

DEPOSITION OF MAJOR ARTHUR WERMUTH

Name: Wermuth, Arthur W. Rank: Major ASN: 0346666 .

after being duly sworn at The Trade and Commerce Bldg. on 8 October, 1945, testifies as follows:

Q. How old are you ?

A. 30

Q. Were you captured by the Japanese and made a prisoner of war? If so where and when?

A. April 9, 1942 Bataan, PI

Q. At the time of your capture of what unit were you a member?

A. 57th Infantry P.S.

Q. By what Japanese unit were you captured?

A. I do not know, but the forces that were fighting on Bataan.

Q. Do you expect to be repatriated, and if so, to what country?

A. USA

Q. What will your complete address be after your repatriation?

A. Traverse City, Michigan or 2628 Farwell Ave. , Chicago, Ill.

Q. Will you state the names and locations of the camps at which you were held prisoner of war and the dates you were confined at each camp?

A. Cabanatuan – June – August 30, 1942
Lipa, Bantagas – September 42 – January 43
Bilibid – January 43 – July 43
Cabanatuan – July 43 – October 44
Fukuoka Camp 22 Japan – Jan 45 – April 45
Mukden Manchuria – April 45 – Liberation

Q. Do you know, or have reason to believe, that the Imperial Japanese forces failed to treat prisoners of war with humanity or otherwise committed atrocities and war crimes against them.

A. Yes

Q. Will you state all facts in detail pertaining to atrocities, war crimes, violations of Rules of Land Warfare and human decency at Boat Trip from Manila to Mojii, Japan, the dates thereof, the

perpetrators, giving their names, ranks, units, and other identifying information.

A. 13 December 1944 –

Over 600 men in hold of Oryoku Maru, over 800 in another. Each man did not have 24” to himself – for 7 hours no latrine. In the 800 man hold 3 5 gal. cans sent down – Only meal that was decent in 47 days was the first meal on board – * canteen of tea per day.

14 Dec - We were bombed – All food and water stopped – Boat hit - 14th we got 10 gal. of tea for 800 men 15th – 2 bombs in rear hold – orders given to evacuate. Swam ashore at Olongapo, PI. No gear with us – stayed there 4 days – Plenty of water – 1 GI spoon of raw rice per day – No blankets or other clothing –

Went to San Fernando, Pampanga PI there in boxcars, 160 to 1 car – from 10AM Dec. 24 – 6AM Dec. 25 – man in front of me died during the night – Quarters were so close that he did not crumple up until unloaded. Taken off at San Fernando, La Union, stayed one day boarded ship. Got 2 rice balls and 1 canteen of water.

Lt. Col Joseph Ganault, in charge of half-tracks in islands was in charge of front holds – Now dead.

Second Ship – 2 times per day * cup of rice – * cup tea or water – 25 Dec to Jan 1 – conditions were fair – no clothes – very cold – 1 Jan to 9 we were in Takow Harbor in the hold – On 8 Jan the group was split – I know following is correct – 478 in front hold – Hold had just been emptied of oil and coal, filthy – 9 Jan – Morning ration came down at 7:45. Planes came over at 8 – Strafed then put two bombs in forward part of hold – one on port side – killed 225 immediately – Not over 25 people that did not have shrapnel – On 14th Jan 152 out 478 got out of hold – 116 were seriously wounded – Rest walked. Out of 478 not 50 alive. Ship was not marked.

From 9th to the 12th, the bodies lay in the hold – The wounded were left also. They were not given any medicine, no bandages, very little food, while on deck there were 2 Red Cross bundles of medicine. I plead medicine and to have the dead moved, to no avail.

Lt. Teschino, wore glasses – 5’ 8” 160# gold teeth – decent looking, looked like Mulato, English had been Shinto priest, made statement that prisoners lives meant nothing – bare minimum would give us – He laughed at us when we asked for medicine, food. He said the Red Cross parcels were for our new camp. Interpreter Wada, 5’3” – civilian – wore glasses part of the time. 140 short legs – very exciteable, he would get us water for a gold wrist watch, 2000 yen, or anything of that nature. Morning of the 13th we got 20 gal. of tea.

12th bodies taken out – AM on 14th we were taken out with wounded. 900 out of 1600 left on ship. Went a small ship 2’X4’ given each man – twice per day * cup of rice – 4 GI spoons of salty water – I weighed 190 when I left – on January 30 at Moji I weighed 103. No food, no medicine, less 500 got off at Mojii. Almost all wounded were dead – It was cold, some were given clothes – 35% got off barefooted and in underwear.

Then detailed to take 110 men to hospital in Mojii – less than 30 lived – We were in hospital 4 days before doctor came-

One doctor a 1st Lt. fair English – good German – 5’9” slender 150 full head of hair – no mannerisms – no glasses – I can identify him – We called him Butcher – He had all Red Cross medicine.

Com. Carry Smith USN, had shrapnel in his neck – 7 days after we were there with a knife and scissors he gauged out the shrapnel without anesthetic, laughing at Smith. Another man had a 50 Cal. bullet cut out without anesthetic – Although were a minimum 60 lbs. below wt. We left Phil. with 7 were made to take care of the feeding – washing of floors, carrying out dead, washing of clothes without benefit of any heat –

/S/ Arthur W. Wermuth

Major Infantry

Subscribed and sworn to me this 8th day of October, 1945.

/S/ James H. Ross 2d. Lt. Infantry

A Certified True Copy

/S/ Claude A. Muzzy

CWO USA