**RESTRICTED**

WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's Department – War Department

United States of America

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In the matter of the deaths of Riflemen Perpetuation of the testimony of

Bent and Cyr and four other men, all Jack Van Allen, Civilian.

Canadians, from poisoned liquor bought in

Kawasaki, Japan, after V-J Day.

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Taken at: Branch Office, Area Intelligence Division,

1270 Avenue of the Americas, (Room 804), New York 20, N. Y.

Date: 13 August 1946.

In the presence of: Joseph S. Smith, 1st Lt., Inf., 0-1329998, 108th CIC Det.

Area Intelligence Division,

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

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

Reporter: Edward J. Corcoran, Special Agent.

Questions by: Joseph S. Smith, 1st Lt. Inf.

Q. Please state your name and permanent home address.

A. Jack Van Allen, 633 California Road, Bronxville, New York.

Q. When and where were you born?

A. 8 November 1918 in Iowa falls, Iowa.

Q. What is your marital status?

A. I am single.

Q. What formal education have you had?

A. I graduated from New Rochelle High School.

Q. What is your civilian occupation?

A. I am in charge of a warehouse with an auto supply company.

Q. Did you serve in Japan?

A. Yes. I left the United States on 6 June 1941 and was captured on Bataan on 9 April 1942.

Q. Do you recall the death of several Allied soldiers from poisoned liquor?

A. Yes.

Q. Please tell what you know of those deaths.

A. We were all prisoners of war. When the war ended the Japanese liberated us immediately. Most everyone started to celebrate one way of the other. About the first week in September we received a call from the Mayor of the town of Gotozi for help. Some of the men were raising the devil in the town. Two Canadian MP's and myself went down. While on our way, I noticed a man by the name of Curley Moore, a member of the Royal Engineers, British Army, walking with a jug in his hand. We completed our business and on the way back ran into Moore again. He was pretty well under the weather and asked me to have a drink. I took a couple of swallows. Later that night, while in bed, I heard a thud in the yard. We were sleeping on the first floor of a building in town. I got up and looked out the window and saw a form lying on the ground. Another fellow and myself ran down and it was Moore. We brought him to the dispensary where Major James S. Smith, 477 N.E. 71st Street, Miami, Florida, examined him. He could find nothing wrong with Moore. The Major, however, did not know that Moore had been drinking heavily, nor did he then know what he was drinking. We left him in the dispensary and learned he died the following morning.

Q. Do you know what he died of?

A. Major Smith, a Major Robertson, British Army, and Dr. Huismann, Netherlands East Indies Army, held an inquiry after Moore died. There were no facilities for analyzing the contents of the jug. By smell and taste, however, they decided the jug contained a mixture of menthol spirits, wood alcohol, and kerosene. Moore died in convulsions. I later heard that his and other lives, might have been saved if a stomach pump had been available. Major Smith attempted to get one but it arrived too late to be of help.

Q. Do you recall a Canadian soldier by the name of Cyr?

A. No, I cannot recall the name.

Q. Do you recall a Canadian soldier by the name of Bent?

A. Yes. He was Howard N. Bent, Waterville, Kings County, Nova Scotia. He died during the first week in September 1945 exactly as Moore died – same symptoms and same contortion of the facial muscles.

Q. Do you know of anyone else who died as a result of poisoned liquor?

A. Well, I attended a mass burial of six men on or about 9 September 1945, outside of the town of Omine. Two of the men were Moore and Bent. Another was George Pemberton, 155 Worthing Road, Basingstoke (Meadhurst) Hants, England. He was a member of the Royal Engineers, British Army, and died on 8 September 1945. I do not know who the others were. I was told, however, that all six men died from poisoned liquor.

Q. Where was the liquor obtained?

A. In Moore's case I know it was a Japanese in town. Who he was and where he lived I don't know. However, Moore's best friend was a Kenneth L. Waller, Route 1, Box 128, Fresno, California. I heard he knew who the Japanese was and started after him intending to kill him. Somehow or other the Japanese police got to this Jap's house first and when Waller arrived he found the Jap had been arrested and was being held at the police station pending the arrival of the American Army. That was the last I heard of the whole thing. Whether he was held and eventually punished I do not know. I believe, however, that Lt. Ron G. Williams Darby, Tasmania, an Australian Army officer who was the Camp Commander, has the full story. I do not know who sold the liquor to the other men.

Q. You mentioned previously that you took a few drinks from Moore; did you suffer any ill effects?

A. Mo. I attribute this to the fact that the drinks made me thirsty and I drank a lot of water immediately. I also ate a good meal that same evening.

Q. Do you know of anyone else who suffered from poisoned liquor?

A. Yes. An American soldier by the name of Clifford Eberr, Peoria, Illinois, a civilian merchant marine sailor, Eric Kamins, 90 Hudson Street, Hoboken, New Jersey. Both these men recovered. I don't know where they obtained the liquor.

Q. Did you hear of any other poisonings?

A. Yes. As I recall it, I heard of men dying in other places from poisoned liquor. I remember talking it over with some of the fellows. Everyone agreed it looked like a plan on the part of the Japanese to get as many Allied soldiers as possible. It was pretty hard to hold the men back. They had been prisoners for over three years.

Q. Do you have anything further to add?

A. Only one thing which has nothing to do with a poisoned liquor. I do not know whether the death of a George W. Murray, 4631 Second Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, has ever been reported. He died on 4 May 1943 at POW Camp No. 8, of malnutrition. He was about twenty years of ages. I do not know what his rank was in the American Army other than that he was an enlisted man.

**George Weasley Murray - Canadian**

Q. Is there anything else you wish to state?

A. No, that is all.