

Clyde McCain (#3)
Sept. 23, 1935
Kennamer

Bay Pines, Florida
September 23, 1935

CLYDE MCCAIN, a patient at the Veterans' Hospital, Bay Pines, Florida, made the following response, under oath, to questions propounded by D.W. Kennamer, Central Office Investigator, in the case under investigation entitled:

FLORIDA STORM

- Q Please state your full name and home address?
- A Clyde McCain, Los Angeles, California.
- Q Can you give us any street number?
- A 3801 Behbel Place - that's my mother's address.
- Q Were you a member of the veterans' camps?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Were you there during the hurricane?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q How long had you been assigned to the camps and what camp were you assigned to?
- A #3, since December 17, last year.
- Q Did you receive any injury in the hurricane?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Just state what injury you received?
- A Injured side and head and right side, split thumb nail and I was gassed by gasoline - chlorine gas from batteries, and shock and nervous tension.
- Q Did you identify any of the dead?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Name those that you identified?
- A Well, there was quite a few identified, but I just know the

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men by - off hand, not their original names, just their nick names.

Q Any name you knew them by will be helpful?

A Why, a man by the name of - we called him Shoemaker - a Russian pollock.

Q What did he do?

A He was a shoemaker in the camp there, and George Carr, a man by the name of Cherry, he was a painter on this job, and there was another man that I identified and his name was B.C., and then there was another man, Jakeman, he was identified, and there was quite a number that were there that I identified by looking at them; I had worked around them and it would be hard to say off hand just who they were, what their names were now, and there was another little man I knew that worked in the mess hall, we called him Shorty; that's all I know. I helped carry out some of the dead.

Q Do you know the name of any veteran who left the camp before the storm?

A No, I don't believe I do.

Q At what time did aid come to you on the Keys after the storm?

A Why, about 5 - what do you mean, in the nature of man or....

Q I mean when did aid come from the outside to the Keys to render first aid treatment and to evacuate you?

A Oh, well there was a doctor there - come there in the morning, Wednesday morning, about 8 o'clock, with a few medical supplies which he had, alcohol and cotton, etc., and there was a boat come in and a coast guard cutter and a private boat, a yacht came in at, you might say around 2 o'clock.

Q Did aid come from the ~~land~~ civilian population first or government officials?

A Government officials.

Q Have you any criticism to make of the aid that came to you people after the hurricane and the manner in which you were cared for?

A No, sir, none whatever.

Q You believe aid got there as early as it would have been safe to come?

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- A Well, we could have had aid there that morning?
- Q Tuesday morning?
- A Wednesday morning. Tuesday we had a big high gale.
- Q Are there any other facts about this matter you have not related?
- A No.
- Q Don't you know anything about the weather conditions, whether there was any indication of a storm or any delay in getting you men out of there?
- A Well, we had bad balmy weather all day and low pressure; of course, I could tell you a lot of things, but I thought maybe you were waiting for me to answer your questions. This man in charge of the camps, Mr. Ghent, made a speech at the mess hall and one of the questions put to him was if in case there was a hurricane overtaken the Keys and camps probably, will we have a chance to be transported out and Mr. Ghent said we have trains waiting for you in Miami where we can get you out of the Keys 24 hours before any storm hits you.
- Q Did he promise to get you out 24 hours before any storm?
- A At that time he did.
- Q Were there any indications the storm was going to hit the Keys before Monday morning?
- A Well, no; no it was slow coming. It was slow coming. I was looking for it myself about 5 o'clock, because I have been on the seas a little and know how those things are. I was depending on the train and we were told at 2 o'clock by the first sergeant in camp to pack our bags and anything that we wished to take of a small nature; that the train was on its way and to stand by, which we did. At 3 o'clock a ~~Statens~~ Ford car came from Homestead, the man lived at Miami, and he had an empty seat in the back and the thought came to me that I should have asked this man for a ride to Homestead; I knew the storm was on its way then, and I changed my mind and instead I said to myself I should wait for the train just as it was ordered and stay at the camp; that's about all I know. Now, about that - this captain we had in camp, he done all he could for us.
- Q What captain is that?
- A Captain Davis, and I was there during the first blow - I was in the mess hall on the mess hall porch when the first crash came and

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during the lull between the first storm and second I was on the ferry and there was some other men there with me and they wanted to stay on the ferry but the captain of the ferry told them, "You men had better leave the boat because this storm is getting worse and this ship won't be safe," and quite a number of the men deserted the ship and went to the banks and railroad tracks and were washed back, and I stayed aboard the ferry and was saved.

Q You were aboard the ferry during the storm?

A The second storm. There is another thing here I want to say. Wednesday morning I helped take out some of the dead bodies from the swamps and the bodies were carried to a little ware house and laid out on the ground proper and were identified by the time keeper and various men that knew these particular men, of course, some of them were badly mutilated and were beyond recognition. They were identified, I wouldn't say off hand just how many, but there were about 35 bodies brought out of the swamps that morning.

I, CLYDE MCCAIN, DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY SWEAR that the answers made herein to questions propounded by D.W. Kemmerer, Central Office Investigator, are true and correct, with such initialed corrections as may appear therein, to the best of my knowledge and belief, so help me God.

(S) Clyde Mc Cain
CLYDE MCCAIN

Clyde W. Bunker SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO this 75th day of September, 1935, before
Form 4503a. Dated 9-16-35 Authority: Veterans' Administration,

(S) Clyde W. Bunker
Chief Attorney
Bay Pines Fla
Certified a true copy
Clyde W. Bunker
Chief Attorney
Bay Pines Fla