

CHAPTER 8

EXCERPTS FROM IMPORTANT WAR CRIMES TRIALS

1. As a conclusion to this brief review of the activities of the Australian Military Forces in respect of the tracing, apprehension and trial of Japanese war criminals, it is fitting that a short account should be given of some of the more important war crimes and of the trials relevant thereto conducted by AMF Courts. The following have been selected:-

- (a) The Sandakan – Ranau marches in British North Borneo.
- (b) The trials of Senior Japanese officers at Rabaul.
- (c) War Crimes at the Tantoei camp in Amboina.
- (d) The Burma/Siam Railway atrocities.
- (e) The murder of members of the civilian administration at Nauru.
- (f) The murder of civilians at Kavieng.
- (g) The murder of Flight Lieutenant Newton and Sgt L.G Siffleet.
- (h) Hainan Island atrocities.
- (i) War Crimes at the NAOETSU PW Camps, Japan.

A. – THE SANDAKAN AND SANDAKAN-RANAU MARCHES

2. On 7th August 1942 “B” Force of 1496 Australians were moved from Changi Prisoner of War Camp, Singapore, to Sandakan, British North Borneo, on a 3,000 ton cargo steamer under most appalling conditions. At about the same time 970 British prisoners were moved to Jesselton ex Java and Singapore under similar conditions. This British Force was later moved to Sandakan, No. 2 PW Compound in June 1943, 747 being alive on arrival at Sandakan. The move was brought about by the shortage of food and water in the Jesselton area and insufficient space in the Jesselton gaol to accommodate the PW’s causing the abnormal death rate. In June 1943 “E” Force consisting of 500 Australians, was moved to Borneo staging at Kuching & Bahala island awaiting completion of No. 3 PW Compound. Early July 1943, “E” Force was transferred from Bahala Island to No. 3 PW Camp, Sandakan. This made a total of approximately 2743 Australian and British prisoners arrived in Sandakan in the 3 compounds, up to July 1943.

3. In September 1943, subsequent to the discovery by the Japanese of underground organisations between prisoners in the compounds and natives and civilians outside who supplied the prisoners with food, drugs, information and escape assistance, 203 British and Australian Officers and 40 other ranks were moved from Sandakan to Kuching. This left a total of 2727 prisoners at Sandakan, including 7 Australian and 3 British Officers, most of whom were employed on the construction of an Airfield, work on roads and garden plots.

4. During June 1944, 100 British PW’s were moved from No 2 Compound, Sandakan, to Labuan where they were worked on the roads, and Airfield construction. 15 of these PW’s who were alive in May 1945 were moved to Seria and murdered en route to Luton, June 1945.

5. From September, 1944, the death rate started to increase rapidly, which was steady up to this time considering the conditions under which the prisoners lived and worked. The Japanese cut the prisoners’ ration by half and the death rate increased from 12 a month in September 1944, to 327 in the month of March, 1945.

6. By November, 1944, Allied Air Operations over North Borneo had rendered the Sandakan Aerodrome useless for Japanese war effort. Consequently its maintenance by prisoners of war labour was stopped and the prisoners' already totally inadequate rations were further reduced. This, in addition to murder, systematic torture and ill-treatment, caused the death of approximately 1400 prisoners to this date.

7. In January 1945, as the prisoners were no longer required for war work, and in any case very few of them were physically fit if required, the Japanese decided that they were in incumbrance which had to be got rid of by some means. It was decided, therefore, that prisoners would be moved by foot from Sandakan to Ranau, which was approximately 135 miles away. This decision was taken although the Japanese were fully cognisant of the appalling physical condition of the prisoners owing to ill-treatment, starvation, and sickness, which made it very certain that a large number would not survive a march over 135 miles of tropical virgin jungle country in which the track in many parts was either knee-deep in mud or over mountainous country rising to 9,000 ft. above sea level, on which progress had to be made on hands and knees. In addition, only about 30 per cent of the prisoners had boots; the remainder set out with either rubber soled shoes or strips of hessian bound round the feet or bare, and most had little or no clothing to speak of, or shelter en route.

8. The movement of prisoners from Sandakan en route to Ranau, was carried out in 3 main moves; hereinafter reference to the first will mean the 9 parties which left at intervals from 28 January 1945 to 6 February 1945.

The strength of the Australian and British prisoners on 1st September 1944 was approximately 1960 and on the 27th January, 1945, was reduced to approximately 1335, and on the 28th January, 1945, the first party left Sandakan on the initial march to Ranau.

From the Australian Camp there were 55 PW's under the command of CAPTAIN YAMANOTO who was commanding officer for the movement and also LIEUT. IINO HIGERU, and 2/LIEUT. YAMASAKI with about 40 other ranks as guards, together with 5 of the PW compound guards. Of this party no more than 40 reached Pugnatan which is about 16 miles north of Ranau.

No. 2 party consisting of 55 Australian PW's moved en route to Ranau on the 29th January, 1945, with LIEUT. HIRANO YUKIHIKO in charge and about 40 other ranks Japanese, plus 4 PW Compound guards, only 30 PW's reaching Ranau.

No. 3 party left with 55 PW's on 30th January 1945, with LIEUT. TOHOHARA in charge and about 45 other ranks Japanese plus 4 PW Compound guards and only about 33 PW's reached Ranau.

No. 4 party left on the 31st January 1945 with 50 PW's under the command of CAPTAIN MIZUTA RYUICHI with about 40 other rank Japanese, plus 4 PW Compound guards. Of this party only about 40 reached Ranau.

No. 5. Party left on 1st February 1945 with LIEUT. SATO in command of 50 PW's, 50 other ranks Japanese, 4 PW Compound guards. Only 35 PW reached Ranau.

No. 6 party left on 2nd February 1945, with LIEUT TANAKA in charge of 40 PW's, about 50 other ranks Japanese and 3 PW Compound guards. Only 27 PW's reached Ranau.

No. 7 party left on the 4th February 1945 with 2/LIEUT. SUGIMURA in charge of 50 PW's, about 45 other rank Japanese and 5 PW Compound guards. No more than 40 PW's reached Pugnatan. This party consisted of all British PW's.

No. 8 party left on the 5th February 1945, with LIEUT. HORIKAWA in charge of 50 PW's, about 50 other rank Japanese and 4 PW Compound guards. This party was all from the British No. 2 Camp. Only 37 PW's arrived at Ranau.

No. 9 party left on the 6th February, 1945, with LIEUT. ABE in charge of 55 PW's, 50 other ranks Japanese, 5 PW Compound guards. About 29 PW's arrived at Pugnatan. This group comprised 20 Australians, the balance British.

9. Of the total of 470 British and Australian PW's, who left Sandakan in the first 9 parties en route to Ranau the Japanese admit 157 did not reach their destination, the admission being the missing PW's were murdered as they became exhausted or ill and unable to travel.

10. The Japanese Commander CAPTAIN YAMANO and his second in command CAPTAIN ABE KAZUO have been tried by court and sentenced to death and hanged, and seven other guards officers have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

11. The first march, PW on reaching their destination were used for the portering of stores between Ranau and Pugnatan consisting of a return journey of 32 miles. The same thing happened to those PW's who fell by the wayside from exhaustion etc. and unable to carry on were not allowed to rest but were disposed of as the Japanese term it – murdered is the true word.

If a few PW's were fortunate to reach Pugnatan and too exhausted to make the return trip the next day, they would be substituted by one who had rested or recovered somewhat, but very few ever returned from the final trip to Pugnatan.

12. On the 29th April 1945, no more than 65 of these 314 PW's were alive; during the 9 weeks in Ranau-Pugnatan 249 PW's had been murdered or died.

13. On 27th April 1945, Allied planes bombed and strafed Ranau for the first time and continued for 3 days. When on the 29th April 1945, the Japanese went into the jungle about a mile from the Airport Camp and moved with them about 40 to 50 of the remaining PW's of which two-thirds were seriously ill and had to be carried to the new camp site in the jungle, the PW's doing all the portering and movement of sick PW's; where they remained until 10th June 1945. On this date 18 PW's were alive out of the original 470, who departed from Sandakan in the first march.

14. On the 10th June, 1945, the PW's in the Ranau Jungle Camp, 9 unable to walk, were murdered, the other 9 moved to a new camp, 110 mile post Tambunan Rentis – about 4 1/2 miles – east of Ranau, where only 6 were alive on 26th June, 1945.

15. The second march commenced on the night of 29th May 1945, and the party consisted of 536 PW's. British and Australians were marched out from Sandakan en route to Ranau, under the command of CAPTAIN TAKAKUWA TAKUO and his second in command CAPTAIN WATANABE GENZO. The PW's were moved in groups of 50 with Japanese guard on each group.

16. On the night of 29th May when 536 PW's moved out of the Sandakan Camps, 291 PW's were left behind, mainly hospital cases.

17. Of the 536 British and Australians who formed the second march, only 183 reached Ranau on the 26th June 1945 to join up with the 6 survivors of the first march. Two Australians escaped alive en route to Ranau, one at Kolapis and one at Sapi. Both escapees were found by friendly natives and delivered out to Lebaron Island and recovered by Allied forces.

18. At Ranau the Japanese continued their inhuman treatment of murder, torture, ill-treatment, and starvation to such purpose that of those prisoners who reached Ranau only 6 survived, consisting of 4 who escaped on night of 7th July 1945 and 2 on night of 28th Jul 1945. After escaping 1 died out of the first and 1 died of the second escape.

19. Of the 291 British and Australian PW's left in Sandakan on 29th May 1945, of those who were alive on 9th June 1945 – 75 PW's were marched out en route to Ranau forming the third march.

The actual destination was not definite for the third march as the condition of the PW's was so low it was stated by the sole survivor of the Japanese guard, ISHIKAWA, the PW's only managed to travel about 30 miles before they all died? But ISHIKAWA died himself at Jesselton before he could be fully interrogated. But it was known that the third march was commanded by LIEUT. IWASHITA who was murdered by a Japanese guard, and that it included 75 sick prisoners.

20. The Prisoner of War Camp Commandant, CAPTAIN HOSHIJIMA who was in charge at Sandakan from its inception till 17th May 1945, together with CAPTAIN TAKAKUWA TAKUO, and his second in command CAPTAIN WATANABE GENZO have been sentenced to death and hanged, and 19 other guards have been sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

21. The 4 escapees from Ranu, on the night of 7th July were contacted by friendly natives and were sheltered in a hide-out in the jungle where one died on 28 July, 1945.

On the night of 27th July 1945 it being learned definitely from Japanese sources that all PW's were to be murdered within a day or so, Sticpewich and Reither warned the senior officers of the prisoners and escaped themselves on the night of 28th July 1945. Friendly natives were organised on contact and later a message was forwarded to Allied command. A contact was made with an Allied reconnaissance unit on the 6th August 1945, giving position and information of the previous escapees. On the morning of 8th August 1945, Driver Reither died. On the night of 9th August 1945, Sticpewich proceeded with native guides from Sumang to Lansat where he joined up with Allied forces on the morning of 10th August 1945, and gave in detail information of the Japanese intention to dispose of all prisoners of war as ordered by their higher command of the 37th Army which appeared to be the general order for all prisoners of war throughout. The information enabled action to be initiated with reference to other PW Camps and enabled the surviving 3 of the escape on 7th July 1945 to be picked up, given medical care and returned to Australia.

22. The PW's who were alive in the Ranau camp on the morning of 1st August 1945 included 5 officers and 28 other ranks – all were murdered by the Japanese that day.

23. A study of the preceding figures discloses the appalling fact that between September 1943 and August 1945, 2723 Allied prisoners were either murdered or died of torture, sickness and starvation at Sandakan, on the march to Ranau or at Ranau.

24. The initial investigation and Trials were conducted in British North Borneo and Labuan Island. Trials commenced at Labuan on the 12th December 1945 to the 31st January 1946. Other trials were held at Rabaul May and June 1946.

25. The investigations which disclose the above atrocities and the subsequent trials of the Japanese criminals directly involved, together with evidence given at the major war crimes trial Tokyo in December 1946, it was considered by Lt. Col. J.W. FLANNAGAN, AAG. War Crime Investigation, to re-open investigations with the view to determining what high ranking officers, if any, had ordered the marches and this inhuman treatment of prisoners. The result of these investigations was that LT. GENERAL BABA MASAO, G.O.C. 37th Japanese Army, was tried and sentenced to death by hanging, by an Australian Military Court at Rabaul on 2nd June 1947 for the responsibility and criminal action of his subordinates in connection with the Sandakan-Ranu marches.

B – THE TRIALS OF SENIOR JAPANESE OFFICERS AT RABAUL

16. In May 1946 it was decided to arraign before an Australian Military Court under the War Crimes Act 1945 certain senior Japanese officers, in command of operations in NEW GUINEA, NEW IRELAND, NEW BRITAIN and BOUGAINVILLE areas for their responsibility for war crimes committed within the areas of their command by members of units under command.

17. This decision was made in view of the great number of, and the widespread areas in which crimes were committed, plus facts which it was claimed proved that senior Japanese commanders must have known, even if they did not order, the conduct of their sub-ordinates towards prisoners of war, due allowance being made for operational circumstances which would decide the degree of control possible for a commander to exercise.

18. All the preparatory work in connection with the trials was carried out by DPW & I. and DLS, and in the case of the provision of material suitable for the prosecution, consisted of:

- (a) The preparation of an authenticated map delineating the area of command of each Japanese senior officer concerned.
- (b) The preparation of an authenticated list of units under command of each of these officers.
- (c) Examination of original court proceedings dealing with war crimes already proven before Australian Military Courts and extracting from appropriate proceedings the names of Japanese perpetrators, their units, and the locality of the crime.
- (d) Co-relating the perpetrators with each senior officer's command and area of command.
- (e) Photostating into all court proceedings linked to a senior officer.
- (f) Preparation of an abstract of evidence for each trial.

19. Some idea of the amount of research involved in the abovementioned tasks may be gained from the fact that over 200 court proceedings and numerous boards of inquiry and reports had to be examined.

20. The prosecution case was all documentary except for one witness, namely Capt CHINT SINGH who was brought from India to give personal testimony. Capt CHINT SINGH was one of the few survivors of Indian prisoner of war working parties in New Guinea.

21. Originally 23 senior Command and Staff officers were selected for investigation, but by March 1947, after 9 months of intensive investigation, this number had been reduced to 4, namely, General IMAMURA Hitoshi, G.O.C. Japanese 8th Army Group; Lt-Gen ADACHI Hatazo, GOC 18th JAPANESE Army; Lt-Gen KATO Rinpei, Chief of Staff 8th Japanese Army Group; and Maj-Gen HIROTA Akira, CO Field Supply Depots, Rabaul, against whom it was considered a prima facie case was established.

22. AHQ convened the courts and the following AMF personnel participated in the trials:

Maj-Gen J.S. Whitelaw, C.B.E., Court President

Brig E.M. Neylan, M.C., Court Member

Col W.N. Tinsley, D.S.O., Court Member

Lt-Col H.G. Guinn, D.S.O., Court Member

Lt-Col H.C. Smith, Court Member

Maj L.G.R. Kyngdon, Court Member

Maj Dick, Assistant Prosecutor

Lt-Col J.T. Brock, Judge Advocate

23. At the request of AHQ the Attorney-General's Department provided Mr L.C. Badham, K.C., and Mr T.S. McKay as counsel for the prosecution.

24. While the preparation of the material for the prosecution was going on, Maj-Gen YAJIMA Masanori, senior Japanese legal officer at Rabaul, was informed of the intention to try senior Japanese officers at Rabaul. He immediately submitted a request for additional Japanese legal and court personnel from Japan to be made available for the defence. This request was approved and Maj-Gen YAJIMA and an assistant moved to Japan in November 1946, selected 15 Japanese, including solicitors, translators and interpreters, and returned with them to Rabaul on 2nd February 1947. Subsequently, before the trials commenced, certain senior Japanese service personnel were moved from Japan to Rabaul at the request of Maj-Gen YAJIMA to appear as witnesses for the defence.

25. The following are the dates on which the trials commenced and the resultant confirmed sentences and acquittals.

- (a) Maj-Gen HIROTA Akira, 19th March 1947, sentenced to seven years imprisonment.
- (b) Lt-Gen ADACHI, Hatazo, 8th April 1947, sentenced to imprisonment for life. (ADACHI committed suicide in September 1947.)
- (c) Lt-Gen KATO Rinpei, 28th April 1947, acquitted.
- (d) Gen IMAMURA, Hitoshi, 1st May 1947, sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

26. The substance of each charge was – “Committing a War Crime, that is to say, a violation of the laws and usages of war, in that he between.....and.....being a Commander of Japanese Armed Forces in, such Forces being at War with the Commonwealth of Australia and its Allies, unlawfully disregarded and failed to discharge his duty as such commander to control the conduct of the members of his command, whereby they committed brutal atrocities and other high crimes against people of the Commonwealth of Australia and its Allies.”

27. The majority of the documentary evidence produced by the prosecution was original court proceedings concerning the trial of Japanese war criminals for crimes against Indian and Chinese prisoners of war. In this matter the defence raised the point that Indians and Chinese after capture became voluntary collaborators with and a component part of the Japanese forces and as such they were punishable under the Japanese Army Criminal Code for any offence, eg. against discipline, committed by them, and that they were not treated as prisoners of war but were accorded the same treatment as Japanese soldiers. To rebut this, defence evidence was obtained from senior surviving Indian and Chinese officers that they and their nationals at all times retained their status as prisoners of war and furthermore that the Japanese used ill treatment and torture against individuals and parties in an effort to make them become collaborators.

C – THE TANTOEI CAMP – AMBON

28. On 26th October 1942 there were 528 Australian, 14 American and 7 Dutch, a total of 548, prisoners of war in Japanese custody at Tantoei Camp, Ambon. Previously, in July 1942, 500 Australian and Dutch prisoners under the command of Lt-Col J. Scott had been moved from Ambon to Hainan Island.

29. Of the 548 prisoners at Tantoei Camp Ambon in October 1942 only 139 were recovered by Australian Forces when the Japanese capitulated, and many of this 139 were in such a debilitated and diseased condition that they died subsequent to their repatriation.

30. Of the 409 who perished at Tantoei Camp, 17 were executed and the remainder died of starvation, torture, beatings and the denial of medical attention.

31. From Sep 44 – Aug 45, the rice issued to PW averaged 6 ounces per man per day and very often was mixed with sand and dirt. This 6 ounces of rice was increased to a total of 25 ounces of food per day by the addition of sweet potatoes, sweet potato tops and tapioca, these additions being worthless from a nutrition point of view. Also, the 40 kgs sacks of rice were invariably under weight and the edible amount further reduced by decomposition. During the same period, Japanese troops received 13 ounces of rice per day plus other foods and were buying privately.

32. Requisitions for medical supplies were never completely fulfilled, the amount granted being hopelessly inadequate to give PW proper medical care – one month when there were 200 ulcer cases in the Camp, one only bandage was supplied.

33. For 6 weeks commencing November 1944 a form of torture was introduced, known as the “long carry”. This consisted of working parties of approximately 100 PW being forced to carry loads of bombs and cement weighting 90 to 150 lbs over 8 miles of rugged, precipitous country. The Japanese never used the bombs or cement and this treatment was designed to lower the morale of the PW and to accelerate their ultimate death. Infirm PW made progress on all fours and were clubbed along the track by the guards. Many PW were carried back by their comrades to camp unconscious and died without recovering consciousness.

34. For allegedly breaking out of camp and visiting a native village, 23 Australian PW were systematically beaten and tortured for a period of approximately 8 days. Some were bound to trees, others were strung up by cable wire bound around their wrists with their toes just touching the ground. They were beaten into insensibility with pick handles rubber hose and or lengths of wire, revived by cold water being thrown over them, then beaten insensible again and tortured by lighted cigarettes being thrust up their nostrils. The victims were given one rice meal a day with water. Sometimes after they had drunk the water, the Japanese would jump on their stomachs. At the end of the beating, all but 11 were returned to the camp suffering from broken bones, concussion and severe lacerations. The 11 who did not return to camp were subsequently executed.

35. The abovementioned details are not relevant to a number of separate trials of Japanese officers and other ranks in connection with specific murders and other war crimes at Ambon PW camp but rather with a mass trial of 91 Japanese officers and other ranks who were concerned with the administration, control and guarding of prisoners at the Ambon camp and as such were charged en masse with:

“Committing a war crime, namely ill treatment of prisoners of war, in that they in and between the months of Feb 42 and Aug 45, ill treated Aust and Dutch prisoners of war at Tan Toey Camp Ambon by

- (a) physical beatings and torture

- (b) compelling sick and infirm PW to go out on working parties.
- (c) failing to ensure the provision of proper food supplies
- (d) failing to ensure the provision of proper medical supplies and medical care.”

36. Of the 91 Japanese charged, 4 were sentenced to death, 32 to terms of imprisonment varying from 1 to 20 years, and the remainder acquitted.

37. Some of the most notorious amongst those sentenced were:

- (a) Capt SHIROZU Wadami, Commander of the 20th Garrison Unit, who was responsible for the administration and guarding of the prisoners was sentenced to death.
- (b) Civilian (Interpreter) IKEUCHI Masakiyo was sentenced to death.
- (c) Lt MIYAZAKI Yoshio, camp commandant, and Commander of the Land Guard which supplied the guards for the camp was sentenced to death.
- (d) Lt SHIMAKAWA Masaichi, in charge of the guards at the camp was sentenced to death.
- (e) P/O TAKEUCHI Michio who constantly beat PW on working parties to such an extent that many of his victims were carried back to camp unconscious (2 died immediately after his beatings) was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.
- (f) P/O TANAKA Masaichi was responsible for many brutal beatings and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

38. Photographs showing the debilitated condition of PW recovered from Ambon will be found on page 313.

D – THE BURMA/SIAM RAILWAY

39. At the commencement of the Japanese occupation of Burma and Siam the internal railway systems of those two countries were separated by 415 km; this being the distance, for railway constructional purposes, between railheads at Bampong in Siam and Thanbyuzayat in Burma. The terrain between the two railheads included some of the worst jungle country in the world and contained notorious cholera belts and other areas in which malaria and dysentery were endemic. In addition, owing to the complete absence of, or where they did exist totally inadequate means of communication, accommodation, hospitalization and supply, diseases such as beri-beri, pellagra, tropical ulcers scabies, plague and respiratory troubles, although not endemic, were certain to heavily impact and cause disease and death amongst any body of men which attempted to work, sustain and move through this country.

40. For strategical purposes the Japanese decided to bridge the gap between Bampong and Thanbyuzayat by a railway using as labour Allied prisoners of war, at that time mostly concentrated in Singapore and Java, and natives from occupied territories.

41. Accordingly, from September 1942 onwards large parties of prisoners moved from Singapore, Southern Burma and Java by ship and rail to Thanbyuzayat in Burma and overland to Bampong in Siam to commence construction from both ends. In most cases the Allied senior officers in charge of parties were given no inkling of what they and the men under their command were going to. On the contrary, the Japanese authorities deliberately spread stories that the parties were proceeding to rest camps in areas where there was much more food and better hospitalization. Undoubtedly one of the motives of the Japanese in spreading this false information was to limit the amount of baggage that would be carried by prisoners. But whatever their motives were, the result as far as the Allied PW officers who organized the moves were concerned was that sick men were included in the parties, and medical supplies and instruments which could have been taken in reasonable quantities were reduced to a minimum.

42. The conditions obtaining during the moves of the various parties to their working areas were appalling. Ship holds and train trucks were grossly overcrowded to the extent where there was only crouched-up sitting room for journeys taking 4 or 5 days to complete. Then after offloading from ships and trains marches on foot of distances varying from 10 to 300 km had to be undertaken, sometimes over unmade roads and tracks through dense and mountainous jungle in torrential tropical rain during the hour of darkness, with all baggage on the man. Whether moving by train, ship or foot, the arrangements for accommodation, sanitation, drinking, feeding and treatment of the sick were totally inadequate, as a result of which many men died during the moves or immediately after arrival at the working areas, from exposure, exhaustion and disease.

43. It is not intended here to give the conditions in any particular groups, force or camp, as although some of these congeries suffered more casualties than others, the same general overall conditions obtained in every case.

44. The organization of personnel for the construction of the railway was:

- (a) Japanese Railway Engineers who were responsible for the direction and supervision of PW labour on the job when they had been handed over by the camp guards.
- (b) Japanese and Korean PW camp staffs who were responsible for the entire administration and security of PW.
- (c) PW administrative staffs within the camps comprising amongst others, the commanding officer (generally the senior Allied officer in the camp), adjutant and Supply Officer.

45. The system for the supply of PW for working parties was that the Railway Engineers notified the Japanese camp staff daily of the numbers required. The Japanese or Korean camp commander, very often a private or non-commissioned officer, then passed the demand on to the PW Adjutant, who was supposed to parade the requisite number. The numbers demanded by the Japanese were in no way related to the actual number of fit men available, and if the Adjutant was short of the requisite number, as was generally the case, the Japanese, not necessarily medical personnel, would hold their own sick parade and visit the hospital to obtain the required number of workers. In this manner thousands of debilitated and diseased PW were forced to work, thus hastening their deaths.

46. The treatment of PW by the Japanese with regard to working hours, food, medicine and accommodation was in itself sufficient to kill thousands, but in addition their systematic, continuous, sadistic ill treatment, torture and bashings added many hundreds to the death roll.

47. The working hours varied in time and places from 10 to 24 hours a day for six and seven days a week. Very often the distance from the work camps to the job was up to 10 km, which had to be marched starting in the dark before the dawn, and back to the camp at 10, 11 or 12 o'clock at night after work ceased.

48. The work itself was the heaviest manual labour without any mechanical assistance, and included clearing virgin jungle, building embankments, laying sleepers and rails, spiking rails, blasting cuttings through hills of rock, and building 15 km of bridging over rivers and ravines.

49. The basic Japanese ration issued to prisoners varied in time and place; the further the line was pushed out from the bases in Siam and Burma the scarcer became the rations. An approximate figure for the whole period of imprisonment would be:-

- (a) 20 oz of rice, polished, very often of the poorest quality, containing weevils and dirt, per day.
- (b) 4 oz of vegetables per man per day, including turnip tops etc.
- (c) 2 oz of meat or fish per man per day.
- (d) minute quantities of oil, sugar and salt.

50. Prisoners were allowed to supplement the basic ration issued by the Japanese by private purchase of fruit, eggs, peanuts and sugar from natives through a camp canteen system, in which either the Japanese bought the goods in bulk from the native traders and sold it to the PW canteen at a degree of profit depending on the avariciousness of the Japanese concerned, or the PW camp staff bought direct from the native tradesmen, who increased their prices so that the Japanese camp commander could get his commission. The canteen, of course, was not established in all camps, but depended firstly on the proximity of the camp to sources of supply, and secondly on the good will of the Japanese camp commandant. Also, in every case where canteens were established, the amount of goods available and the purchasing power of the prisoners were totally inadequate to supply all but a small portion of requirements.

51. Coarse tobacco, tobacco leaf and native cheroots were generally available if prisoners had sufficient money to buy.

52. It is not known what quantity of red cross food parcels were received by the Japanese, but the only issue made to prisoners along the railway in three and a half years was one half parcel per man. After the railway was completed, some bulk supplies of food were received from the Red Cross.

53. The accommodation was generally in huts, in which the roof and walls were built of atap, that is, a type of palm leaf, and bamboo with a raised bamboo floor inside. Each prisoner was allowed a space about 30 inches wide and 80 inches long, and when the number of men to go into a hut could not be fitted in to this pace on the existing floor, tiers of bunks had to be built with the bottom of one man's bunk being about 18" above the face of the man beneath him. Very often the jungle had to be cleared and huts built by the prisoners after they arrived at their camp site, the prisoners meanwhile living in the open. Some camps into which prisoners were moved were already occupied by natives suffering from cholera, with the dead and dying lying around exposed, and the whole camp area underfoot consisting of 12 inches of mud churned up into an obscene contagious mess of human excreta and refuse.

54. Medical supplies were shockingly and ludicrously inadequate, except in the case of quinine which was usually available. Thousands of workmen in isolated areas decimated with diseases, received every few weeks a few bandages and a handful of drugs, usually of no specific value. As usual, medical officers were called upon to sign untranslated vouchers listing supplies. Repeated requests for reasonable quantities of such specific drugs as emetine, Vitamine, concentrates, sulphoniilimide preparations, iodoform, etc. were simply ignored. These drugs were known to be purchasable locally though contacts were forbidden and prices fantastically high. Small quantities were obtained through clandestine channels.

55. The Japanese would not hear of application to International Red Cross sources either by their own army or by prisoners of war.

56. The lack of antiseptics was a grave factor in epidemic disease. Wounds and the very prevalent ulcers were dressed with scraps of clothing or even paper or leaves of trees, and gangrene and flyblown ulcers were routine spectacles. The treatment of tropical ulcers and septic conditions was rendered extremely difficult owing to the complete paucity of drugs, dressings, instruments and anaesthetics. Numerous operations had to be effected in primitive surroundings, with crude improvised instruments, frequently without anaesthetics.

57. In cholera epidemics in most cases no saline was available and this had to be manufactured from kitchen salt and distilled water from improvised stills. Saline transfusions sets were manufactured by all sorts of improvisations, and in one case an intravenous canula was produced by drilling a hole in a bamboo thorn.

58. The Japanese attitude with regard to sickness was that it was shameful and criminal for a man to be ill, and they frequently stated that it did not matter if the sick died. In many cases they actually implemented this belief by reducing the rations.

59. The approximate numbers and casualties of PW, by nationalities, who worked on the railway line are :-

	Number of PW	Deaths
British	27412	7934
Australian	12121	3949
Dutch	17399	4616
American	569	127
	<u>57501</u>	<u>16626</u>

60. In addition a number of PW were killed by Allied bombing due to the Japanese siting PW camps close to military objectives and failing to notify Allied Governments of the location of PW camps.

61. As well as PW labour, tens of thousands of natives from occupied countries were recruited for work on the line, and their conditions closely approximated those suffered by Allied PW. It is impossible to assess the death numbers of these natives, but some sources have given it as 150,000.

62. With regard to war crimes trials of Japanese connected with the construction of the railway, British and Australian courts had, as at the end of November 1947, sentenced 64 to death and 105 to varying terms of imprisonment. Hereunder are the names and sentences of some of the criminals:-

Rank	Name	Appointment	Sentence
Col	NAKAMURA Shigeo	OC PW Groups Siam	Death
Maj-Gen	FUKEI Shimpei	OC PW Groups Malaya	Death
Col	SUGASAWA Iju	OC PW Admin French Indo China and OC PW engaged on war work on B/S Railway Group Commander	Death
Maj	HACHISUKA Kunifusa	F and H Forces Group Commander	Death
Maj	KUDO Hikosaku	No 1 Group B/S Rail Camps	Death
Col	ISHII Tamiji	Group Commander, No 2 Group B/S Rail Camps	Death
Col	NAGATOMA Yoshitada	Group commander, No 3 Group B/S Rail Camps	Death
Lt-Col	YANAGITA Shoichi	Group Commander, No 2 Group B/S Rail Camps	20 years
Maj	CHIDA Sotomatsu	Group Commander, No 4 Group B/S Rail Camps	18 Years
Kor Gd	HAYASHI Eishun		Death
Capt	HIGUCHI Tomizo	MO No 3 Group HQ	Life
Capt	MIZUTANI Totaro	Camp Comdt, 80, 95, 100 Km	Death

E-THE MURDER OF MEMBERS OF CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION AT NAURU

63. When the Allies recaptured Nauru from the Japanese, an investigation was immediately commenced to determine the fate of Lt-Col F.R. Chalmers, DR B.H. Quinn, Mr W.H. Shugg, Mr F. Harmer and Mr W.H. Doyle, who had voluntarily remained at Nauru when the evacuation of civilians was organized just previous to the Japanese invasion.

64. Interrogation and re-interrogation at Nauru, Rabaul and Tokyo of Japanese officers and men who had served on Nauru and were concerned in the custody of Internees had elicited the same story, which they consistently maintained in spite of intensive questioning. This was that the five missing civilians had been interned by the Japanese when they arrived on the Island, but that they had been killed during an Allied air raid on the night 25/26 March 1943.

65. To discountenance the story of the Japanese, dozens of statements were obtained from Nauruan natives and Chinese that Lt-Col Chalmers and his four colleagues had been murdered by the Japanese, but the evidence was so conflicting as to the time, place and method of execution that it was impossible to establish a prima facie case against any Japanese concerned.

66. Finally at Rabaul on 13 May 1946 Lt Comd NAKAYAMA Hiromi, Adjutant of the Garrison Force at Nauru, confessed to the murder of the five civilians, and was subsequently tried and sentenced to death.

67. It was always considered by DPW & I that Japanese other than NAKAYAMA were concerned in the murder, and that NAKAYAMA had assumed full responsibility for the murders to stop investigations and to shield his accomplices. Accordingly investigations were continued, on hundreds of interrogation reports on Japanese who had been questioned and on one such report by a Japanese named SATO JIN was a statement that Lt SASAKI Saburo, assistant adjutant to NAKAYAMA, had told SATO JIN that he, SASAKI, had shot the interned civilians with his pistol.

68. A search was immediately commenced for SASAKI, who had been returned to Japan in 1943. He was ultimately located, arrested and interrogated, and made a full confession to participating in the murders. Subsequently SASAKI was moved from Japan to Rabaul, where he was tried and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

F – THE MURDER OF CIVILIANS AT KAVIENG

69. Early in 1946 investigations were commenced to ascertain the fate of a group of approximately 32 civilians who had been interned by the Japanese at Kavieng, New Ireland in 1942.

70. Rear Admiral TAMURA Ryukichi, Commander of Japanese Naval Units in New Ireland, and several of his subordinates, were interrogated and all gave substantially the same account of the fate of the missing civilians; this was that they had been embarked on a Japanese vessel named the "KOWA MARU" in February 1944 for movement to Rabaul, and that en route to Rabaul the 'KOWA MARU' was sunk with all hands by allied bombing.

71. This specious story was not believed in toto although the 'KOWA MARU' did visit the vicinity of Kavieng, and was sunk en route to Rabaul. Further investigations located survivors who definitely stated that there were no civilians from Kavieng embarked on their ship. Accordingly, an intensive search was commenced for Japanese who served under TAMURA at Kavieng, particularly for junior ranks as it was considered that they were more likely to crack-up under interrogation.

72. Eventually, in June 1947, after 70 Japanese had been interrogated, a Japanese crew member of a barge gave the following full ghastly details of the fate of the missing civilians. In February 1944 Kavieng was subjected to a number of Allied naval and air bombardments which TAMURA believed to be a softening-up prelude to an Allied landing. Consequently he gave orders to his subordinates for the disposal of the interned civilians, numbering approximately 32.

73. The murders were planned and carried out by moving the victims from their camp to the vicinity of Kavieng South wharf sometime in March 1944. They were then blindfolded and taken one by one on to the wharf where they were killed by ju-jitsu and strangulation. After death the bodies were loaded on two barges which then proceeded some distance to sea. At a place in the vicinity of Nago and Edmago Islands the bodies were thrown overboard with cement sinkers attached.

74. In connection with this crime, Vice Admiral TAMURA has been tried and sentenced to death and 5 subordinates have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment by an Australian military court at Hong Kong.

G. – MURDER OF AUSTRALIAN PRISONERS IN NEW GUINEA

Ft/Lt W.E. NEWTON VC at SALAMAUA

Sgt L.G. SIFFLEET at AITAPE

75. The murder of F/Lt NEWTON was discovered through the capture on July 31st 1943 of a Japanese Intelligence Report giving details of the capture and interrogation of 2 members of the crew of an Australian Boston Aircraft which crashed at SALAMAUA on 18th March 1943. The details given definitely established the identity of the prisoners as F/Lt NEWTON and Sgt John LYON.

76. A captured Japanese diary gave a detailed account of the decapitation of NEWTON at SALAMAUA. The diary was published in the press and was the first case of the deliberate execution of an Australian PW to become known. It was not until after the end of hostilities that it was learnt that Allied air crew members and members of land forces captured as individuals or as small parties were nearly always executed.

77. Excluding the New Britain area and S/L WAWN's crew who were captured just before the end of hostilities only 3 RAAF members who fell into Japanese hands in New Guinea or the Netherland East Indies survived the war. At least 65 were deliberately killed, in most cases by beheading.

78. When at a later date photographs depicting the beheading of an Australian prisoner were found on a dead Japanese Major it was assumed that the victim was F/Lt NEWTON. It was obvious to anyone familiar with NEWTON's appearance that the victim shown in the picture, which received worldwide press publicity, bore no resemblance to him but an official announcement was made that NEWTON was the subject of the photograph.

79. Another photograph found at the same time depicted another Japanese beheading an Ambonese and the executioner was recognised as a Japanese named YUNOME who was a PW at Murchison Victoria. From this man it was learned that the incidents in the photograph took place at AITAPE in October 1943 and an Australian victim was established to be NX14311 Sgt SIFFLEET L.G. who was captured whilst operating behind the Japanese lines in the AITAPE area in company with two Ambonese. YASUNO, the executioner of SIFFLEET was found to have been killed in action.

80. YUNOME was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and a naval Captain NOTO was sentenced to 20 years. Vice Admiral KAMADA the commander in the area was proved to have authorised the murders but was not brought to trial for this offence as he was executed by the Dutch for crimes which he committed in Borneo.

81. F/Lt NEWTON was proved to have been killed by Lt KOMAI who was subsequently killed in action in the Philippines. KOMAI was O/C of a detachment of the Sasebo No 5 Special Naval Landing Party which formed part of the garrison at SALAMAUA. This unit, known as the TSUKIOKI BUTAI, was involved in other atrocities notably the murder of nine civilians including 3 women and a 5 year old child at BUNA in Aug 42. Cdr TSUKIOKI was killed in an Allied bombing raid on SALAMAUA in Aug 43 and most of the remainder of this unit were killed in action in the WAU SALAMAUA Campaign, at MILNE BAY and other places.

82. The fate of Sgt LYON who was captured with F/Lt NEWTON remained a mystery until recently. It was learned early in the investigation that both PW had been taken to LAE for interrogation and that NEWTON had been returned to SALAMAUA as a sort of trophy, to be beheaded by the capturing unit. Contradictory stories were obtained from natives and Japanese which were explained when it was learned that an American named Joseph Fox had bailed out of a U.S. Boston and had been captured near SALAMAUA about a week after the capture of NEWTON and LYON and had also been taken to LAE to the HQ of the Japanese 7th Naval Base Force.

83. Recent investigations by 2 Aust War Crimes Sec in TOKYO have obtained Japanese confessions of the murders of LYON and FOX at LAE. LYON was stated to have been bayoneted in the back and this was confirmed recently when a native digging post holes at LAE found a skeleton which has been positively identified as LYON. Examination of the remains showed that he had been killed by a bayonet thrust in the back and his hands were tied. FOX was beheaded about a week later.

84. It is noteworthy that the Japanese executioner boasted to the investigators of his skill with the sword and ends a signed confession with the words "the spectators applauded my stroke".

85. The murders of NEWTON, LYON and FOX were authorised by Rear Adm FUJITA who committed suicide to avoid arrest and his Chief of Staff Cdr MUCHAKU hanged himself in prison.

H – HAINAN ISLAND ATROCITIES

86. HAINAN Island lies 10 miles due south of Lui Chow Peninsula, Kwantung Province, CHINA (was formerly a part of that province) and 195 miles east of Northern Indo-China. It is bounded on the north by HAINAN Strait, on the west by the Gulf of Tonking and on the south and east by the South China Sea. It is approximately 180 miles long (NE/SW) with a maximum width of 100 miles. Its area is nearly 14,000 sq. miles; slightly larger than FORMOSA and 1 1/2 times as large as SICILY.

87. The Australian PW who were confined on HAINAN Island comprised 15 offrs and 248 Ors who were portion of "Gull Force" captured at Ambon on 4 Feb 42 and transferred to HAINAN Island on the 'TAIKO MARU'. This Party left Ambon on 25 Oct 42 and arrived at HAINAN Island on 5 Nov 42. They were released from captivity on 12th Sep 45 after being in confinement for 3 years and 7 months; 2 years and 10 months of which was spent on HAINAN Island.

88. The Prisoners of War compound was about 10 acres with a low barbed wire fence which at the later stage was electrified. The huts were coolie barracks of a primitive nature made of scraps of iron and timber. Men slept on the floor on old grass mats – two men to three mats. The average area for sleeping – 263 officers and men was 4608 sq ft or 18 sq ft per man. This included all sick, no separate accommodation being provided for them. Roofs and walls were not weatherproof. No materials were provided for repairs and the huts were invested with bugs, rats, lice, fleas etc. Sanitary arrangements and hygiene were entirely absent. Food was particularly short, barely enough to exist on and at one stage PW commenced eating rats and snails. Hard manual labour was the order of the day, making roads and building A/A defences in a very hot tropical climate.

89. Convalescent and sick personnel were forced to work and were hard driven by Japanese officers, NCOs and men, by kicks, rifle butts and flogging with shovels, pick handles, iron bars and sticks of wood. Many received fractured limbs and admission to hospital were approximately 2430.

90. Of the 263 originally sent to HAINAN only 182 survived; 81 died, 20 from Beri-Beri, 14 from Dysentery, 18 from Starvation and Malnutrition, 12 from Malaria and 17 from other diseases.

91. The extreme cold of the winter also contributed to many deaths due in the main to lack of warmth and clothing. In 2 ¾ years the whole complement of 263 men were issued with 2 thin blankets of very poor quality which were never replaced. The only other issues were 100 thin cotton shirts, 99 pairs thin cotton shorts, 1 pair of sand shoes per man (which did not fit) and 66 pairs of part worn boots. Towels or messing gear of any kind were never supplied. Toilet requisites during the entire period were an issue of 1 tooth brush in Dec 42, 1 packet tooth powder in Dec 44 and several small cakes of soap.

92. In connection with the obvious ill treatment of PW, 17 Japanese were tried by an Australian Court at Hong Kong between 5 Jan 48 and 5 Jun 48 on the following charges:-

- (a) That they were together concerned in the inhumane treatment of prisoner of war thereby causing the deaths of some and bodily injury, damage to health, and physical and mental pain to many others.
- (b) That in violation of the laws and usages of war were together concerned in the employment of prisoners of war on work having connections with the operations of war.

93. Of the 17 tried, 1 was found not guilty and the following sentences were awarded to the remainder:-

Capt	TAHARA	Susumu	12 years Imprisonment
Capt	KAWAMURA	Shinichi	6 months Imprisonment
Capt	AOYAMA	Shigeo	Death by hanging
Lt	YAMASAKI	Takio	8 years Imprisonment
Lt Comdr	KIKUCHI	Ichiro	20 years Imprisonment
Lt	KANO	Tuutami	Death by hanging
Lt Comdr	YAJIMA	Mishima	10 years Imprisonment
1 st Lt	SHIMURA	Seiichi	Life Imprisonment
CPO	HIRATAA	Sadao	1 years Imprisonment
L/Seaman	OBARA	Naoji	10 years Imprisonment
CPO	FUKUNAGA	Tsuneyoshi	14 years Imprisonment
CPO	MATSUKAWA	Chuzo	5 years Imprisonment
Lt	YOSHIDA	Tomonobu	15 years Imprisonment
CPO	TAJIMA	Tamaki	1 years Imprisonment
CPO	AKIYOSHI	Hideo	5 years Imprisonment
Civ Gd	OTSUKI	Shigetada	7 years Imprisonment

94. A further 22 suspects have been apprehended and interrogated regarding atrocities in this camp.

95. Photographs showing the shocking state of some PW recovered from HAINAN will be found on pages 311 and 312.

I – WAR CRIMES AT THE NAOETSU PRISONER OF WAR
CAMP 4B, TOKYO AREA, JAPAN

96. On 10 Dec 42, 300 Australian prisoners of war arrived at the abovenamed camp from Singapore. These men had up till this time been fairly well treated and they arrived in good condition. At the time of the surrender this force was reduced to 240 men, 60 having died from beatings, torture, mistreatment through forcing sick to work, and insufficient food and medical supplies.

97. A typical instance of Japanese ill treatment of these prisoners is quoted hereunder:-

“One particular night in the early part of July 1943 an order was shouted to the prisoners “all men out”. Everyone, sick included, was ordered out into a small parade ground. For three hours these men were made to perform various types of entertainment for the Japanese. They were ordered to form a circle and walk about on the palms of their hands and soles of their feet. They were made to walk in this manner until many of them collapsed either from exhaustion or blows received from the guards’ clubs. In addition to this, when the party warmed up the prisoners were ordered to select an animal they wished to represent and in their exhausted state they had to imitate the animal. As a final form of entertainment, the prisoner’s were paired off and made to beat each other with their fists. The Japanese would watch and if he thought the punching was not hard enough he would step in and demonstrate.”

98. In addition to the above case of gross ill treatment there were many instances of severe beatings resulting in broken limbs and eventual death.

99. This camp was subject to extremes of weather conditions, and the PW were forced to feed furnaces in the heat of summer and also forced to sleep under 5 blankets at night. In the winter they were deprived of a large portion of their clothing; in some cases were not allowed to wear boots; and through the disrepair of their sleeping quarters often woke up in the morning covered in snow.

100. The war criminals responsible were tried by an American Military Court at YOKOHAMA Court House on 6 Dec 46, found guilty and the following sentences awarded:-

Lt	OOTA	Narumi	Life imp with hard Labour
Sgt	SHIBANO	Tadeo	Death by hanging
Sgt	AOKI	Yusu	Death by hanging
Interp	KURIYAMA	Michic	Life imprisonment with hard labour
Cpl	KATAYAMA	Kongo	20 years hard labour
Pte	KONO	Hiroaki	Life imprisonment with hard labour
Gd	TAGUCHI	Yoshio	Life imprisonment with hard labour