

## AUSTRALIAN WAR CRIMES COMMISSION.

### QUESTIONNAIRE.

NOTES:--

(a) This questionnaire should be completed by:--

(i) All repatriated Australian prisoners of war (A.I.F., R.A.A.F. and R.A.N.).

(ii) All repatriated Australian civil internees.

(iii) All repatriated British civil internees in the Pacific Area (excluding Malaya and China).

(iv) All members and ex-members of the Allied forces who have actual knowledge of war crimes committed by the enemy.

(b) It will be completed in the presence of an officer who will countersign the signature of the person making the statement.

(c) It is important that a full statement on page 3 (carried on to page 4 if necessary) be furnished as well as the answer to 8(f).

1. Army number:

761676

2. Rank:

L/BOMBARDIER

3. Full name (in BLOCK letters):

LEE, CHARLES ALBERT

4. Unit at time of capture and/or place of capture (State here unit in which soldier was serving at time of capture, e.g. 2/1 Fd. Regt. or H.Q. 6 Aust. Div., etc.):

15/6 H.A.A. REGT. RA.

JAVA

5. Home address:

48 RIDLEY STREET, LEICESTER, ENGLAND

6. At what enemy camps and hospitals were you confined and when were you at each?

8.3.1942 TO 29.10.1942 JAVA

28.11.1942 TO 14.9.1945 JAPAN

7. Do you have any information about any atrocities against, or mistreatment of, Allied soldiers, prisoners of war, civilian internees or the civilian population for which you think the perpetrators should be punished? (Answer by stating YES or NO in the spaces provided below)--

(a) Killings or executions:

YES.

(b) Rape, torture, beatings or other cruelties:

YES.

(c) Imprisonment under improper conditions:

YES.

(d) Massacres, wholesale looting, pillage, or burning of towns or villages:

NO.

(e) Use of prisoners of war or civilians on enemy military works or operations:

NO.

(f) Exposure of prisoners of war to danger of gunfire, bombing, torpedoing, or other hazards of war:

NO.

(g) Transportation of prisoners of war under improper conditions or deportation of civilians:

YES.

(h) Public exhibition or exposure to ridicule of prisoners of war:

NO.

(i) Failure to provide prisoners of war or internees with proper medical care, food or quarters:

YES.

(j) Collective punishment of a group for offence of others:

(k) Breaches of rules relating to the Red Cross:

YES.

(l) Cannibalism:

NO.

(m) Mutilation of the dead:

NO.

\*(n) Any other war crimes not specifically mentioned above for which you think the guilty persons should be punished:

NO.

**If any question is answered YES then state the facts in 8 (f) and on pages 3 and 4.**

8. Details of Atrocities.--

(a) Kind of crime

KILLING

(b) When and where it happened

KUMAMOTO, JAPAN.

(c) Who was the victim? (Give complete description including name and whether military or civilian personnel)

GUNNER KEENAN.

(d) Who was the perpetrator? (Give complete description and as much information as possible)

LT. SAKAMOTO, CAMP COMMANDANT - NO. 1 CAMP FUKUOKA  
PTE. KATSURA, CAMP INTERPRETER

(e) State if you saw it yourself. If you did not see it, who told you about it? (Give names and addresses of other witnesses)

YES.

(f) Give brief story of crime. **Full statement required on pages 3 and 4.**

GUNNER KEENAN WAS SENTENCED TO THREE DAYS IN THE GUARDROOM FOR NOT WORKING. THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE AS HE WAS CERTIFIED BY THE M.O. TO BE SUFFERING FROM PNEUMONIA. HE DIED FROM THIS TREATMENT ON THE DAY HE WAS RELEASED.

To the best of my belief the above particulars are correct.

C. A. LEE  
(Signature.)

JOHN BEATHAIN(?) O/C  
(Signature of Interrogating Officer.)

22-9-45  
(Date.)

(Place and/or Unit at which interrogation was made.)

Comment by Interrogating Officer:

\* Other war crimes not specifically mentioned include:--

- (i) Usurpation of sovereignty during military occupation.
- (ii) Compulsory enlistment of soldiers among the inhabitants of occupied territory.
- (iii) Attempts to denationalize the inhabitants of occupied territory.
- (iv) Confiscation of property.
- (v) Exaction of illegitimate or of exorbitant contributions and requisitions.
- (vi) Debasement of the currency and issue of spurious currency.
- (vii) Deliberate bombardment of undefended places.
- (viii) Wanton destruction of religious, charitable, educational and historical buildings and monuments.
- (ix) Use of explosive or expanding bullets and other inhuman appliances.
- (x) Directions to give no quarter and refusal of quarter.
- (xi) Misuse of flags of truce.

### **FULL STATEMENT OF ATROCITY OR CRIME**

This MUST be signed by the person making the statement and countersigned by the interrogating officer at the end of the statement.

7.G. DURING OUR TRIP FROM JAVA TO JAPAN, THE BOAT WAS OVERLOADED BY AT LEAST FOUR TIMES ITS CAPACITY WITH PRISONERS & JAPS. AT LEAST FIFTY PRISONERS DIED OF DYSENTERY. MEDICAL SUPPLIES WERE NIL.

7.I. MEDICAL SUPPLIES WERE SENT BY THE AMERICAN RED CROSS, BUT WERE NEVER ISSUED TO OUR M.O.S UNTIL 16.8.45 WHEN SEVERAL BOXES WERE SENT TO THE M.I. ROOM.

7.K. AS ABOVE

C. A. LEE (signed)

LT. COL. SAUNDERS R.A. HAS A COMPLETE LIST OF EACH DEATH IN NO. 1 CAMP, JAPAN. HE IS AT PRESENT IN THIS CAMP.

JOHN BEATHAIN(?) O/C (signed)

### A F F I D A V I T

I, CHARLES ALBERT LEE, with permanent address at 48, Ridley Street, Leicester, make oath and say as follows :--

I was a Lance Bombardier in the 15th Heavy A.A.

I was captured by the Japanese at Garoet, Java, on the 8th March 1942.

I was taken with other prisoners, to **Kumamoto Prison Camp** in Japan.

When I was captured I was wearing British Army tropical kit. This I wore, without any change whatever, until March 1943. I was then issued with a working suit consisting of fibre jacket and trousers. This issue was made to prisoners working on the construction of an aerodrome. No underclothing was issued. There were 231 prisoners at the camp when I arrived. We had to clean our own clothes in the camp bath on rest days -- one day in ten.

Food was bad. We had three meals a day: 7 a.m., 12 noon and 5-30 p.m. The main diet was supposed to be rice, but actually it was millet. This was served by our own men working in the kitchen. It was steamed and served occasionally with thin vegetable soup. During April, May and June 1943, our cooks made a kind of bread from flour issued by the Japanese, mixed with the millet. This was stopped, owing, so the camp commandant said, to shortage of flour. About once a month we were issued with whale meat soup. This was good. Fish was issued once a week. The food was very small in quantity and was frequently bad. We were always very hungry, and many times were almost starved. During the latter months the amount of food issued to us was negligible, merely consisting of a few handfuls of millet. During the first 35 days at the camp, 35 men died. At least 12 of these died from malnutrition.

There were three sleeping huts for the men, one for the officers, and one for hospital. Each hut had one latrine and five earth closets five yards away. The arrangements were primitive. There was no lavatory water system. Excreta and urine were collected each morning by our officers who were prisoners. The Japanese made the officers do this. They were given long wood ladles and had to spread it over the gardens where vegetables were grown. This was objected to by Lieutenant Colonel Saunders, 21st Light A.A., and there was a lot of trouble about it. There was a terrific smell from the excreta all the time. The latrines and earth closets were under cover. There was one wash stand to each hut. These were two yards behind the latrines. They had cold water only. Sometimes the water would run, but often it did not. We had an issue of soap; one 2 ounce bar per man per month. There was one bath, under cover, next to the kitchen. The bath was wood and to heat the water we had our own bath attendant light fires under a length of tin

fixed under the bath. Everyone suffered from body lice and fleas, but the Japanese did nothing about it.

The camp was situated in a clearing in a bamboo plantation. The area was about 250 yards by 120 yards. It was surrounded by a 10 feet high wood fence. There was no barbed wire. In addition to our five huts there were 2 offices for the Japanese and 2 huts used as sleeping quarters by the guards. There was also a guard room, attached to which were three solitary confinement cells. These cells were 6 feet long, 2 feet wide and 5 feet high. They were filthy and riddled with lice. There was a raised board to lie on. The latrine was underneath the board. It was necessary to lift a part of the board to use the latrine. The sleeping huts were 25 feet by 14 feet. Eighty men slept in each hut, on two tiers, one above the other. This number was decreased during the period by the deaths of prisoners. We slept on boards covered with straw, over which were rice mats. We had five good blankets each, which we kept clean ourselves. We had to eat at tables in the huts. There was no Red Cross sign on the hospital buildings. There were mosquito curtains which were adequate. There was no heating of any kind. Medical supplies were totally inadequate. When I suffered from dysentery I was put in the hospital, but received no treatment at all. I was there for a month, and at the same time there were about sixty other men suffering from the same complaint. To the best of my knowledge no one received any treatment. There was no iodine or anything to use for cuts. Our own doctor, Captain **Wallace**, R.A.M.C., struggled along as well as he could. I know that he asked for medical supplies, but they were refused. A Japanese doctor called periodically to examine us, and occasionally, on serious cases, he gave injections of some kind, and for beri-beri he sometimes gave a glucose injection, but these occasions were rare.

The only Red Cross supplies arrived in May 1943. They comprised food parcels, bulk sugar, corned beef, cocoa and dried fruit. This was kept in camp by the commandant for three weeks, when it was issued under his supervision to the prisoners: one food parcel per officer; two food parcels for three men. At the same time every man received two tins of corned beef. The following day a number of the men went sick and the commandant blamed this on the tinned goods (salmon, butter, jam) which were in the food parcels. He immediately withdrew the tinned goods and corned beef. Subsequently about half of these food stuffs were issued in cooked form. We saw Japanese private Katsura, the interpreter, and the guards eating food which we knew was the Red Cross supplies sent to us, and several times Katsura gave us some of the tins of corned beef which had been taken from us. Katsura never said anything to us about it though we told him we knew he was eating our supplies. He just laughed. The bulk supplies were issued to us a little each rest day. No medical supplies were issued, and I don't know if any were included in this consignment from the Red Cross.

We were employed on airport construction. We built a complete aerodrome near the camp. The working conditions were bad, chiefly owing to the climate. We started work at 7.45 a.m. We had a break from 10 a.m., to 10-15 a.m., and had dinner from 12 noon to 1 p.m., then continued till 3 p.m., with a break of 15 minutes, and ceased work at 5-15 p.m. We were under Japanese military guards and Korean gangers. We were forced to work very hard. Only a few prisoners at a time were assigned to dangerous work. This was as follows :- They were instructed to undermine, by means of picks, whole sections of cliff 60 feet high, for levelling purposes. Often the cliff would collapse on the men and sometimes the men would be buried under the debris. One man,

Bombardier **Ketcher**, sustained a broken leg, and he lay in the hospital for 12 months without proper attention.

The Japanese guards had no consideration for our safety. This was proved by the work at the cliff face. The day we arrived at Kumamoto we were made to stand on parade for three hours. It was a bitterly cold day and we had no warm clothes. Our kit was searched. The commandant spoke to us. We were assigned huts. Shortly afterwards the military guards started to be violent. Even before we started work in the mornings they would come into the huts with fixed bayonets and poke us as we lay in bed, thus forcing us to get up. This was persistent. While working the guards seized every opportunity to ill-treat us. Their favourite method was to strike a man on the head or body with a long bamboo stick. I was struck about seven times. The injuries were not serious but were painful. Many times, if the guard saw a prisoner idling or receiving anything from Korean labourers, they would practise jui- jitsu on the prisoner, frequently rendering the man unconscious. These incidents were so common and frequent that it is difficult to remember isolated cases. Sometimes in the night the guards would wake everybody in the huts for no reason whatever.

One day, about June 1943, the camp commandant visited the working site and watched us. He stood on slightly raised ground. He saw one of our men, Gunner **Adams**, R.A., pulling up sweet potatoes from the nearby garden. He immediately shouted to a guard who fetched Adams. The commandant called us all to attention. Adams stood before the commandant who kicked him over his left eye. Adams fell down, stood to attention, and was again knocked to the ground by the commandant who kicked and hit him about eight times. Eventually Adams was unable to stand. He was bleeding from the head. The commandant then ordered Adams to be taken to solitary confinement.

In addition to myself, Private Frederick **Canterbury**, Pioneer Corps, 102 Oldham Road, Shaw, Lancs., Lance Bombardier Walter **Beacon** R.A., and Gunner **Pateman**, R. A., were witnesses.

Early in January 1943, Gunner **Keenan** (not Kiener) 48 Lt. A.A., who was on a working party, although very sick from debility and malnutrition, was reported by the Japanese guard, whose name I don't know, for not working. This report was made to the N.C.O., in charge, who sent for Keenan. Keenan said he was feeling very sick and unable to do the work. The N.C.O. sent him straight back to work shovelling earth on to trucks. Keenan collapsed on the ground. He managed to sit up and so remained until the end of the shift, about 4 hours. We helped him back to camp. The Interpreter, Katsura, sent for Keenan, asking what was wrong. Keenan explained that he was feeling sick and unfit for work. Katsura took Keenan to the Commandant's office. About half an hour later Keenan came back to the hut. He was dazed. He did not know where he was, or what he was doing. He said he had had a terrific beating from Katsura. He was put to bed and was unable to go on the working party next day. I understand that he was later fetched from his bed by Katsura, and that R.S.M. James, 21st Light A.A. was present. Keenan was taken to the Commandant's office and received 3 days solitary confinement. A day or two later he was carried from our hut to the hospital where he died the same day. Dr. Wallace said he died of pneumonia. I did not see any marks on Keenan, but a probable witness to this is Gunner R. **Webb**, 21st Light A.A., who put him to bed. Gunner **Docherty**, 48 Light A.A. may also assist in this.

I'm sure that the name of the soldier who died was Keenan, and not Kiener, and I remember that Keenan was the name we put on the cross when he was buried.

I remember one occasion, I believe in April 1943, Gunner W. **Fern** 21st Light A.A., was detailed by B.S.M. **Smith**, 21st L.A.A., to carry out a fatigue duty. Katsura came up at that moment and sent Fern outside. Katsura followed. He struck Fern with his fists, kicked him and practised ju-jitsu on him for about twenty minutes. Fern was finally knocked senseless. We took him back to the hut. His face was badly cut and bruised. His body was bruised all over. We put him to bed, but he had to go to work next day although he was not fit. The witness to the assault was B.S.M. Smith and Lance Bombadier **Jarvis** (since deceased).

It is my opinion that Jarvis was worked to death.

I recall another instance, probably about the same time, when Sgt. Urakita (second-in-command at the camp) beat up Gunner Robert **Morrison**, 21st L.A.A. The circumstances were that Morrison was alleged to have given to Japanese Guard, Private Honda, sugar from the kitchen. The sugar was found on Honda, who stated that Morrison gave it to him. This Morrison denied. Urakita went to the kitchen and called Morrison outside. He punched, kicked and practised ju-jitsu on Morrison for about fifteen minutes, until Morrison was unconscious. Morrison was very badly bruised on the body, but was forced to resume his duties as camp baker immediately, although he could hardly stand up. Sgt. **Regan**, the Cook Sergeant, 21st Light A.A. witnessed this.

It was the general practice for sick prisoners to work on the aerodrome construction unless we had temperature exceeding 108 degrees, when we were confined to bed in our huts for two days, without treatment. I know that almost all the prisoners were forced to work although sick from dysentery and fevers. I myself was sick from either dysentery or fever on a dozen occasions, but the interpreter ordered me to go to work, although I said I was too sick for work. Complaints were made on our behalf by Colonel Saunders to the commandant, but nothing was done about it.

We had no contact with civilians generally. The Korean labourers who worked with us were, on the whole, sympathetic towards us.

I left Kumamoto in November 1945, and went to Kashii prisoner of war camp. The journey was made by train. We had seating accommodation. The journey took seven hours and food, consisting of rice in boxes was served twice on the journey. As far as I can say, the conditions were good.

I know of no other violations at Kumamoto Camp.

The camp regulations were:- Prisoners of war were sworn not to attempt to escape from the camp. The penalty for such an attempt was death. Prisoners must not converse with civilians or Japanese guards, work diligently, the military situation must not be discussed between ourselves; all Japanese to be saluted at all times; prisoners were responsible for the cleaning of the camp



and hutments; all prisoners must go to bed by 7 p.m., daily and rise at 5-30 a.m.; games were only allowed on rest days; card playing was forbidden.

The name of the camp commandant was Lieutenant Sakamoto. At first he seemed fair towards us, but as time went on he became steadily more drastic in his actions. There was no reason for this, but we all knew that he was influenced by the interpreter, Katsura. This man, who had previously been in America, seemed to have a grudge against all the prisoners. He used to say that he knew us and hated us, and that if he could get us in trouble with the commandant he would do so. This was heard by all the prisoners in the camp. Katsura was more violent than the other guards.

I know of no other information regarding this camp, nor do I know the names of any other Japanese personnel who were responsible for ill-treatment of the prisoners of war.

(signed) C. A. Lee

Sworn at the Town Hall in the City of Lancaster this 11th day of February 1947.

Before me (signed) Dorothy M. Gates?, Justice of the Peace

### A F F I D A V I T

I, CHARLES ALBERT LEE, with permanent address at 48, Ridley Street, Leicester, make oath and say as follows :--

I was transferred with the others prisoners of war from Kumamoto camp to **Kashii prisoner of war camp** in November 1943. I remained there until February 1944.

I wore the fibre suit previously issued to me at Kumamoto Camp. In January 1944, there was an issue of American Army scale winter clothing, consisting of vests, pants, shirts, socks, caps and working overalls. This issue was made from American Red Cross supplies. It was not sufficient for a complete change of clothing per man.

Food consisted of rice and soup; 3 meals per day. It was fairly satisfying, and fish was issued almost daily.

Hygiene and sanitation were primitive consisting of latrines and earth closets, which were cleaned out each morning by our officers, who used ladles for the purpose. The excreta was used as manure for the kitchen gardens, but these were situated outside the camp.

There was one large wash stand in the main grounds of the camp; it was necessary to pump water to fill the wash stand. There was one wooden bath and we obtained hot water by lighting fires under the bath. Soap was practically non-existent, and lice caused a great deal of trouble as we had no means of keeping clean properly.

The camp was surrounded by a 10 feet high wooden fence. The area was about 130 yards by 80 yards. The prisoners' accommodation comprised one large wooden sleeping hut which ran almost the length of the camp. The officers quarters and hospital were combined in this hut. 300 officers and men were quartered in this hut. The Japanese officers and quarters were outside the camp.

There was also a guard room and four solitary confinement cells at the camp. These cells were 6 feet long by 2 feet wide by 5 feet high. They were filthy and lice-riddled. There was a raised board with latrine underneath.

We slept on boards over which were rice mats. We had five good blankets per man. We ate together in the huts. Mosquito curtains were adequate. There was no heating of any kind.

Medical supplies were practically nil.

Three Red Cross supplies were received by us. They were one Canadian, and 2 U.S.A. issues. The supplies consisted of food parcels, corned beef, cheese, jam and butter and cigarettes. These were issued in 3 consecutive months.

At the time I was working in the Red Cross warehouse at Hakata, 6 miles from the camp as member of a working party. We unloaded the Red Cross supplies when delivered, under the supervision of Sgt. Major Anada, the Welfare Officer for the area. The supplies were checked and stored. Anada then used to decide what quantity to issue to each prisoner of war camp in the area. This comprised 17 camps. It is to my knowledge that only a small percentage of the Red Cross supplies were issued to the camps, the remainder was stored. Anada said that this was on the instructions of the main camp commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Fukamoto, at Hakata.

There were medical supplies in the U.S. Red Cross issues. These were stored and a very small percentage was issued to the various camps. The remainder was destroyed when the Americans bombed Hakata in June 1945.

Working conditions were hard. The main job for the prisoners was timber stacking. There were no safety precautions.

The Japanese treated the English fairly well, but their treatment of the Dutch and American prisoners who came to the camp in December 1943 was brutal. About 30 Dutch and 6 American prisoners of war were put in our hut at this time.

Interpreter Private Katsura was at this camp. He immediately began to ill-treat the Dutch and Americans. Without any provocation he would beat them with sticks, hit with his fists, kick them, and practise ju-jitsu upon them. Several times he rendered prisoners unconscious. The military guards, who were changed monthly also ill-treated the Dutch and Americans in the same way. I can't give details of specific cases, but Colonel **Saunders**, I know, was in possession of all the facts regarding the assaults.

We had, no contact with Japanese civilians.

I know of no other violations.

Camp regulations were :- Prisoners were sworn not to attempt to escape. The penalty for such an attempt was death. Prisoners must not converse with Japanese guards or civilians; work diligently; the military situation must not be discussed between ourselves; all Japanese to be saluted at all times; the camp was to be kept clean by the prisoners; all prisoners to be in bed by 7 p.m. daily and rise at 5-30 a.m.; games were allowed only on rest days -- one day in ten.

The camp commandant was Lieutenant Sakamoto.

Sgt. **Baker**, 48 L.A.A., Gunner Prior 21 L.A.A., Gunner **Pateman** 21 L.A.A., Private Canterbury, Pioneer Corps, can speak as to the proceedings at the Red Cross warehouse.

(signed) C. A. Lee

Sworn at the Town Hall in the City of Lancaster this 11th day of February 1947.

Before me (signed) Dorothy M. Gates?, Justice of the Peace

### A F F I D A V I T

I, CHARLES ALBERT LEE, with permanent address at 48, Ridley Street, Leicester, make oath and say as follows :--

I was transferred with the other prisoners of war from Kashii camp to Misharado [**Mushiroda**] **camp** in February 1944, and remained until December 1944. This camp was only 3 miles from Kashii.

Clothing was the fibre suit issued by the Japanese, plus underclothing from the Red Cross.

Food consisted of rice and soup; 3 meals per day. This deteriorated very quickly until during the last month, food was practically non existent and prisoners and guards were nearly starving.

Hygiene and sanitation consisted of latrines and earth closets which were cleaned by our officers daily. They were forced to do this with ladles, and had to spread the excreta on the gardens which were situated between the prisoners' huts. Consequently the stench was extremely bad. No soap was issued. There was a wash stand at the rear of each hut. There was no running water. There was one wooden bath, and we used to heat the water in it in order to get hot baths. The whole system was primitive.

The camp was near the working site at an airport. It was surrounded by a wooden fence 10 feet high. The camp area was about 600 feet by 300 feet. The prisoners' accomodation consisted of 10 sleeping huts, officers' quarters and hospital. The buildings were made with outer walls of bark and roofs of rice straw. There were the usual Japanese offices and sleeping quarters. There were three solitary confinement cells, 6 feet long, 2 feet wide and 5' high, with raised boards to lie on, and the latrine under the board.

We slept on bare boards. We ate together in the huts. Mosquito curtains were provided. There was no heating in the huts, which were shared by 500 men in addition to the officers' quarters. While we were at this camp, it was the rainy season. The place was an absolute quagmire. The roofs and walls leaked continually and the interior of the huts was saturated with water. We were always wet through. The weather was cold.

Medical supplies were very small.

No Red Cross supplies were received at this camp.

Working conditions were hard. The prisoners were mainly employed constructing runways for the airport. We had practically no tools with which to work. The climate made working very difficult.

There were no safety precautions.

The Japanese guards treated us badly, particularly when we were joined by about 150 Dutch and 150 American prisoners. The Dutch were soldiers. The Americans were civilians.

Interpreter Private Katsura was at this camp. He instigated many beatings, particularly of the Dutch and Americans. The guards struck us with bamboo sticks, kicked and practised jiu-jitsu on us.

One day in June 1944, the prisoners were exercising in the camp, when a Japanese military guard beat a Dutch soldier, whose name I don't know. The circumstances were that the Dutchman was supposed to have failed to salute the guard. The guard struck the Dutchman with a bamboo stick on the thighs repeatedly for 20 minutes. The Dutchman collapsed unconscious. He was taken to hospital and died next day. I did not see his injuries. Captain **Wallace**, R.A.M.C., treated the man. The assault was seen by nearly everybody in the camp. I cannot give further details.

We had no contact with Japanese civilians.

I know of no other violations, but I know that at least 40 prisoners died at this camp, mostly from pneumonia, due to the bad conditions of the huts.

Camp regulations were as at Kashii camp.

Lieutenant Sakamoto was the camp commandant.

I know of no other information.

(signed) C. A. Lee

Sworn at the Town Hall in the City of Lancaster this 11th day of February 1947.

Before me (signed) Dorothy M. Gates?, Justice of the Peace