

For The WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's department -- War Department

United States of America

Perpetuation of Testimony of Ben E. King, Major, 0-275671.

In the matter of the killing, by the Japanese, of an unknown American enlisted man at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during the latter part of 1943 or early part of 1945.

Taken at: District Intelligence Office San Antonio, Texas.

Date: 6 June 1945. ^

In the presence of: James C. Fitzgerald, Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Eighth Service Command ASF.

Reporter: Maxine G. Kelley, clerk stenographer, District intelligence office San Antonio Texas.

Questions by: Special Agent James c. Fitzgerald.

O. State your name, rank, serial number and permanent home address.

A. My name is Ben E. King, Major, CAC, ASN 0-275671, and my permanent home address is 5210 Fairfax walk, Austin, Texas.

O. Have you recently been returned to the United States from overseas?

A. Yes. I returned to Letterman General Hospital San Francisco California on 6 May 1945.

O. Were you a prisoner of war?

A. Yes, a prisoner of the Japanese.

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

A. I was captured at Fort Drum on May 7, 1942 and was taken to the barrio of WaWa about 40 kilometers south of Manila Bay on Luzon where I remained until May 20, 1942. I was then taken to Bilibid prison, Manila and remained there until approximately May 27, 1942. on May 28, 1942 I was taken to Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 and remained there until liberated by American Forces on January 30, 1945.

O Are you familiar with the circumstances surrounding the killing, by the Japanese, of an unknown American enlisted man at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during the latter part of 1942 or early part of 1943?

A. Yes, I am.

In the matter of the killing, by the Japanese, of an unknown American enlisted man at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during the latter part of 1942 or early part of 1943?

0. State what you know of your own knowledge and what was told to you about such incident.

A. On some day during the latter part of 1942 or the early part of 1943 I was in the area where an unlisted man was caught by the Japanese coming through the fence. I do not recall how I happened to be in the area, whether I was the officer of the guard or whether I was just in the vicinity, but I recall that I saw this enlisted man crawling down a ditch on the outside of the fence when the Japanese observed him and took him as he started to crawl through the fence. When this man was caught he was outside of the fence and had a sack full of food with him so he had apparently gone through the fence and obtained this sack of food and had started back to camp when he was caught. The Japanese then took the man to the Japanese Guard House, and I was told that he was later executed. At the time this took place the commander in this camp was Lt. Col. Maurie, a Japanese about 40 to 45 years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. tall and weighing about 145 pounds. He had a light complexion dark hair and dark eyes a small black mustache and did not wear glasses.

In the matter of the killing, by the Japanese, of Cpl. Jordan, Pvt. Wellmar, and two unknown American enlisted men all of Hqs. Battery, 2nd BN., 59th Coast Artillery Regiment, at a camp 12 kilometers east of Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during June of 1942.

During June of 1942, at a camp about 12 kilometers east of Camp Cabanatuan No. 1, an old Filipino Army camp where some American prisoners of war were then held, four members of Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 59th Coast Artillery Regiment, were executed by the Japanese. I was not a prisoner at this camp but my old First Sergeant was at such camp and witnessed the killing of these four men and upon his return to Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 he turned in to me an official report concerning such incident. These four American enlisted men were told by the Japanese that they were going to be punished, for what reason I do not know and the Japanese took them and tied them up in the hot sun, announcing that they would be given a certain number of hours of punishment. After these men had been tied up for one or two days, a large car drove up to the camp containing Japanese officers. The Japanese camp commander then announced to the camp that against his wishes this car had brought orders from the Japanese High Command in Manila^ orders which stated that he must execute these four Americans, four graves were dug and these four men were placed at the edge of the graves and a Japanese firing squad shot them. One of the men, corporal Jordan, rose up out of his grave four times and had to be shot the fifth time before he stayed down. I recall the name of only one other man of the four and he was Private Wellmar. This execution took place in plain view of the American prisoners held in the camp. I do not know who the Japanese officer in charge of this camp was, but the execution of these four men was ordered by General Homma, Chief of the Japanese High Command in Manila.

In the matter of the exposure, by the Japanese, of American prisoners of war to danger of shellfire on Bataan after surrender of American Forces in April of 1942.

On Bataan, following the surrender of the American Forces, the Japanese rushed all possible artillery to Bataan, in order to concentrate their fire upon the harbor defenses at Corregidor and the other forts in Manila Bay and force their early capitulation. Much of this artillery was set up around the town of Cabcaben and the Japanese began firing from this area into Corregidor and the other harbor defenses. Between April 9th, the date of surrender, and May 6th when Corregidor fell, the Japanese used American prisoners of war (both officers and enlisted men) to carry ammunition to their artillery weapons which were placed around Cabcaben. The entire area was under observation from the harbor defenses and American batteries were firing upon the Japanese batteries, consequently American prisoners of war were being forced to carry ammunition for the Japanese under fire from American guns placed in the harbor defenses. Large numbers of American prisoners were wounded and some were killed, the exact number I do not recall, in one instance American fire knocked out an entire Japanese artillery weapon and the crew, and the shell following the one which knocked out the gun crew landed near the American prisoners of war who were helping to load the gun and wounded some of them. One of the men who was wounded at this time was a friend of mine, Captain Wyland, and it was he who later gave me the information which I have just set forth. However, such exposure of American prisoners of war, by the Japanese, to American gunfire has been substantiated many times by other prisoners of war who were on Bataan at that time. The Japanese commander in the Philippines at that time was General Homma, and he was responsible for such use of American prisoners of war and the consequent exposure of such prisoners to American shellfire.

Killing by the Japanese of six unknown American prisoners of war approximately June 20, 1942.

One night in June of 1942 I think it was approximately June 30, but it could have been 15 days either way, the Japanese came into the camp at Cabanatuan Camp about midnight and began to count and recount the American prisoners of War. They carried out this count several times and finally, before the night was over, they took away six American enlisted men for questioning. These men were tied to posts in front of the main Japanese Guard House in front of our camp for the rest of the night. It was extremely hot on the day following and the Americans were given no water they were kept bareheaded, and they were badly beaten while tied up. Late afternoon of the same day, the prisoners were marched around the camp to the east side, where they were placed in a row facing the camp. A Japanese execution squad then shot the men to death. The graves in which these men were placed were located within 20 feet of the fence at the place where they were executed. This was about the middle point on the east side of the camp. The Japanese commander of the camp at the time this execution occurred was Lt. Col. Maurie, and he allowed such to be done.

Killing by the Japanese of Lt. Col. Biggs, Lt. Col. Howard Britung, and Lt. Gilbert, U. S. Navy at Cabanatuan during September, 1942

One evening during September, 1942, about one hour after sunset which would have made it about 8 P.M., Lt. Col. Biggs, Lt. Col. Bitung, both of the United States Army and Lt. Gilbert of the United States Navy, were found in a ditch inside the fence by an American sentry. The three officers were discovered in the ditch when an American prisoner came out of one of the barracks, and against orders failed to go to the latrine and used this ditch as a urinal. When he did so he urinated upon Lt. Col. Biggs and Col. Biggs started yelling and the noise which he made caused the American sentry on duty inside of the compound to investigate. When the sentry found the three officers he remonstrated with them but Col. Biggs took the sentry's club away from him and knocked the sentry down. By this time a number of other American prisoners had come out of the barracks to where the commotion was going on and endeavored to calm Col. Biggs and the other officers and bring them into the barracks before the Japanese were aware of what was going on. It was only when one of the prisoners made a flying tackle and brought Col. Biggs to the ground that it was possible to quiet him, by that time the Japanese heard the commotion and came to see what was going on. When the Japanese saw that the three American officers had parcels with them, indicating they were in the process of attempting an escape, they took the three officers outside of our gate and questioned them and then moved them to the Japanese guard house. The three officers were tied up to posts in front of the Japanese guard house and were left outside in the wind and rain. Despite the noise caused by the wind I could hear the Japanese beating them. In addition to beating them with clubs the Japs used judo methods on them by throwing them up into the air and allowing them to fall on the ground, where the Japanese would stamp and beat them in the kidneys, the face, and the groin. The following morning the three men were still conscious but during the morning they occasionally became unconscious and the Japs would revive them so that they could continue their torture. They were tortured all day long by the Japanese, and as they were tied beside a well traveled Filipino road the Japs forced every passing Filipino to dismount his vehicle, bow to the Japanese guard and take a club and beat the Americans. When the Filipinos failed to strike the Americans hard enough, the Japanese would beat the Filipinos. This torture continued throughout the day and the following night, and on the second day the Americans were still alive although they appeared to be in horrible condition, Col. Britung's face was completely caved in and his jaws were crushed. On this morning a light rain was falling and a detachment of Japanese (headed by one officer who I can only identify by saying that he was a captain and had lost a thumb on Bataan) armed with rifles and entrenching tools untied the Americans and supporting them by the shoulders marched them east on the road directly passing the

side of the camp. I went to the fence and saw them passing but once they went behind the trees which lined the road I did not see them again. I stayed at the fence for perhaps 30 minutes or an hour and while there I heard some shots in the direction in which the group had marched. About 10 minutes after the shots were fired the Japanese re-appeared and the entrenching tools that I had seen them carry out were now covered with mud, indicating that they had been used since I saw them last. We were never informed by the Japanese that these men were executed, but we were only told to drop them from the camp roll. The Japanese camp commander at this time was Lt. Col. Maurie. Col. Maurie was aware of the treatment these officers were receiving and permitted such torture and physical treatment.

In the Matter of Beatings and Physical Torture administered to American Prisoners of War, by the Japanese, at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1.

While I was a prisoner of war at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 from May 28, 1942 until liberated by American Forces on January 30, 1945, I witnessed countless beatings administered by the Japanese to American prisoners of war. Most of these beatings took place on the farm detail outside of the camp, and I would estimate that not more than ten percent of the entire camp personnel escaped a beating at some time or another. There were few days when fifty men did not receive beatings while working on detail. Once during September or October of 1945, I was beaten on the head with a 2 x 4 by a Japanese guard, a guard whom we nicknamed "Air Raid". At the time this occurred there were about 1200 American prisoners in mass formation, and this guard came up from behind the group I was standing with and he started swinging a 2 x 4 right and left and he knocked down at least 50 men. There were 50 others who were struck but not knocked down, of whom I was one. Frequently on the farm Japanese guards would take from one to fifteen men and torture them by forcing them to kneel down with a hoe handle placed in back of their knees on top of the calves of their legs and force them to sit upon their haunches with this hoe handle thrust behind their legs; in this position, and with their arms outstretched would make them hold a five gallon container full of dirt out in front of them. If they dropped the container, they were beaten. A short period of time in this position would cause circulation to stop, and I estimate that I have seen a total of 500 men who had been thus tortured. They were unable to walk after such treatment and consequently we had to carry them in from the field. During the period I was at Camp Cabanautan No. 1, I also saw countless Filipinos beaten, and I once saw over 200 Filipinos beaten, placed in the hot sun, given no water, then tied up and beaten more thoroughly. This particular incident occurred sometime in 1943, I do not recall exactly when. It is impossible for me to recall all of the instances upon which I have seen beatings and torture administered. However, I can safely say that these beatings occurred hundreds of times, and I can state that I have seen the Japanese guards whose names follow administer beatings frequently: "Little Speedo, Air Raid, Donald Duck, Porky, Charlie Chaplin, Caribou Sam, Bull Montana". I do not remember the proper Japanese names of these men, but I am certain that they have been properly identified by other liberated prisoners. The course of treatment of American prisoners of war which I have set out was followed during the entire time I was a prisoner, and was carried on under each of the camp commanders who were there while I was a prisoner. These camp commanders were Lt. Col. Maurie, Major Ewanaka, and Major Takasaki.

In the Matter of the Torture and Beating By the Japanese of Five Filipinos at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during September or October of 1944

Sometime during September or October of 1944 five (5) Filipino men were brought into the camp at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 and were tied up by the Japanese and tortured. The Japanese attempted to hide these men from the Americans by placing them where they could not see them. However, we were able to watch what they were doing to the Filipinos, and I saw them, beat these men brutally, and I saw the Japanese carry hot coals from a fire and place these coals on the bare stomachs of these Filipinos. It was rumored in camp that these men were being tortured because they had been caught digging vegetables on the farm, but I do not know if that is true. After these men were tortured they were taken away and I do not know if they were finally killed or not. The Japanese commander in the camp at this time was Major Takasaki and he was aware of this occurrence. Major Takasaki was -- description omitted--

In the matter of the execution, by the Japanese, of an American enlisted man, (FNU)^ Compton, at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during September 1943.

During September of 1943 an American enlisted man named Compton, who was a patient in the locked psychopathic ward, escaped from the ward into the field outside the camp. His escape was discovered by the Japanese and they combed the countryside for him for several days but didn't locate him. He was finally found in a composte (manure) pile by Americans working on the camp farm. When found, Compton was in a state of coma. He was brought to the camp and remained in the American section for perhaps an hour when the Japanese guards came in with a litter, placed him on the litter and marched from the camp with him at about dusk. The official Japanese report that we received in the camp concerning Compton was that he had been tried and dealt with under Japanese army regulations. I know that he was never seen again and that he must have been executed. The Japanese camp commander, who was responsible, was Major Ewanaka.

In the matter of the burning, by the Japanese, of a barrio near Camp Cabanatuan No.1 during the latter part of 1942.

One morning during the latter part of 1942 (I can recall neither the month nor the day) a number of Japanese dive bombers flew over in the vicinity of Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 and began bombing and strafing a nearby barrio, prior to the time this attack began I had neither seen nor heard evidence of any hostilities in the region. This barrio was located between Camp No. 1 and the town of Rizal and was slightly east of north between 10 and 15 kilometers from the camp. The Japanese bombing and strafing lasted for about an hour and it started large fires which I observed burning for some time. I later heard from Filipinos that this barrio had been completely burned out and the population wiped out, as the barrio was caught without warning by the Japanese bombers, however, I cannot say that this report is true. In as much as this bombing and strafing was done by Japanese war planes, such mission must have been ordered by the Japanese High Commander in Manila, General Homma.

In the matter of the exposure, by the Japanese, of American prisoners of war to danger of bombing in and near Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 in January of 1945.

In January of 1945 the Japanese came to Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 and forced American prisoners of war to begin repairing military lines of communication in the Cabanatuan camp area and along the cabanatuan-pongabon road. During this period this road was under almost constant strafing and bombing from low-flying American planes, which planes were strafing and bombing all traffic passing along the road. The American prisoners of war who were forced by the Japanese to repair lines of communication were driving in trucks all along this road, performing the duties forced upon them by the Japanese, and they were constantly subjected to fire from the American planes above, although they suffered no casualties, they were constantly exposed to danger, in addition^ during January, American prisoners of war were forced to repair Japanese tanks and army trucks;, doing all types of mechanical work and battery repair work. It is impossible for me to say who the Japanese Camp Commander was at this time as the Japanese were constantly moving in and out of the camp. However, the Japanese Commander on Luzon at this time was Lt. Gen. Yamashita and he was responsible for such exposure of American prisoners.

In the matter of the exposure of American Field Hospitals numbers 1 and 2, to danger of shellfire and bombing on Bataan after, surrender of the American Forces in April 1942.

After the surrender of Bataan, American Field Hospitals numbers 1 and 2, both full of patients, were left on Bataan and were not moved away until after the fall of the harbor defenses at Corregidor and the other forts in Manila Bay. One of these hospitals was located at Cabcaben, located there in buildings and tents, and we were aware of its location. At that time, after the surrender of Bataan and before the surrender of the harbor defenses, I was with the 59th Coast Artillery Regiment on Fort Drum. We had excellent maps and, as we had the location of the American Hospitals on Bataan, we had circled such hospitals and we had orders not to fire into the circles we had, without calling back, after receiving fire orders, to verify the order to fire inside the circle and call attention to the fact that such firing order would necessitate firing inside the circle. I know that my battery fired only one round which came close to the hospital area at Cabcaben, and it struck on the ring of the circle so that the hospital area only received spray of fragments from the shell. We know that Japanese artillery batteries were placed on the hospital grounds, as we could observe the fire coming from the Japanese weapons from the hospital area. I later learned that the Japanese batteries were placed right on the hospital grounds, right next to the wards. Although our fire from Fort Drum did not strike either one of the hospitals, fire from Corregidor did strike Hospital No. 2, and one ward with all its patients was completely destroyed. The Japanese were responsible for all casualties caused by American shellfire as their artillery was placed right in the hospital area where the effort was made by the Americans not to strike the hospital. It would have been a simple matter for the Japanese to have evacuated the American patients from these hospitals to the rear, but this was not done, and instead the Japanese attempted to use such patients as a protection or as insurance, against American counter battery fire upon their artillery which Americans in the harbor defenses knew to be in the area of Field Hospitals Numbers 1 and 2. The Japanese High Commander in the Philippines, General Homma, was responsible for such failure to evacuate American patients and for the emplacement of Japanese artillery in American hospital areas, subjecting American prisoners of war to danger of shellfire from their own weapons in the harbor defenses in Manila Bay.

In the matter of the killing, by the Japanese, of (FNU) Trujillo, an American enlisted man, at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during March of 1945. ,

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On approximately March 30, 1943 (I am not certain of this date -- it could have been 30 days either way), I was awakened during the night by a commotion of shouting and excited Japanese voices. It was about midnight but I went outside and I saw that the Japanese had an American outside of the fence at the southwest corner of the old hospital area. The Japanese were crowded about him and the Japanese officer of the day was present. I later learned that this American was a perimeter guard who had been going through the inner fence dealing with the Japanese guard on the outside of the camp. On this occasion the American had apparently waited until the Japanese officer of the day had passed by, and after he had passed the American had gone over to carry on some sort of negotiation with the Japanese guard. However, the Japanese officer of the day was apparently suspicious and he turned around and came back. When the Japanese guard who was dealing with the American saw the Japanese officer of the day returning he turned on the American and struck him with his rifle butt and started blowing his whistle, yelling that it was an attempted escape. The American guard, whose name I learned was Trujillo, was tied to a post at the guardhouse, next to the hospital fence, with his hands tied behind him. As I was close by, I could hear the Japanese beating the American at intervals all night long. The American was held, and I watched the Japanese torture him. He was beaten with clubs, he was beaten in the kidneys and legs with rifle butts and bayonets. Finally a Japanese non-commissioned officer of the guard took off his belt (which was a wide belt with a large metal buckle) and began to beat the American about the face with the buckle. The Japanese continued beating Trujillo until the Japanese was exhausted, and by this time he had succeeded in completely obliterating Trujillo's features and Trujillo was unconscious. He was later revived and he was marched away and I heard that he was executed. The camp commander at this time was Major Wanaka and he was completely responsible for the treatment which this American prisoner received and for his death.

In the matter of the killing, by the Japanese of 2nd Lt. Bob M Huffcutt at Camp Cabanatuan No. 1 during April 1944

During the month of April 1944, 2nd Lt. Bob Huffcutt was shot and killed by a Japanese guard while he, Huffcutt, was working in his okra patch inside of the camp compound. At the time Lt. Huffcutt was shot, I was in front of my barracks building and I was shielded from Huffcutt by this barracks building and other nearby buildings. It was just after lunch-time and I was washing my mess gear when I heard a rifle shot. I rushed to the rear of the barracks building and as I got to the rear of the building I saw a Japanese guard in a guard tower level his rifle and fire at an object laying on the ground inside the fence. At that time I did not know who or what the, guard was shooting at. Immediately after the final shot which I heard, the Japanese guards started driving all Americans away from the area. The boys who had been in the okra patch were also driven back, and they told us that it was an American working in the okra patch who had been shot by the Japanese guard. I later learned that this American was Bob Huffcutt. The American prisoners who tried to go to the aid of Huffcutt were driven back, and it was 20 minutes before Japanese officers and guards came into the compound and went to the okra patch. Finally, after the Japanese officers and guards had left the patch, they allowed the Americans to go in and recover the body of Lt. Huffcutt. At this time the Japanese had an order that Americans should not come closer to the fence than one meter. However, when Lt. Huffcutt was shot he was at least 12 feet on the inside of the fence, and I saw where one bullet had plowed the ground, and it was about 11 or 12 feet inside the fence. There was absolutely no excuse for the killing of Lt. Huffcutt, nor had he done anything to provoke such attack. Lt. Huffcutt, prior to the war, had been a personal secretary to Mr. Sayre, U.S. High Commissioner in the Philippines, and after refusing to leave the islands upon the outbreak of hostilities, was given a commission in the U. S. Army. I do not know who the Japanese guard was who was immediately responsible for the death of Lt. Huffcutt. However, the camp commander at this time was Major Takasaki.

In the matter of the exposure to public exhibition and ridicule of American prisoners of war at WaWa, Nasugbu Military District, Luzon, during May 1942.

On or about way 8, 1942, all of the American military personnel from Fort Drum, in Manila Bay, numbering approximately 224 men, and from "Fort Frank, also in Manila Bay, were taken prisoners by the Japanese and shipped out of Manila Bay by Japanese fishing boats to a point some 20 miles south of Manila Bay. I was one of the prisoners taken from Fort Drum. We were unloaded on what had formerly been a deep sea pier which had been wrecked by American forces prior to evacuation in December 1941. The barrio of WaWa, a few kilometers from the city of Nasugbu, is where we were unloaded. There we were stripped of all possessions, including our hats, canteens and mess gear, and a Japanese colonel commanding the Japanese Military District made a short speech during which he told us that the Japanese would fight for one hundred years -- until the last American was exterminated, and told us that we were to be severely punished by the Japanese. The Japanese began working us, and worked us for three successive days, 24 hours each day. For two days we received no water at all, and at the end of this period nearly all of us were unconscious and those who were not unconscious were very ill. The American prisoners were then formed into a line similar to bucket brigades and required to pass rocks in this manner with great rapidity. These lines were paced by Filipino citizens working under Japanese bayonets, and these Filipinos were relieved every 50 minutes to keep fresh Filipinos working all the time. Every time an American dropped a rock or slowed down, a Japanese guard would come up and club the man to the ground with a rifle. The only rest we had during the three days was two 1-hour breaks we received during the night. Even during these breaks we were not allowed to lay down and any American who so much as touched his elbow to the ground was struck with a bayonet or clubbed into unconsciousness. Filipino citizens by the hundreds were herded by Japanese soldiers who forced the Filipinos to witness this brutality at bayonet point. A motion picture camera was brought up and while the Japanese announcer taunted and jeered at us the Japanese took motion pictures of us at work. They announced to us and to the Filipinos that this picture would be titled "America learns to work". This punishment continued for approximately seven days, and at the end of that time we were marched to Nasugbu and forced to publicly put on a review for the Japanese. We were practically naked and we were never allowed to put any covering on our heads at all. As a result, very few of these Americans survived the first year of imprisonment, their resistance had been

so lowered. Our Commanding officer at Fort Drum, Col. Louis Kirkpatrick, never completely recovered from his exposure and beating and died the following April. This entire course of treatment and public exhibition was administered under the direction of the Japanese District Commander. I do not recall his name, and the only physical characteristics about him that I can recall are that he was between fifty and fifty-five years old, very small, darker than usual, and that while he was watching us work he foamed at the mouth like a mad dog and that he foamed in this manner whenever he became extremely agitated. I recall that he was a colonel and that he was in charge of the Nasugbu Military District for the Japanese and that he was relieved on approximately May 15, 1942.