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STOCKADE PRISONERS REBELLION

Investigation conducted by S/Sgt. Yeramian

Date: December 31, 1943; hour: 1430

Sgt. Yeramian was asked by Harry Ellis (Red Cross director) if he would like to go over to 320th area - there was some trouble and "gas" was being used.

Investigator ordered photographer, Pvt. Shank, to prepare his equipment and stand by for orders, then went with Mr. Ellis.

Upon arriving at stockade area and observing difficulties in stockade, investigator requested Mr. Ellis to drive him back to office to pick up photographer.

After picking up photographer, investigator returned to stockade area and entered same.

Lt. Schaner, prison officer, was marching prisoners out into open area. In the area of stockade and in front of prisoners were the following officers: Lt. Col. Verne Austin, Major Earl Phillips, 2nd Lt. Leonard Schaner, 2nd Lt. Russell Smith, 1st Lt. Forbes, and 2nd Lt. Crawford.

Lt. Schaner was the only officer who spoke to the prisoners as a group.

Lt. Schaner:..When we call you men out for roll call we expect you to fall out and no questions asked....

Lt. Schaner then spoke to Cpl. Rosenfield. Cpl. Rosenfield pointed out a man in the Japanese group, one Isamu Uchida, and ordered him to step out in front. Lt. Schaner then ordered Cpl. Rosenfield to place him in the small stockade where Tom Yoshiyama and Hiroyoshi Tsuda are confined.

Lt. Schaner:..Now if there are any more of you who would like to go with him, just step up towards the gate..

There was a momentary pause, then Koji Todoroki very boldly and defiantly stepped out; a murmur passed through the prisoners, followed by the entire group breaking ranks and moving in the direction of the gate. Upon this action by the prisoners, Lt. Schaner ordered them to get back.

Lt. Schaner:..I was just waiting for that. You men will be put on bread and water for twenty-four hours. You men will have to learn that we mean business and will not tolerate such a demonstration.

(This was after Lt. Schaner conferred with Col. Austin and Major Phillips.)

Lt. Schaner then commenced to order the trucks to roll into stockade and take out all the food with the exception of bread from the mess hall. This work was done by the military.

Upon the suggestion of the investigator (S-2) a Japanese detail was picked out to perform this manual labor. Masanao Kasuda was a bit reluctant to more or help carry out any of the foodstuffs he was detailed for, and received a few tender cuffs from Lt. Smith and S/Sgt. Anderson which then made him change his mind.

The S-2 investigator tried to keep on the most friendly and diplomatic terms with the prisoners, many of whom he knows by name, by manner of slight jests and apparent friendliness which outwardly was accepted graciously.

It was also ordered to take out all food from the individual barracks, such as cookies, oranges, apples and other delicacies that were allowed into the stockade for the Christmas holiday.

On an afterthought Lt. Schaner ordered all tobacco also be taken out of stockade.

This search was conducted by military personnel in a most unnecessary destructive method.

The S-2 investigator ordered Cpl. Becker of S-2 to search for any important written data or material which resulted in the discovery of the minutes of meeting of negotiating committee on November 4, 1943.

The investigator of S-2 and T/5 Hockensmith of S-2 conducted a search of all attics but found nothing.

The investigator warned and advised military personnel conducting search not to put anything in their pockets belonging to prisoners.

After the trucks rolled out of the prison gate the prisoners were dispersed and returned to their quarters.

Investigator remained in stockade until last of military personnel left area. When investigator was about to walk away from gate, Mr. Fred Mohri came running to fence and called investigator back asking if he could have a few words with him. He stated that a wristwatch was missing of one of the men in barracks #1. He no sooner made his statement, then another man came dashing out and stated that he was missing a pair of gloves. Investigator gave Fred Mohri assurance that

S-2 would attempt to find said last articles for them.

Investigator proceeded to prison office to consult with Lt. Schaner in regard to missing articles and also to suggest searching military personnel who made the search of stockade. Lt. Schaner at once called to some of the searchers who were in the prison office building and strongly reprimanded them for such unethical activities. Lt. Schaner instructed them to throw everything they might have picked up from stockade onto a bed while he stepped out of the room. Several (perhaps twenty-five or thirty) packages of cigarettes were then found on bed and the before-mentioned gloves. The wristwatch was not found.

Lt. Schaner also ordered men from 320th who participated in search to return what they had taken. Only cigarettes and a deck of cards was returned. The Lt. also informed Lt. Crawford to check his men, but nothing was found with them.

Investigator returned to stockade to return gloves. Cpl. Becker accompanied him. As soon as barracks #2 was entered by S-2, complaints of missing articles were hurled at them. Watches, fountain pen, cigarettes, radio, gloves, and cash money from wallets. Edward Ige's radio was said to have been seen thrown out onto the ground from the barracks. The radio was missing. Investigator advised Edward Ige to make a complete list of missing articles, their description, the person to whom each article belonged, and its approximate value. Kazuo Kozama claimed forty dollars was missing from his wallet. Investigator did not go into other barracks, not wanting to become involved too much, assuming that matter was for the prison office to straighten out.

Investigator and other S-2 men left stockade at 1610 hours.

Investigator's Conversation with Prisoners

Invest.: Hiya, Sugimoto.

Sugimoto: Hello, Sgt. Sam.

Invest.: The hell's the matter with you guys, can't you keep your nose clean?

Sugimoto: Our nose is clean.

Invest.: What's the matter anyhow, what happened?

Sugimoto: Oh, nothing you don't know.

Invest.: Well, Andy, if you want to be nasty it's your privilege. I would only like to know your side of the story. I myself believe it takes two to make a fight or argument. You don't have to say anything if you don't wish to--that is your privilege. I was only trying to help you with what little I might.

(Silence from Sugimoto.)

Several of the men about Sugimoto spoke to him in Japanese (men who I know) whereupon Sugimoto began telling me his story:

Sugimoto: Well, it was like this. Lt. Schaner took Tom (Yoshiyama) and Tsuda out of here and placed them in the small stockade. They were chosen by Lt. Schaner himself to act as spokesmen and heads of the prisoners. Anything they say or do is the wish or thought of every man in here. He (Lt. Schaner) had no right to take them out of here.

Invest.: When were they taken out, Andy?

Sugimoto: Yesterday (December 30, 1943 - 2300 hours) about eleven o'clock.

Kuratomi who was close by spoke up and said:

Kuratomi: It was right after we returned from speaking to Capt. Hartman.

Invest.: Oh, hello, George, sorry I didn't see you standing there. Thanks.--

Kuratomi: Maybe Mr. Mohri here could tell you more about it. He was the one who negotiated with the Lieutenant.

Invest.: Well, Mohri, now let's have it from you. How did this all start?

Mohri: Well, when Lt. Schaner took Tom (Yoshiyama) and Tsuda out of here we didn't like it. We did not come out for roll call yesterday (December 30, 1943). You know roll call is usually at 1:00 o'clock right after lunch.

I talked to Lt. Schaner about it and he said that if we would clean up the area and fall out for roll call that day (December 30, 1943) that he would release Tom and Tsuda. We cleaned the area around the barracks and went out for roll call. The next morning we expected to see Tom and Tsuda returned here, but they were not. Therefore, when roll call came today nobody went out. We were waiting for Tom and Tsuda.

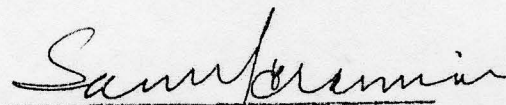
Investigator acted quite sympathetic and voiced the opinion that twenty-four hours of bread and water wouldn't bother them too much. Whereupon Rev. Kai who was also close by spoke up and said:

Rev. Kai: You know, Sgt. Sam, Japanese people are funny.

Invest.: Yes, Reverend, I know just what you mean. The Japanese people can take a lot of punishment and do not mind it. I know it doesn't bother you to torture yourself.

Rev. Kai: (with a grin) Yes, that's right, that's what I mean.

Investigator left area.


Sam Yeramian, S/Sgt.