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4 Oct '43

SPOT REPORT NO. 153

(Subject to correction, addition or deletion)

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SPOT REPORT NO. 153

CWG/MTT/JF/1

Presumably SALAMAUA Area (date and exact place unknown). Rec'd
Adv Ech ATIS - 1 Oct '43. Rec'd ATIS SWFA - 4 Oct '43.

Full translation of AE 433, Item 1, extracts from diary, owner and unit unknown, containing entries dated from Oct '42 to 3 Jul '43. Condensation published in Adv Ech ATIS Translation No. 106, 2 Oct '43.

"BLOOD CARNIVAL"

29 Mar '43. All four of us (Technician KUROKAWA, NISHIGUCHI, YAMATA and myself) assembled in front of the HQ at 1500 hrs. One of the two members of the crew of the Douglas which was shot down by A/A on the 18th, and who had been under cross-examination by the 7th Base Force for some days, had been returned to the SALAMAUA Garrison, and it had been decided to kill him. TAI Commander KOMAI, when he came to the observation station to-day, told us personally that, in accordance with the compassionate sentiments of Japanese BUSHIDO, he was going to kill the prisoner himself with his favourite sword. So we gathered to observe this. After we had waited a little more than ten minutes, the truck came along.

The prisoner, who is at the side of the guard house, is given his last drink of water, etc. The Chief Medical Officer, TAI Commander KOMAI and the HQ Platoon Commander come out of the officers' mess, wearing their military swords. The time has come, so the prisoner, with his arms bound and his long hair now cropped very close, totters forward. He probably suspects what is afoot; but he is more composed than I thought he would be. Without more ado, he is put on the truck and we set out for our destination.

I have a seat next to the Chief Medical Officer; about ten guards ride with us. To the pleasant rumble of the engine, we run swiftly along the road in the growing twilight. The glowing sun has set behind the western hills, gigantic clouds rise before us, and the dusk is falling all around. It will not be long now. As I picture the scene we are about to witness, my heart beats faster.

I glance at the prisoner: he has probably resigned himself to his fate. As though saying farewell to the world, as he sits in the truck he looks about, at the hills, at the sea, and seems deep in thought. I feel a surge of pity and turn my eyes away.

As we passed by the place where last year our lamented HAN leader was cremated, Technician NISHIGUCHI must have been thinking about him too, for he remarked, "It's a long time since we were here last". It certainly is a long time. We could see the place every day from the observation post, but never got a chance to come. It is nearly a year since the HAN leader was cremated. I was moved in spite of myself, and as I passed the place I closed my eyes and prayed for the repose of SHIMIZU's soul.

The truck runs along the sea shore. We have left the Navy guard sector behind us and now come into the Army guard sector. Here and there we see sentries in the grassy fields, and I thank them in my heart for their toil as we drive on. They must have got it in the bombing the night before last - there are great holes by the side of the road, full of water from the rain. In a little over twenty minutes, we arrive at our destination, and all get off.

TAI Commander KOMAI stands up and says to the prisoner, "We are now going to kill you". When he tells the prisoner that in accordance with Japanese BUSHIDO he would be killed with a Japanese sword, and that he would have two or three minutes' grace, he listens with bowed head. The Flight-Lieutenant (T.N. in Japanese, "TAII" - this refers to the prisoner) says a few words in a low voice. Apparently he wants to be killed with one stroke of the sword. I hear him say the word "One" (T.N. in English). The TAI Commander becomes tense and his face stiffens as he

"Yes" (T.N. in English).

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Authority NND 54973

SPOT REPORT NO. 153 (Continued)

G/G/MET/JF/I

Now the time has come, and the prisoner is made to kneel on the bank of a bomb crater filled with water. He is apparently resigned: the precaution is taken of surrounding him with guards with fixed bayonets, but he remains calm. He even stretches out his neck, and is very brave. When I put myself in the prisoner's place, and think that in one more minute it will be good-bye to this world, although the daily bombings have filled me with hate, ordinary human feelings make me pity him.

The TAI Commander has drawn his favourite sword. It is the famous OSAMUNE sword which he showed us at the observation post. It glitters in the light and sends a cold shiver down my spine. He taps the prisoner's neck lightly with the back of the blade, then raises it above his head with both arms, and brings it down with a sweep.

I had been standing with my muscles tensed, but in that moment I closed my eyes.

SSH ! It must be the sound of blood spurting from the arteries. With a sound as though something watery had been cut, the body falls forward. It is amazing - he had killed him with one stroke. The onlookers crowd forward. The head, detached from the trunk, rolls in front of it. SSH ! SSH ! The dark blood gushes out.

All is over. The head is dead white, like a doll. The savageness which I felt only a little while ago is gone, and now I feel nothing but the true compassion of Japanese BUSHIDO. A senior corporal laughs loudly, "Well, he will enter Nirvana now !". Then, a superior seaman of the medical unit takes the Chief Medical Officer's Japanese sword and, intent on paying off old scores, turns the headless body over on its back, and cuts the abdomen open with one clean stroke. They are thick-skinned, these KETO (T.N. "Hairy foreigner" - common term of opprobrium for a white man) - even the skin of their bellies is thick. Not a drop of blood comes out of the body. It is pushed over into the crater at once and buried.

Now the wind blows mournfully and I see the scene again in my mind's eye. We get on to the truck again and start back. It is dark now. We get off in front of the HQ. I say good-bye to TAI Commander KOMAI, and climb up the hill with Technician KUROKAWA. This will be something to remember all my life. If ever I get back alive it will make a good story to tell, so I have written it down.

At SALAMAUA Observation Post, 30 Mar '43, 0110 hrs,
to the sound of the midnight waves.

Note: The prisoner killed to-day was an Air Force Flight-Lieutenant (T.N. "TAII") from MORESBY. He was a young man, 23 this year, said to have been an instructor to the A T C at MORESBY.

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SPOT REPORT NO. 153 (Continued)

IDENTIFICATION OF KOMAI TAI

1. From records the following references establish KOMAI as Sub-Lieut, 1st Class KOMAI, Company Commander Anti Aircraft Machine Gun Platoon of TSUKIOKA BUTAI.

- a. Diary belonging to Seaman 1st Class HAMAUZU of TSUKIOKA BUTAI contains the following statement:

"On 15 May '42 I was at last sent to the TSUKIOKA BUTAI as a member of N.L.P. (I was assigned as a gunner of No. 2 Gun of KOMAI A/A Machine Gun Platoon)".

After a reference to dreaming of his mother, HAMAUZU writes:

"My Commander gave me the following lines after I had let him see my verse 'Dreaming of my departed mother', 'In the shade of the moon I dream of my departed mother' by TAI Commander KOMAI".

(ATIS Current Translations No. 72, pp 14-15, 17).

- b. Diary dated 15 May '42 - 8 Jan '43 belonging to an unknown member of SASEBO No. 5 SLP, TSUKIOKA BUTAI identifies the following members of the unit:

SASEBO Naval Station No. 5 SLP
 SLP Comdr - Lt-Comdr TSUKIOKA
 No. 2 Det
 Coy Comdr - Sub-Lieut. 1st Class, KOMAI
 Adj't - Sub Lieut, 2nd Class, KARATO
 HQ Pl Ldr - WO IMO
 No. 1 Pl Ldr - WO SHINOHARA
 No. 2 Pl Ldr - WO KUDAMUTA
 No. 3 Pl Ldr - WO TAGUCHI
 MG Pl Ldr - Sub-Lieut, 2nd Class, KARATO

- c. The diary mentioned in 1b above contains this further statement "27 Aug '42 preparation for the advance to SALAMAUA and to MUBO. At last our KOMAI TAI is to act as a Combat TAI. Ordered by Commander to assemble in front of our HQ.

Immediately after instructions by Commander MIYATA on the beach, we left on a large MLC for SALAMAUA.

(ATIS Current Translations No. 28, p 39).

2. The identity of the TSUKIOKA BUTAI in SASEBO No. 5 SNLP is established by the following reference:

PW JA 145565, captured 14 Sep '43 (?) and not yet fully interrogated, was a member of SASEBO No. 5 SNLP.

He states that the commander was originally TSUKIOKA, Torashi. After his death, his place was taken by an officer from the 80 Guard Unit, whose name PW thinks was either SATO or SASAKI.

(Adv Echelon Report No. 69, 22 Sep '43).

3. The atrocities reference in Advanced Echelon Document 433 is dated 29 Mar '43. During the early part of '43, the movements of the TSUKIOKA BUTAI are known to be as follows:-

6 Jan '43 Evacuated from NEW GUINEA to RABAU by submarine.

19 Mar '43 Part of SASEBO No. 5 SNLP at SALAMAUA.

May '43 Main body of SASEBO No. 5 at SALAMAUA.

End

