

Herbert R. WILLWEBER was interrogated at the Osaka Branch Office on 14 January 1947 by Mr. Arthur T. Neville.

Herbert R. WILLWEBER, after being duly sworn to speak the truth conscientiously, adding nothing and concealing nothing whatsoever, testified as follows:

Q. What is your full name, age, address and nationality?

A. Herbert Rudolf WILLWEBER; 45 years of age; Hyogo-ken, Muko-gun, Ryogenmura, Kashio Chara 28; I am a German national.

Q. Do you expect to remain at your present address for the next six months and if not how can your whereabouts in the future be ascertained?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your present occupation?

A. I am employed by the American Forces at Itami Air Base APO 660. My immediate superior is Lt Richard Patton in the Aircraft Maintenance Section.

Q. What was your occupation before the war?

A. I owned the Kobe Osaka Press which was eventually stolen from me by the Japanese Government.

Q. State in your own words what you know about Osaka Prison (Sakai).

A. On 18 October 1944, I was transferred together with Mr. dos REMEDIOS from the Kobe Prison to Osaka Prison in Sakai City. Mr. dos REMEDIOS was sentenced to a comparatively short prison term - about 8 or 10 months I am not certain. It was not the customary procedure to transfer "short term" prisoners to Osaka Prison. The usual procedure was to keep "short term" prisoners in the Kobe Courthouse Prison.

I remember on the morning that we were preparing to leave for Osaka Prison, one of the head guards questioned the order to send dos REMEDIOS to Osaka Prison. He knew that dos REMEDIOS would not be able to survive such severe treatment that was in store for him at Osaka Prison. However, regardless of dos REMEDIOS' age (he was 72 at the time) he was transferred with me to Osaka Prison. On the way to Osaka Prison dos REMEDIOS was able to speak to me and he told me that he was sentenced to prison because he told one of his Japanese neighbors that the Japanese Government was misusing the sign and the institution of the Red Cross. When we arrived at Osaka Prison dos REMEDIOS asked for his woolen underwear, but the prison guards refused to let him have anything than a cotton prison uniform, straw sandals and two cotton futons (quilts). Both dos REMEDIOS and I were placed in solitary confinement cells.

I remember on the first day that we were in Osaka Prison we were forced to stand for over one hour on a cold concrete floor in one of the hallways. We were waiting to be fingerprinted. In an effort to keep warm I stamped my feet and one of the guards beat me across the legs with a stick for moving. We were ordered to stand at attention and not to move in any-way. Dos REMEDIOS was shivering and was unable to stop shaking. The officer who fingerprinted him beat him across the head and face and kicked him in the shins. After about one week all the new prisoners including dos REMEDIOS and I were sent to the Osaka Prison Hospital for a medical examination by one of the hospital attendants. We were forced to strip completely and stand naked for over 1/2 hour in an unheated room with open windows. The medical attendant was dressed in a winter uniform. The examination consisted of measuring the height and weight of the prisoners and also a check on the teeth of the prisoners. At this examination dos REMEDIOS complained about his dysentery, but he was ordered to keep still by the hospital attendant who told him that he was fortunate that the Japanese did not shoot him for being a spy. About one week later all the European prisoners were taken into the prison courtyard. I saw dos REMEDIOS and he told me that he was very weak and that he was suffering from indigestion and dysentery. Once a day the European prisoners were permitted to exercise for about 15 to 30 minutes. And no European would miss this opportunity to see a white face unless he was deathly sick and unable to walk. Dos REMEDIOS

was frequently unable to come out of his cell for his daily exercise. He grew very thin and was no more than a walking skeleton. One day he told me that he had been begging the guards to take him to the prison doctor, but they refused. On the 15th of December 1944 I developed a sore throat and began to run a high temperature. I was afraid that I was suffering from angina - an inflammatory affliction of the throat which produces fits of choking. I asked the guard for permission to see the prison doctor, but he refused and the next day I was unable to eat and he finally consented to take me to the prison hospital. I arrived at the prison hospital where I was treated by a hospital attendant who swabbed my throat with Iodine and gave me a few Aspirin tablets. The next day I was still running a fever and I was sweating and I asked the guard to take me to the prison hospital. While I was in the prison hospital an air alarm sounded and I was thrown into one of the hospital prison cells. And the next day, for the first time I was examined by a physician who realized that I was sick and ordered me confined to bed. He ordered the hospital attendant to give me three Aspirin tablets four times a day and also to increase my food ration. Shortly before Christmas dos REMEDIOS came to the prison hospital and he was so weak that he staggered when he walked. He was put in a hospital cell by one of the hospital attendants and was not called for an examination until 5 days later. When the doctor saw dos REMEDIOS he was shocked and ordered attendant to give him glucose injections. The doctor also notified the hospital attendant to send for dos REMEDIOS' immediate family. On the same day dos REMEDIOS was transferred to the prison "dying room". The next day dos REMEDIOS' relatives visited him and a few days later he died at about 0600 in the morning.

While I was in the prison hospital I received a letter from my wife written in Japanese, but I was unable to read it without my dictionary which had been taken away from me when I entered the prison. However, the prison chaplain showed me a few photographs of my new born son, but would not permit me to keep the photographs. I remained in the prison hospital from 7 December 1944 until 19 January 1945 and during that time I saw at least 100 Japanese prisoners die in the prison hospital. The other prisoners told me that this was the usual average for prison deaths.

In Osaka Prison Hospital I saw the following Foreign Nationals: CONRADI, HEILEMANN, BAREE, BURUCHENKO, and two American soldiers JOSLIN and REAMER and another American soldier whose name I don't know.

On two occasions during January 1945 I saw the hospital attendant OSADA walk down the aisle and I heard him go into the cells of the American POWs and beat them. I couldn't see what he was doing, but I could hear him beating the Americans. At night the prisoners were able to talk to each other by calling through the bars and the two Americans JOSLIN and REAMER told me that OSADA had beaten them because they had concealed some writing paper and a pencil.

One night in January 1945 I was talking with prisoner CONRADI and one of the trustees spit at me through the bars. And I told him that he was a good advertisement for Japanese culture. He reported me to one of the medical attendant who ordered me handcuffed with one hand in front of me and one hand in back of me and in this way I was unable to lie down. I was afraid that I was going to catch cold because I could not cover myself with my futon and I kept walking in my cell to keep warm. The hospital attendant told me that it was only because he was "soft-hearted" that he did not chain me to the window bars and throw cold water over me. Later on the same evening he took off my handcuffs and beat me across the face and told me to lie down and to stop walking around in my cell.

On 19 January 1945 I was released from the prison hospital and returned to my old cell. On 24 March 1945 I was called to the prison office where I was questioned by a high official as to whether or not I had friends or relations in America and he showed me a Red Cross letter. He permitted me to read the letter, but he would not permit me to touch it. He asked me if I wanted to write a reply in Japanese. I told him that I would need a dictionary to write a reply in Japanese. The next day I received my dictionary and I wrote a message of 25 words, but I was unable to contact the officer who showed me the Red Cross letter. I keep complaining to the guard that I wanted to see this officer and he finally beat me and told me to be quite. On 25 March 1945 with the aid of my dictionary

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I was finally able to read the letter which I had received from my wife in the hospital in December 1944.

During air raids all of the European prisoners were handcuffed and locked in their cells. This practice was discontinued in July 1945.

On 23 July 1945 I became very ill and I was sweating and ran a high temperature. The next day I asked permission to see the doctor, but I was refused. On 25 July 1945 I was finally given permission to go to the hospital. Two prisoners carried me on a stretcher and took me to see prison attendant OSADA. He ordered me to stand up and as I was getting up he kicked me in the back with his leather boot. He put his hand on my head and then started to beat me across the face. One of the prisoners told him that I was a German National and then he gave me two Aspirins and gave me permission to wrap my futon around me as I walked back to my prison cell. In my cell I was beaten by the officer on duty and he accused me of lying to him about my sickness. I was not permitted to lie down and I was forced to work. At night I continued to sweat and my futons were completely wet with my perspirations. On 27 July 1945 I became so weak that I was no longer able to stand up. I became delirious and began to scream and one of the high officers ordered me to be taken to the hospital. I was again received by hospital attendant OSADA who refused to permit me to see the doctor. OSADA beat me across the face and kicked me in the back and I was sent back to my cell without any medication. I asked the guard for a dry shirt, but he refused to give me any dry clothing. On the 28th and 29th of July 1945 I had severe pains in my chest and I was suffering from dysentery. My ears became infected and I thought I was going to die. After the 23rd of August 1945 my food ration was increased and the guards no longer abused me. On 6 September 1945 I was released from Osaka Prison.

Q. Do you ever see any of the prison guards mistreat any of the Allied POWs?

A. No, I can't say that I saw them beaten or mistreated because I was kept in a solitary confinement cell. However, as mentioned above I heard OSADA beating the American POWs JOSLIN and REAMER on two occasions in January 1945. I know they were beaten because they told me that OSADA beat them for concealing writing paper in their cells.

Q. Did you ever see the American POW Ben MAGDON?

A. Yes, I saw him sometime in August 1945 shortly before the end of the war. He was a horrible sight. His body was completely covered with vermin and sores. There was not one spot on Ben MAGDON's body which was not covered with some kind of a sore. The Japanese knew that Ben MAGDON was to be released at the end of the war and they started to give him sulphur baths to help cure his skin disorder. However, the only reason he received such treatment was because the Americans were winning the war.

Q. Did you ever see POW Robert NEWTON mistreated?

A. No, I can't say that I did, but everyone was beaten in Osaka Prison. That was the rule.

Q. Did you at anytime see the following prison guards mistreat any of the Allied POWs: Otokichi YOKOYAMA, Takeo KODAMA, Shéijiro SHIMANO?

A. I can't say, I don't know these prison guards by name. However, if I saw these men I might be able to recognize them.

Q. Did you ever see Governor Michizo SHIINA?

A. No, I frequently requested to see Governor Michizo SHIINA, but I never saw him. I wanted to complain to him about the way I was being treated.

Q. When and why were you arrested?

A. I was arrested 15 September 1943 at Kobe City. At that time I was the owner of the Kobe and Osaka Press (a printing plant). I was arrested and accused of being a spy for the Allies and taken to Kobe Water Police Station. I remained

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at this Police Station until 18 September 1943 at which time I was transferred to the Kobe District Courthouse Prison and I remained there until the 18th or 19th of October 1944. And then I was transferred to Osaka Prison (Sakai) with a Portuguese National dos REMEDIOS who later died from abuse and the lack of medical treatment at Osaka Prison. At the time of my arrest in Kobe City the following persons were arrested at the same time and accused of being spies for the Allies: My wife EN WILLNEBER, Christian COHRADI, Boris BARANETZ, and his sister whose name I don't remember, Retraut KISSENDORFER (a German School teacher, about 25 yrs old), and Agnes THIELE.

I received my worse beatings in the cellar of the Kobe Water Police Station. I was interrogated daily by the following men: Foreign Affairs Chief Mr. OSAKAEE who speaks English and German, and Mr. MORI and Mr. YAMAGAUCHI who were Mr. OSAKAEE's henchmen.

I was anti-Nazi in my views and all the German people in Kobe City knew this. I was framed by Mr. KAHRER a Gestapo agent in Kobe City. I had been previously warned by Miss KISSENDORFER that I was under investigation by the Japanese Police and the Gestapo and was suspected of being a spy and a Communist. Mr. OSAKAEE questioned me concerning my political views and directly accused me of being a spy for the Allies and a Communist. I told him that I was Anti-Nazi, but I was not a spy. For three months daily, usually two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, I was tortured by Mr. OSAKAEE, Mr. MORI and Mr. YAMAGAUCHI. I was tortured in the following manner. I was made to squat in the Japanese fashion and sit in this position for hours at a time. I was made to endure the following tortures. I was beaten with kendo sticks across my back, sides and chest. Mr. YAMAGAUCHI struck me in the mouth with a kendo stick and broke my bridge. He beat me everyday until my back turned black. Mr. MORI and Mr. OSAKAEE also beat me and made me kneel on bamboo sticks and then placed one bamboo stick in back of my knees causing excruciating pain. I was beaten across the soles of feet until my socks were soaked with blood. Mr. OSAKAEE pulled out some of the hair from my head. The beatings I experienced at the hands of Mr. OSAKAEE, Mr. YAMAGAUCHI and Mr. MORI are unbelievable. One day they tied my arms with a rope and by using a kendo stick as a lever they pulled my arms out of joint. On one occasion they beat me so badly that one of my arms started to swell to twice its normal size. My torturers became frightened and sent for a doctor to determine whether or not they had broken my arm. As soon as they found out that my arm was not broken they continued to beat me. I told them that I was not a spy, and that I did not believe in Nazism. However, they insisted that I was a spy and a Communist and wanted me to tell them the names of all the spies in Kobe. One day they brought Samurai swords into the interrogation room and Mr. OSAKAEE told me that he was finished with my interrogation and tried to frighten me. Mr. OSAKAEE told me that I would have to confess to some crime otherwise I would not live very long. He suggested that I should say that I passed disparaging remarks about the Emperor. I signed a confession about 150 pages long. The confession was written in Japanese so I don't know exactly what it was that I signed. Before I was transferred to the Kobe Courthouse Prison I was given a rest from my beatings for about 20 days so that my body would heal. I was transferred to the Kobe Courthouse Prison on 18 December 1943. At this prison the court prosecutor Mr. YAKODA interrogated me concerning my confession and I explained to him that I didn't know exactly what I signed and I signed under duress. The interpreter explained that I was a foreigner and that I would get off with a fairly light sentence if I would admit that I was talking about the Emperor and did not realize the seriousness of the situation. I was brought to trial with a White Russian by the name of (FNU) BELMONT in April 1943. Both of us were accused of insulting the Emperor and Mr. BELMONT was acquitted. However, I was sentenced to 3 1/2 yrs at hard labor in Osaka Prison. German Vice Consul WCHLEARTH, a Gestapo agent, was in the courtroom when I was sentenced. I was sent to Osaka Prison with a Portuguese National by the name of dos REMEDIOS on 18 October 1944.

- Q. Do you have any records which you kept while you were in Osaka Prison?
A. Yes, I have a Japanese dictionary in which I made notes about the various

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incidents which happened in Osaka Prison.

Q. Do you have anything further to add to this statement?

A. Yes, I could tell you about how the Japanese kept my wife in prison until about 4 weeks before she gave birth. However, this story is not directly connected with the Osaka Prison incident.

Herbert R. Willweber
Herbert R. WILLWEBER

ALLIED OCCUPATION FORCES)

: SS.

CITY OF OSAKA)

I, Herbert R. WILLWEBER, being duly sworn on oath that I have read and understood the foregoing transcription of my testimony and that all statements and answers contained therein, consisting of 5 pages, are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Herbert R. Willweber
Herbert R. WILLWEBER

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of January 1947.

Arthur T. Neville
ARTHUR T. NEVILLE
Investigator, Legal Section,
GHQ, SCAP.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Arthur T. Neville, Investigator, Legal Section, GHQ, SCAP, certify that on 14th day of January 1947, personally appeared before me Herbert R. WILLWEBER, and gave the foregoing testimony and the several statements and answers set forth therein; consisting of 5 pages, that after his testimony had been transcribed, the said Herbert R. WILLWEBER affixed his signature thereto in my presence.

Arthur T. Neville
ARTHUR T. NEVILLE
Investigator, Legal Section,
GHQ, SCAP.

OSAKA, JAPAN
15 January 1947

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