

10-IR-48

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 48

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~  
ALLIED TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER SECTION  
SOUTH WEST PACIFIC AREA

SERIAL NO. 84  
7 APR 1943

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 48

1. Attached is a Report on information gained from Japanese PW [redacted] alias [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.

*[Signature]*  
for B. C. J. MURPHY  
Major  
C.O. Army Unit

APPROVED  
*[Signature]*  
SIDNEY E. MASHEIR  
Colonel, S.C.  
Co-ordinator

FWC/JMC/NR  
No. 22

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By *[Signature]*  
Date *[Signature]*  
Signature  
*[Signature]*  
CAPT. CAV

PW's Name: [redacted]  
 Rank: 2nd Lieutenant.  
 Unit: YAZAWA (41) Inf Regt,  
 MIYAMOTO (1) Bn,  
 SEO (2) Coy,  
 Leader of 1 Pl.  
 Where Captured: Near GONA.  
 By whom Captured: 4 Aust Soldiers.  
 How Captured: Ill with malaria; offered no resistance.  
 When Captured: 27 Jan 1943.  
 Height: 5' 0".  
 Weight: 115 lbs.  
 Age: 24.  
 Private address: [redacted]  
 Education: 6 years Primary School,  
 5 years Middle School.  
 Civil Occupation: Employee of MITSUI BUSSAN KAISHA at WAKAMATSU.

1. PREAMBLE

PW when captured had given his name as YAMASHITA, Hideo. During his second interrogation he became confused, contradicted himself and eventually admitted his true identity. PW stated that he did not wish to elaborate on his deception, and as he, a Japanese Officer, had been caught lying, he formally requested a pistol to commit suicide. Twice at later interrogations (once in well-written English) he asked either to be killed or allowed to commit suicide.

Throughout his interrogation, PW was deliberate and guarded in his replies. In the early stages he declined to answer questions on organization and was never co-operative. Undoubtedly an experienced soldier, of average intelligence. Such statements as he made are considered truthful.

2. CHRONOLOGY

Personal History. Following graduation from WAKAMATSU Middle School (1936) PW entered employ of MITSUI BUSSAN KAISHA at their WAKAMATSU office. His duties concerned bunkering foreign and Japanese coal-burning vessels. His association with foreigners enabled him to develop his knowledge of English acquired at Middle School.

Pre SWPA.

Apr 40 Conscripted and posted to Depot Unit for 41 Inf Regt at FUKUYAMA, as 2nd Class Private. During training there PW, amongst other Middle School graduates, underwent an examination and was selected as candidate for commission.

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cd Japan to stop at North China. She would have insisted on her evacuating the North was well as returning Manchukuo. If Japan had not complied, China would have attacked Japan by air from North China bases. The reason for Japan's expansion to Manchukuo was to obtain raw materials denied her, such as iron and oil. Once embarked on this course of expansion she was further embroiled with China, India with America and, having gone so far, Japan could not avoid war with both the States and England.

Conditions in Fighting Services

No opinion was held by PW on the number of troops mobilised in JAPAN. None of his relatives had seen active service and as far as he knew no school mates had become casualties. PW had not been wounded and was particularly healthy prior to the New Guinea campaign when he contracted malaria. Brothels were provided in the Army and contained mostly Japanese and Korean women. PW knew of a number of men who had contracted VD but most of them recovered after treatment.

PW did not appear to think it unusual that the much vaunted KONOE Div should have landed in MALAYA after his own Div. He agreed that the KONOE Div might have been kept in the background during the early stages of that campaign to avoid any risk of its morale being lowered by reverses, and might have been kept away from NEW GUINEA for the same reason, but pointed out that this was merely conjecture. His impression was that the Div had done very well in MALAYA.

In his personal opinion the 5 Div possessed better fighting qualities than the KONOE Div, but he had no particular grounds for this opinion except that it was his own Div. The 5 Div had had a series of successful campaigns, and until the NEW GUINEA campaign retreat had been unknown. He did not think that 41 Regt had been sent to NEW GUINEA because of any reputation earned elsewhere, but the whole he presumed it had merely suited the Higher Command's operational plans to send this Regt. He admitted that after service in CHINA, MALAYA and the PHILIPPINES some of the men had expected 41 Regt to be sent home, and had not been too pleased about being sent on to the NEW GUINEA campaign.

Suicide As stated in "PREAMBLE", this PW three times requested to either be killed or allowed to commit suicide. He stated that although he had been well treated he had lied in his first instance as to his identity and had been caught out. Many of his countrymen had been killed already and, as he could not return to JAPAN, he felt it his duty as an officer to die. He admitted that his death would benefit neither his country nor his comrades. ORs might be pardoned if taken prisoner and later returned to JAPAN but such clemency would not be extended to an officer.

Red Cross PW had received no specific instructions from Army Authorities with regard to respect for the Red Cross, but stated that instructions were unnecessary. The Red Cross was internationally recognized as a symbol to be respected, and Jap troops would not fire upon or attack buildings or personnel bearing the symbol.

Attitude to Allied Nations PW thought that the Rescript of the Emperor HEIJI was being followed. He represented that it was the aim of the Jap Army to treat natives of occupied territories as equals. However, circumstances after capture and in NEW GUINEA conditions were so bad for both natives and Jap troops that ideals "went by the board".

Immediately after the fall of SINGAPORE, he had seen many Aust PsW. They were not working at the time and he had never seen white men do coolie work. A number of PsW from MALAYA, he believed had since been sent to JAPAN.

Attitude to Axis Powers

JAPAN was not receiving material assistance from GERMANY at present but PW knew that many Germans were acting as advisers to his Government. PW claimed he had read the Japanese version of "Mein Kampf". He had seen no reference to German racial superiority, a theory which in any case the Jap people would not accept. The portion of the book that stuck in his mind was that in which Hitler asserted an amicable treaty with a country was a valuable prelude to an attack on that country". PW was of the opinion that a good many people, both Japanese and other nationals, considered that Germany had made a cats-paw of JAPAN.

PROPAGANDA

Broadcasts PW had not listened in to the radio in NEW GUINEA but in other theatres of war he had heard Tokyo and Singapore news broadcasts. He was of the opinion that they were innocuous in that they did not reveal the whole story. As an example of this, he did not think the disastrous result of the NEW GUINEA campaign would be released to the public.

PW admitted that there was a decided difference between as described over the radio and as he knew it. Moreover, there was a vast difference between warfare in China and his experiences in other theatres, particularly NEW GUINEA. He had been in some fairly sharp clashes in China, but the immediate issue was usually quickly settled. The MALAYAN campaign had been much more difficult, but eventually successful. In NEW GUINEA it had been a question of endurance under trying conditions, and the Jap forces had suffered greatly from sickness and inadequate supply arrangements.

Leaflets PW, on one occasion, saw an Allied propaganda leaflet which dealt with a naval encounter. Jap troops regarded them as articles of interest but PW held no opinion as to whether or not they had any effect on morale.

15. WASTAGE OR CASUALTIES

Casualties PW stated that casualties in his Pl from wounds and sickness exceeded 50%, mostly from sickness. He had only 15 men left in the latter stages.

16. CHEMICAL WARFARE

Equipment Personnel of PW's unit did not take respirators to NEW GUINEA. PW had not seen or heard of gas generators there.

Training He had received only elementary training in gas warfare, consisting of lectures on types of gas and the adjusting of respirators. He had no experience of gas warfare in CHINA.

18. MEDICAL

Personnel PW's Coy had 3 or 4 Medical Personnel attached. There were no officers included. Jap medical personnel were not selected for physical fitness and devotion to their duty. They were not given small arms drill and were not regarded as fighting troops under any circumstances. PW confirmed that medical officers carried pistols, but maintained that these were not for offence, but for self-destruction if attacked.

Sickness PW stated that every man in his Pl had had malaria in NEW GUINEA at one time or another.

PW entered hospital at LINGAYEN because it was thought that he had typhus. This was not confirmed, however, and PW presumed he had malaria. While in NEW GUINEA he had four further attacks of malaria, but had never had dysentery.