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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY.

MILITARY BOARD

(ADJUTANT GENERAL)

Army

HEADQUARTERS,
VICTORIA BARRACKS

Lt. GURBAY

4078

7 Spec



Quote in
Reply **35758**

Melbourne, S.C.I.

7 October, 1947.

MEMORANDUM for :-

C E E.

(Attention Major Towler).

WAR CRIMES : NEW GUINEA : EXECUTION OF AN AUSTRALIAN
ON KAIRIRU ISLAND.

1. With reference to this Directorate's memorandum 31627 of 29 Aug 47, investigations in Japan have disclosed that two Australians were executed at Kairiru Island, during the period Apr/Jun 1945.

2. It appears likely that the two men executed were members of the "Z" Special Unit referred to in your minute 02407 of 9 Jul 47.

145/1/46

3. The following extracts, (a) to (d), are taken from sworn statements made by the Japanese interrogated including the actual executioner :-

(a) EUNYA Kanzo : "I remember hearing on one day in April 1945 that a prisoner was brought to HQ 27 SNEBF from the north coast where he had been captured by B Company, 27 SNEBF."

"I then went with others to the place of execution which was in the hills some 400 - 500 metres to the west of HQ 27 SNEBF. A great number of officers and sailors gathered in a circle to watch the execution and the prisoner was kneeling in the middle. He seemed to be a tall man with reddish hair and he was clad in a pair of Japanese shorts only.

After the execution the body of the prisoner was buried by my party at the spot where he was executed."

*P.A.
2/2/48*

(b) TAMURA Bunueemon : "Some time during the first half of 1945, approximately one month before I was posted to MUSCHU Island, I heard that an execution was to take place near Headquarters 27 Special Naval Base Force and I went to see it. I cannot now remember the exact date or the hour when this happened.

2/2/48

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The execution ground was in the mountains, approximately 300 metres west from Headquarters 27 Special Naval Base Force across a small stream.

A number of men were standing around in a circle watching, and in the middle was a white man kneeling on the ground. He was clad in shorts only."

*29/4/47 2/1/47
B*

(c) OKUMA Kaoru : "One day in April or May 1945 a

prisoner was brought to Headquarters 27 SNEBF where

I was on duty. He was captured on the north coast of KAIRIRU somewhere in the vicinity of KARAKOL. He was brought to Headquarters 27 SNEF in the mountains behind the south coast of KAIRIRU by Japanese naval troops stationed on the north coast of KAIRIRU.

The prisoner was of small stature for a foreigner and he had very light coloured hair. He was probably about 20 years of age. He was dressed in Japanese type shorts and a shirt.

However, I remember the following results of the prisoner's interrogation with certainty :

- (a) The prisoner told me that he was an Australian.
- (b) The prisoner told me that he was a serviceman, either a Private or a NCO. He was not an officer.
- (c) The prisoner told me that he belonged to the Australian Army.
- (d) The prisoner told me that he had been a passenger and not a crew member in a supply aircraft (YUSOKI).
- (e) The prisoner told me that the plane in which he travelled had not been shot down but was forced down by accident somewhere east of KAIRIRU. The prisoner told me that he was drifting in the sea for about 8 hours and that the tide took him along the north coast of KAIRIRU Island where he landed.

I also recall that a day or two before the prisoner was brought to Headquarters 27 SNEF a report had been received from a lookout post on the east coast of KAIRIRU stating that a plane had crashed into the ocean east of KAIRIRU."

- (d) OGAWA Waichi : "THE FIRST INCIDENT : During the first part of June 1945, an Australian airman was brought to Headquarters from the north coast. At about 1500 Medical Officer MARUYAMA came to the sick bay and I received the order :

'Petty Officer OGAWA, execute him' (OGAWA HEISO KIRE).

Thereupon I went to the scene of the action. At a spot about 100 meters away in the direction of headquarters a large Australian airman, blindfolded and wearing Japanese summer clothing, was being held with his arms behind his back by a guard detail of the sixth squad. He was kneeling on both knees in front of a hole in the ground. I approached Ensign FUMIYA, the chief of the guards, and reported.

'I have come upon orders from the medical officer'.

'Hurry and execute him' (HAYAKU KIRE), I was ordered so I borrowed the sword from the NCO who had come for liaison purposes and decapitated (the prisoner). With only a single stroke of the sword, he fell forward and died.

At this time there were present from headquarters the Staff Engineer Officer, Secretary KAWADA, Medical Ensign OMOTEZAKI, Superior Petty Officer (medical) SUZUKI and Leading Seaman MACHI. Besides these there were fifteen to twenty officers and guards. The corpse was buried on the spot under the direction of Ensign FUMIYA.

THE SECOND INCIDENT : About ten days had passed since the first incident when again an Australian airman was brought to headquarters from the north coast. At about 1500 I received the order from the medical officer :

'Execute him with an injection of one CC of Narcocon'.

Thereupon I took a one CC hypodermic needle and one CC of narcocon from the dispensary and went to the scene of the action. Lt (s.g.) AMENOMORI and Secretary KAWADA were investigating at the finance office room. A fatigue detail was digging a hole. In about two hours the investigation was finished and an Australian of average stature, blindfolded and wearing Japanese summer clothes, was lead out by the guards. His hands were held behind his back and he was made to kneel in front of the hole. The medical officers ordered me :

'Give him the injection' (CHUSHA SHIRO), so I injected once CC of narcocon into the lower part of the left shoulder blade. Then I borrowed a sword from Superior Petty Officer KAWANO. About fifteen to twenty minutes after the injection the order : 'Execute him' (KIRE) was given, so I raised the sword over my head and brought it down, decapitating (the prisoner). The Australian fell forward and died. Under the direction of Ensign FUMIYA, the corpse was buried on the spot."

4. Investigations are still in progress and you will be advised of any information which will assist in identifying the victims of this crime.

S. Arnold Capt
for Lieutenant Colonel,
for Director of Prisoners of War
and Internees.

8 OCT 1947