

No 2157

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STATEMENT MADE IN TOKYO 7 JANUARY 1947
BEFORE MR. ROBERT ONETO, ASSOCIATE-
PROSECUTOR FOR FRANCE

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My name is Fernand GABRILLAGUES, born 1 January 1918 at Paris, Bachelor of Letters, Master of Laws. I am an officer of the French Army and a representative of the War Crimes Service of Indo-China. I live at Saigon, 181 Rue Mayer.

Being in charge of the investigation bureau for war criminal suspects I have been led in the performance of my functions to study a comprehensive body of documents and /this fact/ has permitted me to have cognizance of the war crimes committed in Indo-China by the Japanese forces.

The number of these crimes is considerable, the documentation concerning them is voluminous, and there could be no question of making a complete expose of them. Certain of them are and will remain unknown because of the absence of witnesses and the systematic destruction of their files carried out by the Japanese in anticipation of the Allied landings.

I will leave aside the blows at the liberty and dignity of individuals, the pillage, theft, various cruelties and even murders, mentioning only certain salient facts.

I propose to call attention particularly:

1. To the atrocities committed on the premises of the Kampeitai and in the Prisoner of War camps.
2. To the massacres of Prisoners of War and civilians.

Whilst the Japanese Command in Indo-China was concentrating all the French population in the cities within enclosures where they were often the most exposed to Allied bombardments, the MEPLITAI was signaling itself by its atrocities. Hundreds of Frenchmen were imprisoned and subjected to a state of affairs worse than that of common

criminals: penned up in cramped quarters and under distressing sanitary conditions, without clothes, without medical care, without water, sometimes deprived of food for whole weeks, most often receiving all in all nothing but a single ball of rice, excessively filthy and presented under loathsomely dirty conditions.

On the pretext of interrogation a great variety of tortures were systematically inflicted: clubbings that left lesions and fractures, lighted matches slipped under the nails, burns by cigarettes and by lighted tapers, torture by sharp-edged blocks, torture by water, torture by electricity, hanging by the thumbs, and others.....

These conditions of life and these tortures caused the death of many prisoners, some having been tortured to death, others having died in the course of their stay in prison, exhausted by abuse and sickness. At Hanoi, at Haiphong, at Vinh, at Hue, at Saigon, at Phnom-Penh and in all the places where the Kempeitai raged, hundreds of Frenchmen of all conditions as well as a certain number of nationals of Allied Nations were subjected to degrading treatment from which a great many had no deliverance save by death. Those who by reason of Japan's defeat were able to escape certain death left the Kempeitai prisons mere skin and bones, their health definitely broken.

The examination of the files makes clear the identity of the methods employed in Indo-China in the different local sections of the Gendarmerie.

In the Prisoner of War camps the atrocities committed did not lag behind those habitual to the Kempeitai. These officers and men were forced to work like convicts at defense works. Even the sick, who were soon a considerable number, were also forced to work and were clubbed and beaten with iron bars at the slightest faltering. Scarcely fed, left without medical care, herded like beasts into huts which they had, with great difficulty, constructed with crude means subjected to exhausting labor. The prisoners died in great numbers: 98 over a period of fifty days in the Hoa-Binh camp at Tonkin.

But above all ----- in many parts of Indo-China the Japanese massacred the Prisoners of War.

At Langson sixty defenders of Fort Briere de l'Isle were shot and finished off with the bayonets immediately after the fighting was ended.

At Langson also, at the Citadelle, more than 200 French prisoners were massacred. The execution took place in successive batches of 50 men each: the butchers worked with sabres, with bayonets, with blows of pick axes, and threw themselves upon the survivors. From the second batch on the new victims stood on soil running with blood.

Massacres of Prisoners of war and of civilians took place in various other parts of the city of Langson. General Lemonnier, Colonel Robert, the Resident of the province were among the victims. A child only a few months old, in its mother's arms, had its skull smashed. The mother, by a miracle, survived the massacre.

At DONG-DANG, after a fight which lasted three days, the garrison gave itself up and received the congratulations of the Japanese officers for its heroism. A few moments later the Captain commanding the garrison was slaughtered under the eyes of his men. Thereafter, it was the turn of all the other defenders, executed by sabre and bayonet and of all the Europeans in DONG-DANG. The only survivor of the massacre, Corporal CRON, describes the execution of the Captain and fifty of his men.

At DINH LAP, all French Survivors as well as Annamite Tirailleurs were massacred. Similar massacres of prisoners at TIEN-YEN, at HANOI, at DAM-NA, particularly as far as this last mentioned post is concerned, evidence shows that four wounded Annamites and one European were burned alive.

The massacres mentioned above were the work of the 225th Regiment of the 37th Division, commanded by Colonel SHIZUME.

The 226th Regiment which belonged to the same Division has to its credit in particular the massacres of XIN-MAN, HOANG-SU-PHI and HAGIANG where French prisoners to the number of a hundred were massacred.

In the last mentioned regions, several cases of rape of French women occurred. A woman and her sister aged 14 years were compelled to cohabit for weeks with 50 Japanese soldiers who treated them brutally as well as violating them. One of them went mad and both were subsequently executed. Another example; a young French girl of 15 years and her mother were violated and then assassinated.

Over and above, in several regions, native women were forced into prostitution.

In the section of another Japanese unit, the 21st Division, massacres of French prisoners were equally frequent. They took place, in particular, during pursuit actions with the rearguards of General ALESSANDRI which, departing from the HANOI region, tried to reach China and got there at the price of heavy losses. At TONG, five Frenchmen and 12 Annamite Tirailleurs - prisoners - were executed. At TAN-QUI, fourteen French prisoners were killed by sabre and bayonet, there was a single survivor, Corporal JUBIN, who describes the massacre. Similarly, (there were) executions of prisoners at YEN-BAY, PHUO, SONLA, LAICHAU, MALITAO.....

Finally, in LAPS at TAKHEK, a town likewise occupied by the 21st Division, practically all the male European population was massacred. Fifty five French were thus executed. Two Bishops, the Resident of the Province, two women and a child figured among the victims.

I must add that Colonel TSUNEYASHI, Chief of Staff of the 37th Division, now under detention at SAIGON, in the course of an interrogation before an Investigating Officer of the War Crimes Service stated particularly that General NAGANO, commanding the 37th Division had congratulated the troops of Colonel SHIZUME after the end of the fighting and massacres at LANGSON and

that the General considered these massacres to be an act of war.

Colonel TSUNEYOSHI further stated that General TSUCHIHASHI, Commander in Chief of the Japanese troops in Indo-China, to whom the massacres of the prisoners at LANGSON were reported declared in these very words: "Act as if I knew nothing about it."

Under oath I certify that the foregoing statements are true.

Captain F. GABRILLAGUES,
Delegate of the Indo-China Federal
War Crimes Service

Deposition taken at Tokyo,
Tuesday, 7 January 1947
R. CNETC
Associate Prosecutor for France

C E R T I F I C A T E

The attached outline map indicates the whereabouts of the majority of the localities in Indochina where murders and atrocities with respect to the civil population and prisoners of war surviving the occupation by the Japanese armies, were committed.

Capt. GABRILLAGUES
Delegate of the War Crimes Office

