commandant had reprimanded him for the incident.

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For a time, he was much quieter in his treatment of us, but later things went back to the old conditions.

We were not allowed to wear any extra clothing for working in the mine, having only our khaki drill jackets and trousers. Some of us used to wear a cardigan or similar garment underneath in the cold weather, but if were caught, we were beaten and struck.

VOLUME 1

F. Halton

TAKEN AND SWORN BEFORE ME THIS 20th DAY OF APRIL, 1946.

Thomas Gardner

Justice of the Peace for the County Borough of
Preston

7-6