

A Plea for Leniency

This is a copy of a letter written by 2nd Lt. Masao Nanjo, convicted of multiple war crimes during the Manila Military Tribunal on 14 November 1946, pleading with General Douglas MacArthur, then the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in the Pacific and de facto leader of Japan, for clemency. Judging by the charges against him, Nanjo was stationed near Bacolod in the Philippine province of Negros Occidental during the Japanese occupation of the island nation. There were seven charges against Lt. Nanjo, all alleged to take place between January 1944 and April 1945. The charges alleged that Masao Nanjo either oversaw or personally participated in the torture and execution of Filipino civilians, including one charge that included allegations of killing “an undetermined number” of civilians. Of the seven charges, Lt. Nanjo was convicted of four of them and sentenced to death by hanging. By the time he wrote this letter, he had been in jail awaiting his execution for over seven months. It is currently unclear if his request to MacArthur was heard or granted.

Reproduced from scans made by Michael W. Harris. Records of the General Headquarters Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Record Group 331, Box 8519, Folder 6, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.