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Re baptain Yamamoto.

Statement by Sisters from the Catholic  
Mission Nuanape, 1946.



Catholic Mission,  
Vunapope.  
25th June 1946.

War Crimes Court  
RABAU

Re Captain YAMAMOTO

10/10/9/238  
Dear Sir,

In reply to the letter of T. TASHIRO of 20th, instant, concerning the Japanese Officer YAMAMOTO, I can give the following informations which I collected from the Brothers J. Damen, A. Huth and J. Landinger, from the Halfcastes H. Hoerler and J. Schulz and from the native Sisters.

The Brothers speak very high of YAMAMOTO. They declare that he always made the impression of a gentleman, always being friendly and helpful and that he was the best they ever met amongst the Kempei-dai. He protected the Brothers, who were forced to work, whenever they were molested by others. They especially mention that he was really kind to the captured pilots and in his presence all ill-treatment of POW was never allowed. Ill-treatment was only carried out when YAMAMOTO was absent. Furthermore the Brothers state that YAMAMOTO was strict with his own men and with the native Kempei Boys and, therefore, some of them disagreed with him. These Kempei boys very often inflicted flogging without being told by the authorities and sometimes even without their knowledge which fact nearly everyone of us witnessed. We all are of the opinion that the same Kempei boys are able to give away and blame their former masters for everything in order to protect themselves.

The above mentioned Halfcastes declare that YAMAMOTO was always correct and very friendly. They never noticed any irregularity when he had to deal with natives. He was only strict with the Kempei Boys. In his presence nobody was allowed to inflict any harm to any prisoner, no matter of what nationality or colour they were. Harry Hoerler reports one case of which he was an eye-witness. An American Liberator crashed near Toma and Harry was ordered to drive some members of the Kempei to that place. YAMAMOTO followed in a staff car. When they reached the plane the crew was already dead except the pilot who was seriously wounded. YAMAMOTO spoke very kindly to the pilot and ordered his men to carry the said pilot to the staff car where YAMAMOTO himself helped him into the car. When they came back to the office YAMAMOTO offered the pilot a chair, tea and cigarettes and behaved himself as a gentleman. Afterwards, of course, he had to hand the pilot over to the higher authorities. Cruelties were only inflicted by others, especially, by a certain Warrant Officer named ODO, and always in the absence of YAMAMOTO.

The evidence given by the native Sisters is of special importance. They say that YAMAMOTO gave them several times his truck, that he was always friendly with them, though reserved. He protected the convent of the Sisters in Takabur so that nobody was allowed to enter the house, he erected sign boards in their gardens. He also provided the Sisters with pass-ports in order to come to Vunapope for religious service and even allowed the Sisters to come into our prison-camp and to speak with us without being guarded. They never heard any complaint from the natives against YAMAMOTO. As a matter of fact, during his period the native teachers could carry on with their work.

I, the undersigned, had a few times some short conversations with YAMAMOTO and I must say that he always made a good impression on me, he was always calm and polite and never asking questions like others. One had the feeling of safety in his presence. He surely did his best to be just but there were others against him.

In conclusion I would like to say that I don't think that His Lordship, the Bishop, would have anything to add to this statement nor to contradict it.

I do declare that this statement was made by everyone to the best of his knowledge and conscience.

Faithfully Yours,

(20) *Fr. Leonard Thiele*



Catholic Mission,  
Vunapope.  
6th July 1946.

WAR CRIME'S OFFICE

RABAU

Dear Sir,

In my letter of 25th, last, I was mistaken in so far I took Captain YAMAMOTO of the Kempei, Japanese Military Police, for YAMAMOTO Hisashi, who belonged to Minseibu, Japanese Civil Administration.

YAMAMOTO Hisashi was only a very short time here in Vunapope and, so far, nobody had to deal with him. Nobody, however, noticed anything wrong about him.

Only the evidence given by the Native Sisters concerns exclusively YAMAMOTO Hisashi. The native Sisters were at that time in Takabur without any protection because they were cut off from the other Mission community. The Sisters speak very high of YAMAMOTO Hisashi. He gave them several times his truck and was helpful in every way. He acted always in a friendly way, though he was reserved. He protected the convent of the Sisters so that nobody was allowed to enter the house, he erected sign boards for the house and in the garden of the Sisters and stopped the stealing. He also provided the Sisters with pass-ports to come to Vunapope for religious service and even managed to get the permit for the Sisters to visit us in the prison camp and to speak with us without being guarded. The Sisters never heard any complaint from the natives against YAMAMOTO Hisashi. As a matter of fact, during his activity in TAKABUR the native teachers could carry on with their work. After he had left every religious activity was prohibited by the Kempei.

This statement was made by the Native Sisters to the best of their knowledge and conscience.

Faithfully Yours,

*(s) Fr Leonard Abella*