

ACTIVITY: World War II

CASE: GSAF 1942.00.00.k

DATE: 1942

LOCATION: Surabaya, East Java

NARRATIVE: When the Allies capitulated to the Japanese in East Java in 1942, about 200 Allied soldiers took to the hills around Malang where they formed groups of resistance fighters. Eventually they were rounded up by the Kempetai. The captured soldiers were squeezed into three-foot-long bamboo pig baskets and transported in open lorries, in 100°F [38°C] heat, to a rail siding where they were placed in open railway cars and taken to the coast. Half dead from thirst, the captives were carried onto waiting boats that sailed out to waters off the coast of Surabaya. There, the prisoners – still enclosed in their bamboo cages – were thrown overboard to the waiting sharks. The murders of the Allied soldiers became known as the Pig Basket Atrocity.

The commander in chief of Japanese forces in Java, Lieutenant-General Hitoshi Imamura, was later acquitted of this atrocity in a Netherlands court for lack of evidence. A subsequent Australian Military Court found General Imamura responsible and handed down a sentence of ten years imprisonment. He was imprisoned at Sugamo from 1946 to 1954.

SOURCES:

1) <http://www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/ms/info/massacresinthepacific.htm>

2) <http://www.dutch-east-indies.com/story/page85.php>

3) Imamura, H., *Shiki - Ichigunjin no Rokujunen no Aigan* (Tokyo, Fuyo Shobo, 1970). This is the autobiography of Imamura. Pages 431 to 473 deal with his trial and the treatment of the prisoners in custody.

4) Ota, A., *Rabauru Sempan Saiban no Kaiko* [Trans. 'Recollections of the Rabaul war crimes trials'] (Tokyo: Rabauru-kai, 1985, 221 pp). Refers to the trial of General Imamura (R175) and other Rabaul trials in which Ota was a member of the Defence team.

NOTE: "Of all the horrors facing downed (US Airmen), the one outcome that was feared most was capture by the Japanese. The roots of that fear lay in an event that occurred in 1937, in the early months of Japan's invasion of China. The Japanese military surrounded the city of Nanking, stranding more than half a million civilians and 90,000 Chinese soldiers. The soldiers surrendered and, assured of their safety, submitted to being bound. Japanese officers then issued a written order: "All Prisoners of War are to be Executed."

"What followed was a six-week frenzy of killing that defies articulation. Masses of POWs were



Lieutenant-General Imamura

beheaded, machine-gunned, bayoneted, and burned alive. The Japanese turned on civilians, engaging in killing contests, raping tens of thousands of people, mutilating and crucifying them, and provoking dogs to maul them. Japanese soldiers took pictures of themselves posing alongside hacked-up bodies, severed heads, and women strapped down for rape. The Japanese press ran tallies of the killing contests as if they were baseball scores, praising the heroism of the contestants. Historians estimate that the Japanese murdered between 200,000 and 430,000 Chinese, including the 90,000 POWs, in what became known as the Rape of Nanking.”...L. Hillebrand (2010), *The Unbroken*, page 88



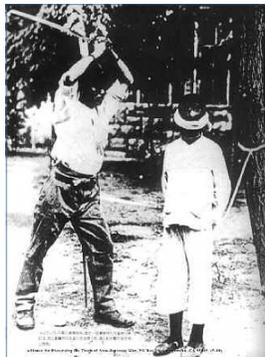
Japanese soldiers at work in Nanking



Bodies of infants & children killed by Japanese soldiers in Nanking



Japanese officer prepares to execute a patient in Nanking



Child about to be beheaded



Iris Chang, researcher & author of the Rape of Nanking. So traumatized by what she had learned, she committed suicide on November 9, 2004.