

no 2144

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R E P O R T  
OF CAPTAIN BEAUVALLET

Bearing on his imprisonment at Japanese Kempei Tai Headquarters between March and August 1945. SAIGON

I. Appointments held by me previous to 9 March.

-Chief of G2 on the Staff of the D.C.C. /Cochin China and Cambodia Division.

-Assistant to General DELSUC for all questions concerning the "Resistance" and by virtue of this title, Liaison Officer between General DELSUC, the Chief of the local SA /Active Service/ (Captain PAUMELLS) and the political delegate (MONSIEUR NICOLAU).

II. Circumstances of my imprisonment at the Japanese Kempei Tai Headquarters.

Made prisoner on 9 March at 2145 hrs. at the Staff Office of the D.C.C. /Cochin China and Cambodia Division/. I was at first interned at the Prisoners of War Camp in the Quarter.

On 17 March, in the morning Kempei /Japanese/ in civilian clothes came to fetch me and took me to Japanese Kempei Tai Headquarters (Chamber of Commerce). There I was interrogated by a non-commissioned officer of the Kempei tai in civilian clothes (whom I believe to be the Adjutant SUMINOTO). I state definitely now that all interrogations were conducted through interpreters, some Japanese, others Annamites or half-breeds of ambiguous origin. Most of them spoke French very badly.

The interrogator asked me first some questions on the powers of G2 and then accused me "of having done wrong to the Japanese Army" and required me to give him what information I had on the French S.R. /Intelligence Bureau/ and the civilian organizations of the S.R. and of the Resistance of which he considered me to be the chief.

I confined myself to denying that I was the chief of such organizations, and as the interrogation became more pressing in order to obtain the information which he desired on the S.R. and the Resistance "in order," he said, "that the Japanese army could destroy them", I emphasized in my reply that I would answer his questions only in so far as the information which he might ask for should not be considered by me as secret. This reply angered him. He grasped his pistol and bade me remember that I was "in his power". Seeing that I kept silence he informed me that he ceased to consider me as an officer, that I was going to be shut up and allotted to more unkind interrogators.

I was, in fact, taken into a building adjoining the Chamber of Commerce where some cells had been set up. My badges of rank were taken away from me as well as the greater part of my effects except an undershirt and shorts. I was imprisoned in cell 3 where there were already some Europeans (among whom were Messrs. KERJEAN, DANIELSSE, SALMON and two Annamite common criminals.

### III. Life at the Japanese Kempei tai Headquarters.

I make a digression here in order to describe what was the routine imposed on European detainees by the Japanese Kempei tai. The Japanese Kempei tai had set up, in a building adjoining the Chamber of Commerce (situated on the left, as one enters by the main gate), six cells. For this purpose they had made use of six magazines and had closed their inner openings with grills made of wooden bars. These grills gave a veritable cage-like aspect to the cells. They allowed the guards to watch the detainees all the time. The entrance was a little door less than 1 metre in height fastened with a padlock. The cells were about 4 metres by 5, with plank floors and permanently lit by a central lamp.

A wooden bucket with a cover was put at the disposal of the imprisoned for their needs. It was emptied daily by a detainee accompanied by a sentry. Some straw mats, about one between two were distributed among the prisoners. In the evening bedding was given out on an average of one piece for three persons.

There were three meals a day, one about 8 o'clock, the second about noon, the third about 1800. Each meal consisted of a ball of rice and either a piece of salted cucumber or a vegetable soup (not very appetizing but generally edible). This soup was distributed in porringers at the rate of one for four or five detainees, who were furthermore compelled to help themselves with their fingers.

A little tea or hot water was distributed under the same conditions after each meal and before bedtime (one porringer to three or four). After the end of May there were fairly frequent supplementary distributions of tea in the interval between meals (one in the morning, one in the afternoon).

The time was taken up as follows: Reveille about 0700, meals under the conditions outlined above, in the evening, toward 2100, roll call, inspection by the duty officer, recitation by the detainees, aloud, of a notice written in French, Annamite, Japanese, and entitled "To the Prisoners," beginning with this phrase which was not without savor: "Corrects himself with a view toward a better future" and enumerating the duties of prisoners: discipline, silence, etc. . . ., after the roll-call, distribution of covers of tea and /then/ to bed.

In the interval between reveille and going to bed the detainees were forced to remain seated "tailor-fashion." Certain N.C.O. of the guard (the majority even) prohibited the detainees from leaning against the walls. This prolonged sitting position, without support, was particularly fatiguing.

The detainees did not have the right to talk. In fact, they availed themselves of their guards' lapses of attention to converse in low voices, and the bits of news (or lies) brought by these last arrested circulated fairly rapidly.

The hygienic conditions imposed on the detainees were lamentable. If my memory serves me well, between 17 March and 10 June there were at most three showers (none between 20 March and 9 May). The interned women and some of the sick (including me from 9 May to 10 June) benefitted from a more favorable regimen and had a shower (unfortunately without soap) almost every day. I may add that at night the mosquitoes were very numerous in the cells and that it was very hot there. The quota was actually raised to 20 detainees per cell (for an area of 20 meters /sic/).

Medical care was provided by a Japanese attendant who came around very irregularly. The care was limited, moreover, to applications of iodized alcohol or sulphur solution, to eye washes and the distribution of quinine. The intervention of a physician was very rare. And further, it was most often without effect. The seriously sick were not cared for or insufficiently cared for, and the only measure that might have been efficacious for them, evacuation to a hospital, was decided on too late.

Of the six detainees who to my knowledge died at Kempei tai Headquarters or shortly after their release therefrom (Mr. FOURNIER, Mr. NICOLAU, Mr. CHABERT, Major LANGELLIER BELLEVUE, Mr. FINOT, and Mr. BERTRAND) the majority died both from the bad treatment undergone and from a lack of care.

A last point remains concerning life in the cells of the Japanese Kempei tai: the attitude of the guards of the guard-house. The guard-house was commanded by a non-commissioned officer of the Kempei tai. His contingent was six or seven men at the beginning, reduced later to four or five. The guards were soldiers of the land army on detached duty with the Kempei tai.

Certain of the N. C. O. guard-house commanders, or soldiers of the guard, gave evidence under various circumstances of great brutality. They inflicted on the detainees whom they accused, sometimes wrongfully, of having spoken or of having misbehaved, painful punishments: blows with a stick, often very violent, whipping with a leather belt, standing up with arms in the air or extended for several hours.

It should be noted that certain Japanese non-commissioned officers and soldiers maintained a proper and at times even a kind attitude. They were on the whole proper vis-a-vis women.

The foregoing expose shows that the mere fact of incarceration in the cells of the Japanese Kempei tai imposed on the Europeans who underwent it a truly miserable life. The deplorable hygienic conditions, unpleasant promiscuity with the ordinary Annamite or Chinese lawbreakers, food insufficient in quantity and especially in quality, physical fatigue due to the discomfort of the positions which were imposed and a very painful morale impression, that of being treated as beasts by savages.

The questions and the brutalities accompanying them constituted a further cause of suffering for those of the internees who had to submit to them.

#### IV. My Stay at the Kempei Tai Headquarters.

Incarcerated 17 March I remained at the Japanese Kempei tai Headquarters till 11 June on which date I was transferred to Central Prison. I was taken again to the Kempei tai Headquarters 24 July and remained there until 2 August. On that date I was freed at the same time as Captain PAUWELLS and sent to the internee Civil Camp at the Normal School and then admitted to the GRALL Hospital 22 August.

On 2 August before my liberation I was led with Captain PAUWELLS before Adjutant SUMINOTO /TN: sic/, who read us a lecture saying that we had both merited being shot for having wished "to destroy the Nipponese Army", and that, if we had had a court martial, we should certainly have been sentenced to death. That moreover, by a special favor of the Japanese High Command, it had been agreed that we should be treated as military personnel and sent to an internment camp on condition that we should thenceforth keep quiet.

#### V. Life at Central Prison.

Some brief indications of the life at Central Prison whose conditions though preferable to those of the Japanese Kempei tai Headquarters, were still very uncomfortable.

At the time I was at Central Prison (from 11 June to 24 July) the European detainees coming from the Kempei tai Headquarters had been distributed into two large rooms (7 and 8, I believe) to the number of 26 and 42, respectively.

The rooms were large enough, light, and well ventilated. The detainees slept on a mat placed right on the cement. A tub filled with potable water permitted drinking and washing. From time to time, almost every day, the detainees were able to go out on the verandah situated in front of the cells. A water plug made it possible to take a shower there.

It was possible to converse freely in the rooms. The rooms were locked and the sole Japanese guard was posted outside under the verandah. In general, one might say that the Japanese guards who were on duty at Central Prison were correct; certain ones even seemed to be trying to show kindness by distributing cigarettes.

There were two meals a day, one about 1030, the other about 1700. Further, about eight o'clock in the morning a little tea was distributed. The meals consisted of rice (generally red rice) with a little dried fish (generally spoiled or almost) or a little fresh fish (some fish heads floating in a salty sauce) or a hard-boiled egg or some bits of bacon fat; further a piece of pumpkin or, by way of exception, a sweet potato or a piece of manioc. On the whole these meals were very insufficient.

An Annamite attendant who came by fairly irregularly (once or twice a week) who was usually impolite to the patients and seemed uninterested in them, took /medical/ care of us. During my stay at Central Prison I was seriously ill, suffering from boils, infected itch, swelling of the legs, and was also in a state of great feebleness, being barely able to hold myself on my feet and spending all my nights without being able to sleep. Although I pointed out my state each time the attendant came by, I was unable to get myself evacuated to a hospital or even visited by a physician.

On the other hand, I wish to point out that one warden of Central Prison named ROSENTHAL (European or mixed) who had remained on duty succeeded in passing some news into the cells, in forwarding correspondence both ways between some of the detainees and their families, and also in getting some medicines and cigarettes passed. Further a man named RAISON sentenced /for a breach/ of ordinary law, who was in a neighboring cell succeeded in getting into Cell 7 some ham, bacon, and sausage which he had bought for himself at the prison store. The deed was discovered by the Japanese guard and RAISON was punished.

#### VI. QUESTIONINGS UNDERGONE.

1. Month of March. After the questioning of 17 March I had been incarcerated, as I have explained above, in one of the cells of the Kempei tai Headquarters.

On the evening of the 19th an interpreter came to me to transmit the order to get up under the pretext that I was to be called immediately to the office. At the end of an hour, seeing that nobody came for me, I was on the point of sitting down again when I was prevented by the N.C.O. of the guard. I then understood that it was an ordeal that had been imposed on me with a view to "preparing" me for a questioning which would probably take place the next day. It didn't occur to me, however, that this ordeal was to last seven days and seven nights handrunning.

On the morning of 20 March I was taken in for interrogation. The same questions as on the 17th were asked me concerning the S.R. and the Resistance. I maintained the same attitude so well that the interrogator sent me away with the announcement that I was going to resume my "picket". I was subsequently interrogated on the 23rd by a cor oral of the Japanese Kempei tai, who asked me several questions without interest which led me to suppose that the interrogation had no purpose beyond checking the state of my fatigue.

I remained standing in my cell until 26 March under the surveillance of guards who, as soon as I weakened and looked as if I were going to sit down, took it upon themselves to renew my respect for orders with their clubs.

I must, nevertheless, admit having found a Japanese corporal and a soldier who in the course of each of the nights of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th permitted me to stretch out for an hour. The same cor oral also permitted me to sit down during some meals. These short moments of respite doubtless helped

me to take this ordeal a little better. It did not prevent my being exhausted from fatigue at the end of this period of seven days and particularly in the course of the night of 25/26 March, when I felt an almost unbearable pain in my feet, suffered nervous tensions which came close to throwing me on the floor, and was even a victim of delirium.

The morning of the 26th I was again led before my interrogator (Adjutant SUMINOTO). He asked me with an ironic smile whether I was tired. I managed enough strength to raise a protest against the manner in which I was treated. I explained what my grievances were:

- (1) That they had removed my stripes.
- (2) That they had placed me in with prisoners who were common law-breakers.
- (3) That they were trying to exert pressure on me to force me to reveal information which I considered secret.

I concluded by stating that such acts were absolutely contrary to all the international rules concerning the treatment of prisoners of war and by expressing my astonishment at seeing the Japanese Army disregard these rules.

Just then there occurred an air-raid alert. I was taken back down to my cell and put back on "picket". However, at the end of the alert, a Kempei came back with an interpreter. This latter informed me very politely that the "punishment" was over.

## 2. Month of April.

Although not interrogated during the first weeks of the month I was able to follow the progress of the inquiry by observing the arrivals of detainees and by conversing with those who were incarcerated in my cell.

While in the month of March the arrests were directed against some lawyers and the personnel of the radio service and of the French Broadcasting Company, in the month of April I saw arrive successively:

-1 April: 3 Commissioners of the Surete.

-7 April: Capt. LAHILLE of BAM (Military organ dealing with S.R.) and, approximately on the same date, two non-commissioned officers of his service.

-15 April: Col. BAILLY, director of artillery (it was in the director of artillery's building /Direction d'artillerie/ that the quarters were placed at the disposal of Capt. FAUMELLS, chief of the S.A. Sud.) On 9 March there still remained some undistributed materiel, tommy guns, in particular; it was in all probability--the fact was later confirmed by Col. BAILLY--the discovery of this materiel by the Japanese which brought about the arrest of the Director of Artillery.

-About 19 April: Capt. FAUMELLS.

The Japanese had then definitely laid their hands on the S.R. and the S.A. which I tried to cover by my silence in March. On 22 April I was

taken from my cell and interrogated by a Kempei tai Adjutant--whose name I do not know--assisted by two or three Kempei. I was asked to give all the information I possessed on the FFI (the Japanese always designated thus the members of the Resistance organizations throughout the inquiry). [As I refused to speak I was subjected to a seance of tortures which was particularly painful. Bound to a bench with an extremely tight rope which cut into flesh, I was subjected for about an hour and a half simultaneously to double torture:

- On the one hand, bludgeoning of the soles of the feet by the adjutant provided with a hard-wood club and by another Kempei provided with a rattan cane
- On the other, water asphyxiation.

Besides this, another Kempei gave me a few body burns with cigarette ashes.

I shall dwell somewhat on the first two tortures, for I carried away the impression that they were applied with particular cruelty. As for the bludgeoning of the feet, I find it hard to say how many blows I received, perhaps 200, perhaps a few less. From time to time some blows were applied to the tibias and the ropes which bound my ankle bones, driving them into the flesh and producing wounds which lasted a long time (along with those of the tibias). Several cudgel blows were also laid on my toes, and the nail of the right big toe in particular was torn out.

As a result of this treatment my feet swelled considerably. For several days it was impossible for me to stand on my feet. To get up I had to have the help of two cell-mates and for the questionings the Japanese Kempei carried me on their backs. At the present moment, more than four months after this series of tortures, my right foot remains deformed.

As for the water asphyxiation, it was inflicted on me under particularly painful conditions. A Kempei pressed against my belly to fill out my chest. A gag had been put on my nose and mouth forcing me to inhale to get a little air. The interrogator poured on my gag the water from a kettle which he had refilled as soon as empty. It was impossible for me under these circumstances to avoid swallowing water and losing my breath fairly rapidly. The one pouring would stop then to begin again as soon as I had succeeded in catching a bit of air. This struggle for an hour and a half against asphyxiation exhausted me completely.

At the end of an hour and a half the adjutant-interrogator, wishing no doubt to vary the pleasures, placed the bench vertically in such a way that I was hanging head down held by the ropes around my ankles which went deeper and deeper into the wounds which had been made in me. I remained about a half hour under these conditions, the interrogator continuing to apply the cudgel blows to my feet and pouring water from time to time down my nostrils.

I was then unbound, placed on a bench in front of a table and Adjutant SUMIHOTO, entering the room, resumed the interrogation punctuated by numerous



↓ cudgel blows on my head, arms, and shoulders.]

Reduced to a state of utter exhaustion, it was difficult to maintain absolute muteness. Nevertheless, I decided to limit myself to a short statement in which:

-I admitted my position in the Resistance organization, deputy to General DELSUC and Liaison Officer between General DELSUC and Captain PAUWELLS, Chief of the S...

\*I acknowledged that some arms had been received by parachute while pretending not to know the number.

-I minimized the recruitment of civilians, presenting it as a sort of clandestine partial mobilization concerning only a small number of reservists and conferring upon them the status of mobilized personnel, the military authority taking the entire responsibility for this mobilization.

Some other questions were asked me regarding Allied parachutists having landed on the territory of Southern Indo-China. I pretended not to be a courant, which brought me a few more blows.

The interrogation stopped at that point, fortunately, for I was at the end of my strength.

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On 23 April I was again interrogated by the same adjutant who had subjected me to the tortures the day before. The interrogation, this time, was very calm. Some questions were asked me regarding the S.R. which it was possible for me to answer, because I had learned from a non-commissioned officer of BAM who was incarcerated in the same cell with me just how far the Bam inquiry had progressed.

Furthermore, some questions were asked me on the administrative organization of Indo-China, on the stationing of troops before 9 March, and various questions unrelated to my functions, for example, what had been the role of Mrs. DECOUX (?) in Indo-Chinese politics.

During this session I received only one blow with the stick for an answer to a question which I no longer remember, but which seemed not to satisfy the interrogator.

On 24 April I was taken in for interrogation about 9 o'clock in the evening. After some anodyne questions, the adjutant (the same one as the two preceding days) went after me again regarding the FFI. Since I appeared reticent and my answers were simple dilutions of my statements of the 22nd, the interrogator tied me to a bench taking pains to pass the cords, which were very tight, right through the wounds which had been made two days before. He told me that he would leave me in this position--which was very painful--until I consented to talk and, if need be, the whole night. I was

left tied to the bench for about an hour. As luck would have it, about 11 o'clock at night, probably feeling tired and not knowing how to keep me under guard during the night, the interrogator had me unbound and taken back to my cell, telling me to think things over very carefully and that I should be re-interrogated the following day.

As a matter of fact he gave it up, for they left me in peace in my cell until about the middle of May.

I fell sick there, however, as a consequence of the tortures endured. In particular, the struggle that I had carried on against asphyxiation by water had brought on some stomach troubles. It was impossible to assimilate food without vomiting. I remained in this state 17 consecutive days, eating, so to speak, nothing, except some bananas which were passed on to me by a fellow-detainee receiving his meals from outside.

Several times I asked to be visited by a physician. I got no satisfaction until 9 May. On that date a Japanese medical captain came to see me. I explained my case to him and requested evacuation to a hospital, being at the time in a state of great weakness. I thought I understood from his answer that he was not empowered to decide such an evacuation and that a decision by the command was necessary. I was then presented to the duty officer who merely asked me whether I was FFI. Since I answered that I had been thoroughly interrogated on that matter, I read in his face that I had no chance of being evacuated to a hospital.

These visits had at least one result. Beginning 9 May I had at least the right to a shower every day and the N.C.O. of the guard received the order to admit to my cell the food that the other detainees receiving their meals from outside were kind enough to send me. In this way I was able to regain some strength.

### 3. Month of May.

In the course of the first fortnight of May I was subjected to two brief interrogations, the first on parachuting, the second on the FFI of Cambodia, interrogations which were interrupted before I could make the slightest statement, the interrogator having noticed that there had been an error and I had been brought in instead of Captain PAUVELLS (whose name was pronounced the same as mine, which accounts for the error).

These interrogations permitted me at least to learn that the inquiry was already well advanced, and that, in particular, the Kempei tai knew the names of the principal members of the Resistance in Cambodia, Mr. JOUBERT and Mr. LASSON, whose names the interrogator mentioned to me to ask whether I knew them.

Further, the numerous arrests which had been made confirmed the development of the inquiry.

In the course of the second fortnight of May I underwent two series of interrogations:

-One from 17 to 26 May, almost daily interrogations concerning the Resistance.

-The second on 22, 23, and 24 May, concerning the S.R. and my supposed relations with the American authorities.

(a) Interrogations concerning the Resistance. These interrogations were conducted by a technical sergeant whose name I do not know. He was always correct and even sympathetic, taking it upon himself to go look for a change of clothes in the room that I had previously occupied in town and intervening to help me obtain an authorization to receive my meals from a hotel in town, a step which I benefitted from between 18 May and my departure for Central Prison 11 June. The questions asked me dealt with:

- My role in the organization of the FFI.
- The orders given by General DELSUC concerning the Resistance, the S.R., political action.
- The organization of the FFI in the South.
- Their radio network.
- Parachuting.
- Material received.
- Lieutenant LOISEL's mission.
- Funds placed at the disposal of the Resistance.

Finally several questions were put to me about the American (?) parachutists who had been able to land in Indo-China and about the alleged setting-up by the French Army of secret depots of arms, munitions, fuel.

Considering the point reached by the inquiry and the Japanese already possessing extensive information on the different questions put to me, I decided that /further/ silence on my part would be pointless. I resolved then to make some statements to give the interrogator as far as possible the impression of frankness while trying to remain within the limits of the information already known to the Japanese. I also deemed it possible to make use of these statements in clearing up certain questions which might have been misunderstood and which the Japanese might give a tendentious interpretation. I also intended to renew my statement of 22 April according to which the military authority covered completely the civilians incorporated into the FFI and considered them mobilized.

It was in this spirit that I answered the questions asked. On 20 May I took advantage of a moment when the interrogator seemed particularly well disposed to set forth my point of view concerning civilians belonging to the Resistance, namely that when contacted by the military authority to be mobilized they had responded to this appeal in a spirit of national discipline which did them honor, that it was consequently inadmissible to treat them as they had been at Kempei tai Headquarters and that at most internment as prisoners of war could be envisaged for them. The interrogator seemed to me very

understanding in this matter. He even agreed that Japanese placed under the same circumstances would probably have acted similarly and stated to me that the civilians arrested as having belonged to the FFI would be transferred to internment camps.

Pending this step I asked him that certain improvements be made in the regimen of the European detainees of the Kempei tai--in particular:

- Increase of the tea ration.
- Thinning out of the cells whose personnel reached 20 per cell at the time.
- Orders to be given to the guard for the suppression of the too frequent brutalities. This request seemed to be taken into consideration--unless another cause was working simultaneously--for:

- (1) Beginning that day two supplementary rations of tea were distributed.
- (2) The next day numerous Annamites were transferred out, the number in the cells dropping to 12 or 13.
- (3) I had the impression that after that day the guard was more proper towards the European detainees.

(b) Interrogations concerning the S.R. These interrogations were conducted by Adjutant SUMIMOTO. They took place on 22, 23, and 24 May and revolved around this one point: I was accused of having been in touch (1) with General MacARTHUR to whom I was supposed to have communicated, via the civilian radio service, information regarding Japanese shipping convoys, (2) with American submarines. [My denials only served to bring about a new series of brutalities. On the 22nd I received violent head blows with a stick. On the 23rd Adjutant SUMIMOTO himself hammered my face with extremely violent blows of his fist, further forcing me to remain kneeling during the interrogation. Finally, on the 24th, a new series of tortures was inflicted, comprising:

- The tearing out of tufts of hair from my head and beard.
- The twisting of my wrists and arms.
- Asphyxiation by strangulation.
- A wound on my foot caused by a see-saw movement pressed on a cord just at the point of a wound made in April. (This unattended wound got infected and was at the bottom of a fit of boils which has continued up to the present time.
- Finally, asphyxiation by water.]

At the end of my strength I finally consented to do what was demanded of me, namely, to sign a statement by which I admitted having enciphered some telegrams destined for MacARTHUR and American submarines signaling to them the movements of Japanese maritime convoys--telegrams which I was supposed to have sent to Mr. LOGNON of the radio service for despatching. (Later on I was compelled to make this statement over by replacing the name of Mr. LOGNON by that of a radio engineer at BIENHOA named CILRIEONT, who, moreover, did not exist unless, making allowance for the mistakes in spelling made by the Japanese, Mr

SAIGON of the radio service, was meant //).

I made clear before signing that this statement was without value since it did not correspond to the truth and since it was extracted from me by violence. That brought the reply: "Sign anyhow; that doesn't matter."

4. Interrogations in June and July.

At the beginning of June before my departure for Central Prison I was interrogated twice by Technical Sergeant ARAI, who accused me of having helped the six American aviators who were picked up on 12 January escape. I succeeded in convincing him that that was a movement regularly operated under orders from HANOI. He interrogated me likewise on the revictualing of Allied submarines. I answered that I had no knowledge of such facts. He did not insist.

In the course of my stay in Central Prison and of the last eight days spent at the Kempci tai Headquarters from 24 July to 2 August I underwent no interrogation.

SAIGON, 2 September 1945

/Signed/Beauvalet /sic/

Certified to be exact and true copy  
Lieutenant Colonel Y Turck, Chief of the War Crimes Service

/signed/ Y. Turck.