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SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

Research Report  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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1. ACTIVITIES OF JAPANESE MILITARY PERSONNEL CONTRARY TO THE LAWS OF WAR:

The following section comprises a record of violations of the Laws of War noted in documentary and other sources on file at ATIS, SWPA. It is complete to 1 Feb 44. Where such references concern violations taking place in SWPA and are derived from captured documents presently held by ATIS, photostatic copies of pertinent sections of the original document, together with names and identifications of the author and translators, are reproduced as Appendices.

a. Murders or Attempted Murders:

For convenience of reference, cases in this category have been classified according to the area in which the murder or attempted murder occurred. Special attention has been paid to cases occurring in SWPA, and attempts have been made to establish the identity of persons and units involved.

In all cases it has not been possible to establish definitely existence of a violation of the laws of war. Where the data given is of such nature as to make a violation probable it has been included.

(1) SWPA:

(a) The following references establish the fact and circumstances of the execution of a Flight Lieutenant near SALAMAUA on 29 Mar 43.

(1) ATIS Document No. 4959, (Original reproduced as Appendix "A", Part I, page A1), extracts from diary, owner and unit unknown, contains the following passage:

"BLOOD CARNIVAL"  
"29 Mar 43. All four of us (Technician KUROKAWA, NISHIGUCHI, YAWATA and myself) assembled in front of the Headquarters at 1500 hrs. One of the two members of the crew of the Douglas which was shot down by A/A on the 18th, and who had been under cross-examination by the 7th Base Force for some days, had been returned to the SALAMAUA Garrison, and it had been decided to kill him. Unit Commander KOMAI, when he came to the observation station to-day, told us personally that, in accordance with the compassionate sentiments of Japanese BUSHIDO, he was going to kill the prisoner himself with his favourite sword. So we gathered to observe this. After we had waited a little more than ten minutes, the truck came along. "The prisoner, who is at the side of the guard house; is given his last drink of water, etc. The Chief Medical Officer, Unit Commander KOMAI and the Headquarters Platoon Commander come out of the officers' mess, wearing their military swords. The time has come, so the prisoner, with his arms bound and his long hair now cropped very close, totters forward. He probably suspects what is afoot; but he is put on the truck and we set out for our destination.

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1. a. (1) (a) (1)

I have a seat next to the Chief Medical Officer; but ten guards ride with us. To the pleasant rumble of the engine we run swiftly along the road in the growing twilight. The glowing sun has set behind the western hills, gigantic clouds rise before us, and the dusk is falling all around. It will not be long now. As I picture the scene we are about to witness, my heart beats faster.

I glance at the prisoner; he has probably resigned himself to his fate. As though saying farewell to the world, as he sits in the truck he looks about, at the hills, at the sea, and seems deep in thought. I feel a surge of pity and turn my eyes away.

As we passed by the place where last year our lamented squad leader was cremated, Technician NISHIGUCHI must have been thinking about him too, for he remarked, "It's a long time since we were here last". It certainly is a long time. We could see the place every day from the observation post, but never got a chance to come. It is nearly a year since the squad leader was cremated. I was moved in spite of myself, and as I passed the place I closed my eyes and prayed for the repose of SHIMIZU's soul.

The truck runs along the sea shore. We have left the Navy guard sector behind us and now come into the Army guard sector. Here and there we see sentries in the grassy fields, and I thank them in my heart for their toil as we drive on. They must have got it in the bombing the night before last - there are great holes by the side of the road, full of water from the rain. In a little over twenty minutes, we arrive at our destination, and all get off.

Unit Commander KOMAI stands up and says to the prisoner, "We are now going to kill you". When he tells the prisoner that in accordance with Japanese BUSHIDO he would be killed with a Japanese sword, and that he would have two or three minutes' grace, he listens with bowed head. The Flight-Lieutenant (T.N. in Japanese, "TAII" - this refers to the prisoner) says a few words in a low voice. Apparently he wants to be killed with one stroke of the sword. I hear him say the word "One" (T.N. in English). The Unit Commander becomes tense and his face stiffens as he replies, "Yes" (T.N. in English).

Now the time has come, and the prisoner is made to kneel on the bank of a bomb crater filled with water. He is apparently resigned; the precaution is taken of surrounding him with guards with fixed bayonets, but he remains calm. He even stretches out his neck, and is very brave. When I put myself in the prisoner's place, and

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1. a. (1) (a) (1)

think that in one more minute it will be good-bye to this world, although the daily bombings have filled me with hate, ordinary human feelings make me pity him.

The Unit Commander has drawn his favourite sword. It is the famous OSAMUNE sword which he showed us at the observation post. It glitters in the light and sends a cold shiver down my spine. He taps the prisoner's neck lightly with the back of the blade, then raises it above his head with both arms, and brings it down with a sweep.

I had been standing with my muscles tensed, but in that moment I closed my eyes.

SSH! ..... It must be the sound of blood spurting from the arteries. With a sound as though something watery had been cut, the body falls forward. It is amazing - he had killed him with one stroke. The onlookers crowd forward. The head, detached from the trunk, rolls in front of it. SSH! SSH! ..... The dark blood gushes out.

All is over. The head is dead white, like a doll. The savageness which I felt only a little while ago is gone, and now I feel nothing but the true compassion of Japanese BUSHIDO. A Senior corporal laughs loudly, "Well, he will enter Nirvana now!". Then, a superior seaman of the medical unit takes the Chief Medical Officer's Japanese sword and, intent on paying off old scores, turns the headless body over on its back, and cuts the abdomen open with one clean stroke. "They are thick-skinned, these KETO (T.N. "Hairy foreigner" - common term of opprobrium for a white man) - even the skin of their bellies is thick." Not a drop of blood comes out of the body. It is pushed over into the crater at once and buried.

Now the wind blows mournfully and I see the scene again in my mind's eye. We get on to the truck again and start back. It is dark now. We get off in front of the Headquarters. I say good-bye to Unit Commander KOMAI, and climb up the hill with Technician KUROKAWA. This will be something to remember all my life. If ever I get back alive it will make a good story to tell, so I have written it down.

At SALAMAUA Observation Post, 30 Mar 43, 0110 hrs, to the sound of the midnight waves.

Note: The prisoner killed to-day was an Air Force Flight-Lieutenant (T.N. "TAII") from MORESBY. He was a young man, 23 this year, said to have been an instructor to the A T C at MORESBY."

(ATIS Spot Report No. 153, pp 1, 2)

1. a. (1) (a) (2) PW JA 145598 stated that:

"He had heard of an officer named KOMAI. He volunteered information that he had heard of KOMAI's executing someone, but could give no further information."

(ATIS Interrogation Report, Serial No. 292, p 8)

(3) ATIS Document No. 5496, file of reference notes and intelligence reports belonging to Lt. KAWADE of 20 Division Headquarters Staff, contains records of various American and Australian PsW captured in NEW GUINEA. One such interrogation report appears from internal evidence to be that of the victim in the abovenoted "Blood Carnival". It is reproduced as Appendix "B" (pp B1 ).  
(ATIS Document No. 5496, pp 71 - 78)

(4) A list of all known members of No. 1 Detachment (Company ?), SASEBO 5 SNLP is set forth below. This is the KOMAI Unit spoken of in Section (1) above. Names of persons known to have taken part in the execution, or those whose participation or presence appears probable on the strength of internal evidence, are underlined below.

OFFICERS

<u>Position</u>		<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Characters</u>
Goy Comdr	(8/43) (*a)	Lt. (jg)	KOMAI, Uichi	小 舞 宇 一
Attached 1 Goy	"	Lt. (jg)	TSUKIBASHI, Akira	日 崎 哲
HQ Pl Comdr	"	W.O.	IMOU, Masatoshi	早 生 正 俊
HQ Pl Comdr (sic)	"	Ens.	SUGAMUDA, Shigeru (*c)	菅 牟 田 茂
2 Pl Comdr	"	W.O.	SHINOHARA, Isaguma (*c)	篠 原 勇 熊
3 Pl Comdr	"	W.O.	TAGUCHI, Hidesuki	田 口 秀 助
MG Pl	"	W.O.	INAGAKI, Hisajiro	稻 垣 久 次 郎
Medical Unit (*b) Comdr	"	Lt.	FUKUSHIMA, Yoneharu	福 島 米 治
MO (*b)	"	Lt.	IGUCHI, Kunihiro (*d)	井 口 邦 彦

(\*a) etc:-

- (a) Figures in parenthesis indicate latest date at which source places person in particular position.
- (b) Presumably attached to SASEBO 5 SNLP, and not specifically to No. 1 Detachment.
- (c) Holds different positions within No. 1 Detachment according to source of earlier date.
- (d) Earlier source names IGUCHI as Medical Unit Commander.