

CONFIDENTIAL-BRITISH SECRET  
 ALLIED TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER SECTION  
 SOUTH WEST PACIFIC AREA

SERIAL NO. 87

9 April 1943

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 50

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

APPROVED:

*M. G. J. Meredith*  
 Major  
 G. C. Army Unit

*Sidney F. Mahaffey*  
 Colonel  
 Co-ordinator

LJN/JMC/BM

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OFFICIAL PW NO. JA 11587

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 50

*Burns*

PW's Name: [redacted]  
 Rank: Sergeant  
 Unit: Medical Unit - PW one of party of 5, in the charge of GUN-I CHU-I (Medical Lieut) KATAYAMA  
 Where Captured: Near EASA  
 By Whom captured: By 3 Australian troops.  
 How captured: Taken in jungle while trying to reach GIJUMA  
 When captured: 11 Dec '42  
 Height: 5' 2"  
 Weight: 124 lbs  
 Age: 25  
 Private address: [redacted]  
 Education: Primary School, 6 years; Higher Primary, 2 years  
 Civil Occupation: Farmer.

1. PREAMBLE

PW's knowledge of military units and organization very limited. He seemed intelligent, and willing to answer all questions concerning his unit which was small, and only connected with medical matters.

2. CHRONOLCGY

Pre SWPA  
 1937 PW called up and medically examined at HIROSHIMA. Classed as DAI ICHI OTSU (Class B.1) and placed on 1st Reserve.

10 Jan '39 Called up and after examination joined the EISET-EU (Medical Corps) as a 2nd Class Private. Posted to HIROSHIMA Military Hospital until time of embarkation. (See sec.9)

Voyage Out  
 18 Jul '42 Embarked with his Unit at HIROSHIMA on a vessel, name unknown, for MANILA. Unescorted, the vessel was armed with one A/K gun aft. (See sec.5)

22 Jul '42 Arrived MANILA. Underwent training in Medical Duties. (See sec.9)

In SWPA  
Early:  
 Sep '42 Left MANILA for RABAU in KIMO MARU. Armed with A/K gun aft. No escort.  
Mid:  
 Sep '42 Arrived RABAU. Stationed at Military hospital.

16 Nov '42 Left RABAU on a destroyer for BASA. (See sec.5). Convoy consisted of 3 destroyers, names unknown to PW.

17 Nov '42 Arrived BASA at night. Disembarked at once by MIC, holding

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and Opl in Dec '40 (after 1 year's service) when he began actual medical work under MOs. PW was promoted to Sgt in Dec '41 (after 2 year's service). His monthly pay before leaving JAPAN was 26 Yen and in NEW GUINEA 58 Yen per month.

Training in MANILA PW attended lectures and a short First Aid course conducted by Med Liout KATAYAMA.

Identity discs PW stated that Jap troops were most careless with their identity discs, which were very often lost. This caused confusion at First Aid Stations and Hospitals.

12. ENEMY SUPPLIES

PW stated that the Medical Supply base for the NEW GUINEA area was at RABAU. His unit had not received any supplies since landing, although their stock of bandaging material was quickly exhausted. (See also 18)

13. MORALE & PROPAGANDA

MORALE

Economic Conditions in JAPAN PW had not received any letters from JAPAN since he left in Jul '42. He had written one letter to his father from MANILA. He had not received any Comfort Bags.

PW stated that when he left JAPAN, the country was prosperous and there was then no shortage of the essentials of life. Many articles had been rationed but they were non essentials, and did not seriously affect the masses. In the country where PW lived, the changes were hardly noticeable, but no doubt it was different in the cities. He knew that sugar and foreign tea were rationed and scarce, but the consumption in the country was so small that the people could get along quite well on available supplies. The main products of HIROSHIMA-KEN are agricultural, and on his father's farm of 10 TAN (1 TAN = 1 acre), JAPAN was raised for rice growing, the balance for vegetables. There was never a lack of food in his village. Farmers were allowed to keep a certain quantity of rice for their own use, the balance being bought and stored by the Government. As far as PW knew warehouses were full of grain. The people seemed contented and did not worry much about the war.

Political Conditions in JAPAN PW attended school through the eighth year. As a farmer he was not interested in politics and had no idea what party his father voted for. Communism he had not given a thought and when it was fairly popular in JAPAN, he was only 10 years old. He was at the farm at the time of the 26 Feb '36 incident and though he thought the principles behind the incident were good, the manner in which it was executed was bad.

No opinion on the anti-English movement in JAPAN was held by PW and he did not know the reasons for Chinese dislike of Japanese. He thought the Roscript of Emperor MEIJI had been followed and believed the Japs should treat and were treating the natives of occupied territories as equals.

PW did not believe in war. The Emperor had stated that this war was unavoidable and in fighting it, TOJO had the interest of the country at heart. There was no question of personal ambitions. PW could express no opinion on whether JAPAN would have been happier had she kept out of the conflict.

At the time of the MANCHUKUO affair he was on his father's farm. He was there also when war with CHINA broke out, and at the time had thought it would soon end. CHLANG KAI-SHEK was the obstacle. The war of 1895 was long before PW's time, and he had given it no thought. The present war had also received little thought from PW and he could express no opinion on the relative strength of the contestants. He confessed that it might have been better had JAPAN stopped at NORTH CHINA, but she was forced by CHINA's attitude to continue the conquest. JAPAN could at any time finish off CHINA but hostilities were prolonged because JAPAN was reconstructing CHINA as she advanced deeper into the country. In the struggle, PW did not think that JAPAN could be hampered by a shortage of planes and ships for he had not heard of any deficiency.

Conditions in Fighting Services None of PW's relatives had been conscripted but some friends from his village had gone to the front. Two or three of them had returned on sick leave, and when he left JAPAN, they were waiting to rejoin their units. They did not talk very much of their experiences and from what he had heard, the war was then going very well for JAPAN. None of his old school mates had been killed but two had been wounded in CHINA. PW himself had never been wounded but had suffered a slight attack of malaria at BASA, as well as stomach trouble from drinking bad beer. The brothels at RABAU were under Military control and were staffed by JAPANESE women.

Conditions in JAPAN PW was at HIROSHIMA during the American air raid on JAPAN. He heard that a few bombs had been dropped on TOKYO, YOKOHAMA and FUKUYAMA but the damage was negligible. He had read no newspaper account of the bombing raid.

PW was not desirous of writing home as he was not proud of being a PW. However, he wished to return to JAPAN after the war was over, for there would be no stigma attached to him for being a PW, as he had no weapons and was not, therefore, in a position to defend himself.

Attitude to Allies PW had seen some American POW in MANILA. They were not working but were kept behind barbed wire enclosures. They seemed happy and contented. They were living in houses and wore the same clothes as when captured. They had their own kitchen and several, accompanied by a guard, were allowed out to buy food. He also heard that there were Australian POW in RABAU. Japanese troops often complained that the Australian POW received much better treatment than the Japanese soldiers. He had never seen white POW doing coolie work.

Attitude to Axis nations Germany was helping JAPAN in many ways, he believed though he had heard only of steel being sent from Germany to JAPAN. PW thought HITLER's ideas of race superiority were presumptuous and he certainly could not agree with them. He took umbrage at the suggestion that the same reverence might be paid to HITLER as to the Emperor.

PROPAGANDA

Broadcasts: PW listened occasionally to the radio, which gave news of the war and musical entertainment. Most of the war news consisted of Japanese victories, and PW stated that he had never heard on the radio of any reverses of Japanese forces, which PW stated was quite natural since there had been none. The Japanese version of the Coral Sea Battle was that while both sides had suffered severe losses, it was a Japanese victory.

15. WASTAGE OR CASUALTIES

PW stated about 50% of forces in NEW GUINEA had suffered from Malaria, and about 20% from stomach trouble. About 5 sick and 20 wounded cases were dealt with daily by PW's Unit. Of the wounded men treated, over 50% suffered from gun shot wounds, mainly on the arms and legs. Before PW's capture about 100 serious cases were to be evacuated to RABAU, but as no ships came for this purpose they were laid in trenches under a rough roof. PW stated that a number died from exposure and lack of attention.

16. CHEMICAL WARFARE

PW had received training at HIROSHIMA in the use of a gas mask. He had never used a mask and did not know how to distinguish between the various types of gases. The masks he has seen were old type. No decontamination materials, as far as he knew, were carried by Jap troops. He did not know of any special decontamination Units. Troops were very careless with respirator equipment and PW's unit did not have any at BASA. PW had a slight knowledge of the treatment of gas casualties.