

CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 65130 JAG.
HQ. Allied Land Forces,
South East Asia Command.
6th November, 1946.

Commander,
Singapore District.

Subject: War Crimes Trials. - Kaneoka Kiko.

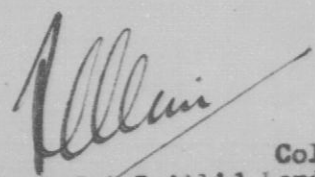
Reference the proceedings of the trial by
Military Court of the above-named accused, and the
attached petition.

1. The accused was tried by Military Courts from 14th - 17th October, on a charge of committing a war crime by being concerned in the ill-treatment of Prisoners of War resulting in the death of some and in physical suffering to others. He was convicted of the charge except that the court made a special finding excluding the causing of the death of some although including the causing of the death of one LAC.L. Thomson. He was sentenced to death by hanging.
2. This case is connected with the Ambon case, in which as you will remember Lieut.Col. Anami, "Bamboo Maori" and others were sentenced to death for crimes in Ambon Island and on the SS. Maros Maru. This accused was not tried with the others involved in the Ambon atrocities, in as much as he had not arrived until very much later than the main body of the camp staff and it was therefore considered more equitable that he should be tried separately.
3. The facts of the case are set out in the abstract of evidence attached to the proceedings. It will be well to point out however that at his trial two witnesses, F/Lt. Blackwood and Pt. Jan Schreuders appeared in person and in general testified that this Korean Guard whilst in charge of the cookhouse at Ambon camp wielded complete powers over Prisoners of War and ran a reign of terror throughout the camp. He was noted for the terrible thrashings which he inflicted on all who came in contact with him and he behaved throughout with a vicious brutality which is all the more blameworthy when one considers that the persons were very weak from prolonged malnutrition and large numbers were in a dying condition. He was responsible for with-holding food supplies and during the voyage on the SS. Maros Maru when the fresh water supply was very curtailed he beat men for dragging themselves to a water pipe from which fresh water was running through small holes in the canvas pipe. Everything possible to have made the Prisoners lives a misery appears to have been done by this man. F/O. Mason stated that "part of his daily amusement was to move around the particularly sick Prisoners of War hitting them on the head with a heavy piece of firewood, this weapon being about 18" long by about 2" thick. He followed up these beatings by demonstrations of ju-jitsu on the very sick Prisoners of War throwing them over his shoulder on to the deck." This witness considered that the cause of the enormous death rate was disease and starvation accelerated by the ill-treatment by the accused.

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4. With regard to the death of LAC. Thomson, in whose death of the prisoner has been found to have been concerned; this occurred on the SS. Maros Maru. Thomson was extremely sick at the time and it is alleged that he could not walk and was delirious. He was crawling along the crowded deck to get some fresh water when Kaneoka Kike saw him and began beating him with the small stick which he always carried. He rained a continuous series of blows in quick succession on Thomson's forehead hitting him about twenty or thirty times. When he had finished Thomson collapsed on the deck. This incident took place about 3 p.m.. On the following morning Thomson was dead and was buried at sea. Affidavits by Cpl. Cooper and F/Sgt. Almond testify as to the death of Thomson and are a remarkably consistent account of the whole transaction. In his defence, the accused, whilst admitting a certain amount of minor assaults on prisoners utterly denies the reputation ascribed to him by the prosecution witnesses and in particular stated that he had never beaten sick Prisoners of War nor had he gone to their quarters. In his petition he urges for consideration that he on one occasion stole medicine to give to a patient who was suffering from hari beri and that he gave two officers special food. I do not consider that these petty instances, if they are true, can count to any material extent in his favour and in view of his terrible record of systematic brutality, I cannot advise that the sentence should be commuted.

5. In my opinion these proceedings are in order, there is ample evidence to support the conviction and I advise confirmation of the finding and sentence. There is nothing in the petition which would give authority for reducing the sentence and I suggest that it should be dismissed.


Colonel,
Offg. D.J.A.G. Allid Land Forces,
S.E.A.

FCAK/PS.