

Ex 1836-A

Doc. No. 405-B

(being excerpts from pages 18 to 24 of Evidentiary Document 405.)

(E) The following references establish the fact and circumstance of the execution of 7-9 Australians in the vicinity of BUNA Government Station about 12 - 14 Aug 42.

(1) The summary report of interrogation of PW JA 100037 yields the following account. Examining Officers were Lieutenant-Commander L.C.S. SHEPPARD, R.N. and G.W. COLTON, USNR.

"No. 4 Section of No. 3 Platoon, No. 2 Company of TSUKIOKA Force was on duty at HAKOZAKI LAMU Landing Place, about 2½ miles west of BUNA and identified by PW as SANANANDA Point, from 11 Aug until it rejoined the main unit at BUNA on 22 Aug 42. PW did not, therefore, witness the incident, but heard about it for the first time about 15 Aug. Two men from No. 4 Section ITTOSUIHEI (1st. Class Seaman) INOUE, Fukuichi, and SAITOSUIHEI (3rd. Class Seaman) IWAMATSU, Takeshi, had left the Landing Place that morning for BUNA, and on their return the same evening they told the story to the rest of No. 4 Section. PW had also talked with other members of the Force who were at BUNA at the time, but claim that he did not hear much about the incident.

PW heard that the party consisted of 7 Australians. Two were men aged about 30, one fat and one not so fat. One was a child aged about 7, which PW thought was a boy. He thought the other four were women, one being the mother of the child and aged about 25. He could give no further description of them, and did not know if they were traders or missionaries. He did not think that the men were soldiers. They had 2 rifles, but he did not think they had any other gear, such as pistols, W/T set, or provisions. He did not know whether the Battalion Commander had any previous knowledge of their former residences. He had not heard of MAHIKOFU Village.

PW heard that the party was brought in by about 20 natives about 12 Aug. but he did not know at what time. He did not know whence the natives came, as those around BUNA had fled some time before. They were, however, natives of NEW GUINEA and did not come from KAPPAUL. He did not know who was the "headman". He did not think that Australians were brought in by force, as they carried 2 rifles, but they may have been deceived by the natives. He thought the latter were acting on their own accord, not under Japanese instructions. He thought that the natives left BUNA after they had been interviewed by an interpreter, and did not witness the execution.

PW did not know what happened when the party reached the Japanese sentry lines. They were, however, captured near a road at the edge of coconut plantation. After capture, they were put in a building in the clearing near the Point.

/He had not heard of any reward being given to them

PW believed that the building was formerly used as a garage. It was completely open at one end, about 10 metres long, 5 metres wide, and 7 - 8 metres high, and had no doors or windows. The roof and walls were made of corrugated iron, tarred or painted black. The floor was made of earth. A dirt road ran in front of the open end.

The prisoners were kept together in this building for the night of the 12/13 Aug. Sentries from No. 3 Platoon were posted; they were outside the building and not inside. One of them was a man from No. 1 Section of No. 3 Platoon, OKUMURA, Masao, with whom PW had spoken subsequently. He did not know the names of the other guards. He did not think that they were bound or stripped, or in any way mistreated. He did not think that the women were raped then, or at any later time, but did not enquire about it; the Japanese would not do a thing like that. Even if they were, PW would not be told about it. Naturally they would be given military rations, and would be allowed to go to a latrine.

While in the building, the prisoners were visited by the interpreter, a man called TASHIRO, personal name unknown. He was a GUNZOKU (Civilian in Naval employment) and came from RAEAUL. PW did not know if he lived in RAEAUL before the war. He spoke to natives in pidgin English. He was last seen alive and well by PW on GOODENOUGH Island Sept. or Oct. 42. The interpreter asked the prisoners their names, ages, occupations, etc. PW did not hear the results of the questioning. He did not know whether they were brought before the Battalion Commander, Commander TSUKIOKA, I. J. N., who was the Senior Naval Officer and in BUNA at the time. PW did not know whether any form of trial or court-martial was held. He did not know why they were treated in such a way, but presumed that the execution was the idea of the Battalion Commander (BUTAICHO NO OI.OE).

The prisoners were executed the following day, 13 Aug. PW did not know at what time, but thought it was afternoon. Before they were killed, a grave was dug. PW did not know whether it was dug by prisoners themselves. He did not know the place where execution took place, but did not think it was in immediate vicinity of camp. It was not in the hills. PW did not know if prisoners were bound before, or during, the execution, and did not think they were stripped. He did not think they were ill treated or teased in any way.

No order was given that all members of the BUTAI were to witness the execution, and attendance was voluntary. Some men remained in their billets, including No. 1 Section Leader of No. 3 Platoon, FUKUHARA, Katsuichi. PW could not give names of others who stayed away, but thought they included Nos. 2 and 3 Section Leaders of No. 3 Platoon. He stated that a man would not be asked whether he attended or not. No. 1 Platoon of No. 2 Company was not present, as it was at a place about 5 RI (12 miles) from BUNA, and did not return until after 24 Aug. The 14th Pioneer

Regiment was also in the BUNA Area, but did not know about the execution, and did not witness it.

PW did not know whether the Battalion Commander was present at the execution, nor the names of officers who attended. He thought that men from the Battalion Headquarters Platoon, No. 2 Platoon, No. 3 Platoon less No. 4 Section, and Company MG Platoon were present. Spectators were fallen in to witness the execution, PW did not hear of any speeches being made beforehand.

PW did not know how many men carried out the execution, but thought there was one man to each prisoner. He did not know if they were volunteers or not. He did not know the names of the executioners and stated most emphatically that this was the truth and that he was not lying. He was not certain from which Platoons they came, but thought they were from No. 2 Platoon and the MG Platoon.

The Prisoners were made to kneel down by the grave and were killed one by one, and not all together. He did not know the order in which they were killed except that the mother and child were killed towards the last. The mother was holding the child, who was crying, in her arms when she was shot with a pistol. The child was then shot with a pistol. He did not know how many shots were fired. PW thought that the man who shot them was a rating and not an officer. The other prisoners were all stabbed with bayonets, but PW did not know how many times. He had not heard, but did not think that their heads were cut off afterwards. He had not heard of a girl aged 16 trying to escape and having her head cut off. He did not know how long the execution took to complete.

PW did not know if all the bodies were buried together in the one grave. They were not cremated, nor were their bodies thrown into the sea. He did not know if the grave was marked in any way, and had never seen it himself. He could not guide anyone to it.

PW stated that he and his friends were ashamed of the incident. He thought that such treatment was not proper and was very brutal. The child, in particular, was pitiful. He thought it "a little cruel" on the part of the Battalion Commander.

PW denied any knowledge of the capture in the BUNA Area, Jul and Aug. 42, of a further group of prisoners or of an American Air Corps Pilot, or of an Australian 2nd. Lieutenant. He had not heard of the execution of any natives. While on GOODENOUGH Island Aug - Oct. 42, natives had mentioned a white man with radio equipment. A search was made for him, but the search party returned without finding him. PW did not think a further search was made, nor any prisoners captured on the island.

PW emphatically stated that he had not told any lies, and even if there were any mistakes in his story, it was the truth as he knew it. He reiterated that he did not know the names of the executioners, as he had never heard who they were."

ATIS Special Interrogation Report of PW JA 100037).

Comment: TSUKIOKA Force is identical with SASEBO
5 SNLP.

(2) ATIS Document No. 243 (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A", Part II, p A2) a diary belonging to SHIN, Shunji, 1st. Class Seaman, 2 Company, SASEBO 5 SNLP, contains the following entries:

"13 Aug - Natives brought in British prisoners - 5 men, 3 women, 1 child. They were lodged in one room.

14 Aug - Beginning at about 8 o'clock, the nine prisoners were beheaded and shot to death (T.N. i.e., some of them were beheaded, and some shot)." (ATIS Current Translations No. 6, p.8)

(3) ATIS DOCUMENT NO. 1051, (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A", Part III, p A3) a diary dated 17 June 42 - 17 Aug 42 belonging to unknown member of SASEBO 5 SNLP, 2 Company, 1 Platoon, 1 Section, contains the following entries:

"12 Aug - In the afternoon natives brought in nine British people, male and female.

13 Aug - Yesterday's nine British people were shot to death to-day."
(ATIS Current Translations No. 32, pp 32, 33).

(4) ATIS Document No. 1268, (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A", Part IV, p A4) a diary dated 10 Jun 42 - 14 Aug 42, owner and unit unknown, contains the following entries:

"6 white people and 3 Australians - 5 men, 3 women and 1 child - taken prisoner (13th). (T.N. from section headed "August" by writer).

"14th - Disposal of prisoners 0830. (T.N. The word used in the original is "SHOBUN" i.e. "disposal", in the sense of "to dispose of" or "to deal with")"
(ATIS Current Translations No. 49, p.41)

(5) ATIS Document No. 1274, (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A", Part V p A5) a diary dated 10 Jun 42 - 13 Dec. 42 belonging to TATEMACHI, Sei of 14 Pioneer Regiment, contains the following entry:

"14 Aug - It is said that some Americans, 3 men 3 women and 1 child, were shot to death in the morning."
(ATIS Current Translations No. 19, p 17)

(6) ATIS Document No. 2113, (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A" Part VI, p A6), a diary dated 2 Dec. 41 - 24 Nov 42, owner unknown but presumably a member of 15 Pioneer Regiment, contains the following entry:

"20 Aug - The other day, nine enemy prisoners (4 men, 4 women, 1 child) because.....(T.N. part of page torn and missing) malignant enemies, were summarily shot to death."
(ATIS Current Translations No. 26, p 11C)

(7) ATIS Document No. 492 (Original is reproduced as Appendix "A", Part VII, p A7) a notebook and diary belonging to SATO, Toshio, presumably a translator attached to SASEBO 5 SNLP, contains the following entry:

"8 Sep - I hear that when EUNA was occupied, the TSUKIOKA Force (SASEBO 5 SNLP) Captured 6 or 7 Australian men and women who had escaped into the jungle, made the m kneel on the beach and beheaded them one by one. In case of one of them, a girl of 16, they bungled the cutting, and held her down screaming and crying out while they cut off her head. The soldier who told me said the sight was more than he could stand. I am told they threw the heads and bodies into the sea. It is said that many ghost-fires fly about in the vicinity. Some soldiers are said to have suffered burns (T.N. The last sentence has been scored through in the original.)"
(ATIS Current Translations No. 6 pp 23, 24).

(8) PW JA 145118 stated that:

"He had heard of the killing of certain PWs - 4 civilians including 1 woman. They had been killed before he came to NEW GUINEA, but he had heard about the case from members of SASEBO 5 SNLP and from Interpreter SATO, an English-speaking Japanese civilian attached to Headquarters.

PW stated that, with the exception of the 100 men from this unit who escaped by destroyer from MILNE Bay, this unit was wiped out."
(ATIS Advanced Echelon No. 1, Subsequent Preliminary Interrogation of PW JA 145118, p 3).

(9). PW JA 100037, interrogated by Lieutenant-Commander L.C.S. SHEPPARD, R.N. and Lieutenant G. W. COLTON, USNR, definitely established the location of the building in which the 7 Australians were imprisoned. PW drew a sketch of the area which, together with a tracing of an aerial photograph, is reproduced as Appendix "C" (pp C1). He stated that:

"Area where PsW were kept on night of 12 - 13 Aug 42 was the BUNA Government Station.

He believed building had been used as a garage. It was about 10 metres long, 5 metres wide and 7 - 8 metres high. Building was completely open at one end and had no doors or windows. Roof was made of corrugated iron. Walls were of corrugated iron, nailed to upright posts, and tarred or painted black. Floor was made of earth. A dirt road ran in front of the open end."¹
(ATIS Special Interrogation Report of 19 Aug 43 on PW JA 100037).

(1) Available evidence bearing upon possible participants in this execution is set forth below:

(A) PW interrogations have established that the following units of SASEBO 5 SNLP were stationed in BUNA Area at time of the incident:

- Battalion Headquarters Platoon
- No. 2 Company
- No. 1. Platoon
- No. 2 Platoon
- No. 3 Platoon
- Machine Gun Platoon
- Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun Platoon
- Anti-Tank Gun Platoon
- Sea Transport Unit
- Medical Unit
- Accountant Unit

The remaining units of SASEBO 5 SNLP were stationed at LAE or KAEPAUL, and did not take part in the incident.