

no 2141



French Troops of LAOS  
Hospital "P"  
No. 1. 747/P

Report of Dr. (Lt.) CARTIER concerning  
the Exhumations of THAKHEK.

At the request of Captain LE SOURD, Delegate of the Commissioner of War Crimes at THAKHEK I was led to proceed 13, 14, 15 June 1946 to the exhumation of the bodies of French military and civilian personnel interned at the military camp of THAKHEK. In the course of it, 17 bodies distributed among four pits were exhumed in my presence and by my efforts.

From these labors I have been able to make the following statements of fact from the MEDICO-LEGAL point of view.

First, State of Conservation--The soil being clayey, decomposition is not complete. The viscera and certain muscular masses (thighs, buttocks,) are not entirely destroyed, which causes the bodies to retain approximately their position and their original relation /to each other/. One body is in course of waxy degeneration and the well-preserved trunk shows no wound.

Second, Position--The four pits examined were of very limited dimensions, circular and about 1.50 meters in diameter by 1.75 meters in depth. The bodies were bent and curled up on each other, the limbs overlapping and intermingling; as a result of this position the disengagement of each one was very difficult. From their positions it seems to me that the bodies were placed in their pits after death and before the appearance of cadaverous rigidity. Three skulls were found neatly separated from the trunk indicating a decapitation. One body remains without a head in spite of all searches. For all the other bodies the heads were found exactly in the prolongation of the cervical vertebrae. All the bodies have their arms bound behind the back by a cord tied to the waist or around the neck. They have a napkin or handkerchiefs over the eyes.

Third, State of the skeleton--All the skulls are the skeletal state. None presents a perforation which could give rise to the conjecture of a bullet wound nor was there a trace of recent fractures or break-throughs. The numerous dentures permitted several identifications to be made. All apparently had their mouths closed, the earth found between their jaws has come from the caving in of the soil.



- a. Shoulder blades. All were intact.
- b. Bones of upper limbs. Humeri, radi, cubita, without any trace of fractures. The bones of the wrist were hard to locate.
- c. Vertebrae. All those found and examined were intact.
- e. /sic; no d in original French/ Rib /sic/ the same.
- f. os iliaques /iliac bones/ of masculine sex, without any trace of fracture.
- g. Bones of the lower limbs. Femora, tibiae, fibulae without recent fractures. All the bones of the feet enclosed in shoes were intact.

C O N C L U S I O N

All the bodies exhumed (17) are in a state of advanced decomposition indicating more than one year in the soil and preventing all investigation into anything other than the skeleton.

The position of the bodies indicates that the burial must have been taken place immediately after death.

Four bodies had been decapitated (3 skulls recovered). As for the other bodies the absolutely intact state of all the principal bones of the skeleton renders very improbable the hypothesis of an execution by fire arms.

It is further to be noted that the trunk found in a state of waxy degenerescence did not present any scar of the dorsal surface (the better preserved surface).

A.P.O. 50683, 26 June 1946  
Medical Lieutenant CARTIER

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

Administrative Liaison Officer  
Chief of the FEDERAL WAR CRIMES SERVICE

/Seal/ WAR CRIMES SERVICE - SAIGON  
/Initials illegible/ 19 August 1946



Certificate:-

I, Yale Maxon, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the French and English languages, and as a result of the comparison between the French and the English texts, I have established that this is a true and correct translation of International Prosecution Document No. 2772 K-1.

/s/ Yale Maxon