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CONFIDENTIAL-BRITISH SECRET

ALLIED TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER SECTION  
SOUTH WEST PACIFIC AREA

SERIAL NO. 55

23 Feb '43

37

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 37

1. Attached is a Report on information gained from Japanese [redacted]
2. All information contained in this Report has been extracted from this PW source only. Its value should be assessed and its distribution restricted accordingly.

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OFFICIAL PW No. JA 145077

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 37

PW's Name: [redacted]  
Rank: 1st Class Private  
Unit: YAZAKA BUTAI  
1st Bn  
2nd Co  
3rd Platoon  
3rd Section  
Where Captured: Near CONA  
When Captured: About Dec 10 1942.  
Height: 5' 4 1/2"  
Weight: 140 lbs  
Age: 31  
Private Address: [redacted]  
Education: 6 years Primary School  
2 years Middle School  
2 years Agricultural School  
1 year course in Agricultural affairs (NOJI KOSHUSHO)  
Civil Occupation: Agricultural and Forestry Specialist (NORIN GITEI)

1. PREAMBLE

Intelligent and co-operative.

2. CHRONOLOGY

Pre SWPA

Jun 33 Conscription examination at FUKUYAMA. Assigned as Conscription Reserve, requiring attendance one day annually to receive instruction.  
1 Aug 41: Called up at FUKUYAMA as 2nd Class Private in 41st Regt. (see sec 3)

Yokohama Out

17 Jan 42 Sailed from WJINA with about 300 men for the 41 Regt and over 700 for the 11, 21 and 42 Regts, all as replacements. These Regts were part of 5 Div (see sec 3 & 11)  
21 Jan 42 Convoy arrived MOOSUNG. Stopped 2 days but no shore leave. Loaded a number of AA guns and some troops but not on PW's ship.  
30 Jan 42 Arrived HAINAN IS. Anchored in bay at South end of island for about one week. No shore leave.  
17 Feb 42 Arrived SINGORA and 41 Regt landed at the wharf at which

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the ship had berthed. PW unaware whether troops from the other ships landed; although he believed they did. He did not, however, know where they were sent (see sec 5).

- 27 Feb 42 Arrived SINGAPORE after all fighting had ceased. PW acted on guard duties for about one month (see sec 11 & 17).
- 27 Mar 42 41 Regt; detached from 5 Div, sailed from SINGAPORE under command of Col YAZAWA. The unit was henceforth known as YAZAWA BUTAI (see sec 5, 11 & Appendix A).
- 4 Apr 42 Arrived LINGAYEN BAY in LUZON. PW landed into hospital on 10 Apr and understood his Regt would depart for PANAY Is on 12 Apr.
- 17 Apr 42 PW was transferred to MANILA and remained in hospital there till 3 Aug, suffering from acute nephritis (see sec 5).
- 5 Aug 42 PW boarded "OSAKA MARU" at MANILA for DAVAO to find that his Regt had sailed on 8 Aug 42, 4 days before his arrival. (see sec 17)
- 10 Sep 42 Departed from DAVAO in TAINEI MARU (see sec 11).
- 14 Sep 42 Arrived PALAU and stayed 3 to 4 days. Took on coal, water and fresh vegetables.
- 17 Sep 42 Sailed from PALAU in a convoy of 5 ships, two of them joining at PALAU.

#### In SWPA

- 23 Sep 42 Arrived RABAUL at night. Proceeded alongside pier next morning and landed. Boarded trucks and taken about 5 RI (12 miles) distant from RABAUL and quartered in a church on the water front for about 6 days. He did not visit township.
- 1 Oct 42 Left RABAUL on YAMATEI MARU (see sec 11)
- 4 Oct 42 Landed BASA in MLCs based there.

### 3. CAPTURE

Captured by about 7 Australian and 1 Native soldier on 10 Dec 42 near GONA. PW stated neither he nor his 2 companions were in a position to resist owing to privations endured during the previous 30 days.

### 4. UNIT OR FORCE

Organization: See Appendix "A".

Armament and Ammunition: TAISHO 11 LMG was used in NEW GUINEA. The gunner carried about 90 rounds and the ammunition carrier a further 240 rounds. Ammunition interchangeable with ordinary rifle rounds.

Operations in NEW GUINEA: 1 Bn of 41 Regt at BASA and GONA. PW was stationed at GONA on seashore watching duties for about one month. PW stated the 2 Bn was either at SOPUTA or KOKODA and the HQ of the BUTAI was at SOPUTA where about one Coy

was stationed. He believed the 3 Bn was at BUNA. 5 Nov 42 left GONA and joined up with the 2 Bn at SOPUTA. The two Bns reached OIVI 10 Nov 42. The NAKAI SHITAI, retreating from KOKODA, passed through OIVI and the YAZAWA BUTAI held on for a few days. PW stated these days were extremely difficult ones as the enemy was pressing at all times and gave the Japs no rest.

15 Nov commenced to retreat and upon reaching a river a week or so later it was decided to build rafts to accommodate from 3 to 4 persons. The one on which PW embarked struck a log and submerged. All equipment including LMGs, rifles, ammunition and hand grenades were lost. PW, with 2 others, managed to get to the bank and commenced to walk towards the coast. They continued for 12 or 13 days, sometimes making fair progress but at other times resting for a day or two. The 3 men all suffered from foot troubles due to the hardships of the trail, also owing to the fact that their boots had never had a chance to dry out since arriving at OIVI on 10 Nov. Rain fell almost constantly.

### 5. IDENTIFICATIONS

5 Div: PW heard it was in CHUSHI (Central China) in 1941, when it was known as MATSU and/or SHO. It became KOI, however, in the MALAYAN campaign and was commanded by Lt-Col YAMASHITA. The code name was again altered when the 41 Regt was sent to the PHILIPPINES under the command of Lt-Col HIYAKUTAKE and it then became OKI. PW had no knowledge of later movements.

OKI BUTAI: PW believed that a new div would be formed of the 41, 4 and 146 or 148 Regts from KUKUYAMA, SENDAI and KURUME respectively. Those 3 regts formed part of the OKI BUTAI.

41 Regt is now OKI 5169. In JAPAN the Regt is referred to as SEIBU 63 BUTAI. Code name MATSU 4. On disembarking, replacements for 1 Bn, about 100 in all, entrained at SINGORA. Those for 2 Bn entrained for KUALA LAMPUR, but PW does not know where the replacements for 3 Bn were sent. Regimental HQ 41 Regt was at KUALA LAMPUR and a stop was made there by the party for 1 Bn on their way to SINGAPORE.

YAZAWA BUTAI: PW suggested that the 41 Regt might have been detached permanently from 5 Div in line with re-organization of 3 Regt Divs.

21 Regt: PW believed was OKI 5174.

11 & 42 Regts: are KOI. PW last heard of them in Jul 42 when they were still in MALAYA.

52 SHICHO TAI: 300 transport troops and over 200 horses of this unit, had come from BURMA in TAINEI MARU. It was a HOKOKU organization. PW thought it was a SHORE DUTY unit but did not know if it was AKATSUKI. PW added that AKATSUKI units contained infantry and, when in hospital in MANILA, there were members of AKATSUKI Infantry Units with him.

PHILIPPINE Operations: While in hospital PW heard that the 41 Regt had engaged in successful operations in PANAY Is, taking about 1 week, then engaged for 2 or 3 days at CAGAYAN in MINDANAO and had then proceeded to DAVAO where they were stationed for about one month.

### 6. PERSONALITIES

YAZAWA BUTAI: Maj MIYAMOTO was CO 1 Bn  
Maj KOTWAI was CO 2 Bn  
Maj KCBAYASHI was CO 3 Bn

General MATSUI, Takuro CO 5 Div in the field. PW believed he was not more than 50 years of age - he had only seen him at a distance on two occasions.

Water in NEW GUINEA was sometimes cloudy when taken from streams. It was then treated with "JOSUICAI", a fluid disinfectant, but this gave the water a peculiar taste. More often than not water was drunk straight from streams.

### 13. MORALE & PROPAGANDA

#### MORALE

Economic Conditions in JAPAN PW had not received any comfort bags but he had heard from his people in September '42 when at DAVAO. They were well and he replied right away. At the moment he didn't want to write home but he was giving the matter considerable thought.

PW didn't know much about present conditions in JAPAN though he knew prices had been fixed for most things. He expressed the opinion that the limiting of prices didn't give much chance of a boom.

Political conditions in JAPAN After his ordinary schooling, PW took a course in agriculture. Living in the country, he was uninterested in politics and didn't bother to vote. What his father's views were he didn't know.

War was not believed in and the Japanese country folk were sick of it and wished for a speedy ending. He could not believe that the Emperor liked war and while Tojo had a lot to say regarding its declaration, PW didn't consider that he was entirely responsible.

Though he had not given it much thought, Communism might suit some countries but he was of the opinion that the cult could not work in Japan. He also thought that the 26Feb36 incident was not a good thing for the country.

At the time of the Manchukuo incident, he was at college and was working at HIROSHIMA when the China war broke out. As there was a large call-up of troops; it was not generally considered that the China war would be a short one. He couldn't decide if China had grown stronger since its commencement though he had heard that England and America were helping her.

Conditions in Fighting Services PW had no idea of the numbers JAPAN had called to the colours. Three relatives had served in CHINA and though they were released they may have been recalled since he left JAPAN. Many of his school mates had also been called up and he knew that some had been killed. He himself had never been wounded but he had suffered from malaria and acute nephritis. PW was not happy to hear he was to go to NEW GUINEA as rumours had reached him, and others in RABAU, that they were to be sent back to JAPAN. Younger men had different views but he had plenty to do in JAPAN and was anxious to return.

Whenever troops were stationed in a locality in numbers, brothels were immediately established by both the Army & Navy. Korean and Chinese women were usually employed but occasionally suitable native women would be enrolled. Profits go to the Services.

Attitude to Allied Nations The dislike the Chinese had for the Japs was possibly due to differences in customs and language. He thought the rescript of Emperor Meiji had been followed and that natives in occupied territories were being treated as equals.

PW saw no Australian POWs but heard there were some in RABAU. He understood they were not working.

Attitude to Axis nations He had heard of Hitler's book but could not subscribe to the idea of German race superiority. The Germans might worship Hitler but it could not be in the same way as the Emperor was worshipped. PW did not think that JAPAN was getting any assistance from Germany.

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#### PROPAGANDA

Broadcasts Listened in to the radio in DAVAO and MANILA but only to TOKIO broadcast and fancied that news is coloured to suit Japanese requirements. He found that there was quite a difference in the war as described over the radio to what he himself had experienced and he doubted if the nation had been told the result of the New Guinea campaign.

Rumours It had been reported that the YAZAWA BUTAI were to be sent back to the PHILIPPINE Islands after a short stay in NEW GUINEA. This as a reward for arduous and meritorious services elsewhere.

### 14. ENEMY INTENTIONS

Nil information.

### 15. WASTAGE OR CASUALTIES

PW of the opinion that shortage of food responsible for lowering of stamina and incidence of malaria in NEW GUINEA. Troops had ground sheets 5'6" square but mosquito head nets mostly torn and therefore useless. Gloves also were issued and when troops were given elementary lectures on malaria they were told to use these and headnets.

### 16. CHEMICAL WARFARE

PW stated he had received but very elementary instruction in the types of gases. Gas masks had been issued and he had been taught how to adjust it. The principal injunction was to put it on immediately alarm was given. All masks had been left in RABAU.

PW had never seen a gas cylinder and was certain that no gas had been brought over when he came. He had never been taught anything about decontamination though anti-blister ointment had been issued to all troops.

### 17. TOPOGRAPHY

SINGAPORE: PW stationed as a guard near a military policed bridge in Eastern section of the town. The sea was only about 20 yards from the bridge but PW was unable to name the river or creek the bridge spanned. There were buildings nearby but no wharves. PW's duty was to inspect all traffic that passed and to see that proper passes were in the hands of all pedestrians, taximen, passengers, etc. PW saw no sunken ships or obstacles in the river.

PW stated he saw a few truckloads of white POWs on occasions but he was unable to say where they were going. All seemed in good spirits. Little damage in the part of the city where PW was stationed.

DAVAO: PW stayed one month before there was an opportunity to rejoin his unit. He did general guard duties about one day in three; the rest of the time was his own.

New wharf, shorter than TAIHEI MARU and constructed of wood, PW believed about 2 1/2 miles to the East of the old pier. Uncertain about buildings, facilities, etc. A few sick horses were landed ex TAIHEI MARU and others loaded in their place.

PW saw aircraft flying over DAVAO but claims to know nothing whatever of unit, types, etc. Could not say whether airdrome existed or not.