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Guide for Interrogation Officers — Brief History
of Australian Prisoners of War Interments and movements
Whilst in Japanese Hands 1945.

Interrogation - General *1* *AB/402*

GUIDE FOR INTERROGATION OFFICERS - BRIEF HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN
PW INTERMENTS AND MOVEMENTS WHILST IN JAPANESE HANDS

(Information compiled from Interrogation Lecture by Maj P. MASSINGHAM,
CC Contact and Inquiry Unit at MANILA 30 Aug 45.)

1. Numbers of Australian PW by casualty classification:-

	PW	Missing	Mag Blvd PW
AMF	18,000	2,527	876
RAN	252	774	1
RAAF	233	598	35
	18,485	3,899	890 - 23,274

Actual names passed through Red Cross - 11,000
PW Mail received - 7,000

2. LOCATIONS

Of these 16,000 taken in MALAYA (approx)
2,500 taken in JAVA

RABAU - Principally officers - moved to JAPAN. Remainder - fate unknown.

AMBON - Approx 1,000, nothing heard of them, probably still well - 200
moved to HAINAN Island. Possibly moved on to JAPAN.

TIMOR - 800 - few to JAVA, remainder nothing known.

JAVA - "PERTH" survivors, together with 2,500 AMF, picked up in JAVA
itself. Some moved to SINGAPORE. (approx 1,544)

Bulk of AMF picked up in SINGAPORE - 1,800
Plus total from JAVA - 500

3. MORALE

Morale of AMF was high which continued to function as Military body
under its own officers. Senior officers moved to FORMOSA, then to MUKDEN.

4. FORCES (defined movement on mass)

Australian PWs for the purpose of movement were divided into "Forces"
as shown below. (NOTE: Japanese definition was "Branch Camp No —";
Officers interrogating should endeavour to get name of Force from PW).

"A" FORCE: CO Brig A.L. VARLEY, 21/c Col ANDERSON.

Left SINGAPORE 15 May 42 - 3,000 Australian prisoners - for work
on coast of KRA Peninsula, on railway to INDO CHINA, 250 miles long; in
camps at VICTORIA PT; MERGUL, TAVOY, YE, then to a series of camps along
railway called Kilos, principle of which were KILLO 50 (probably hospital)
and KILLO 133. Then to THANBYUZAYAT. Conditions were bad, deaths 15-20%.
Probably 600 died, (400 known). Hospital supplies almost non-existent.
By December 43 railway joined. PW evacuated from Railway to main camps
which were situated around BANGKOK -

- (1) KANCHANBURI
- (2) TAMARKAN
- (3) NONPLUJUK

Other camps at (1) BANGKOK (2) NAKAMPATHOM. It may well be that other camps were not identified. In all there were a large number of deaths. Conditions better than Mailway and some men regained health. Only the fit moved to SAIGON where Japanese outfitted them and were to send them to JAPAN, but owing to naval blockade were taken to SINGAPORE, where they remained four months, then embarked for JAPAN. Remnants of A Force on "RAKUYO MARU" which was torpedoed, stayed in water from four to six days without food, then were picked up by American submarines. Ninety-two survivors out of 628 - taken to SAIPAN and GUADACANAL. 136 reached CHINA in acquired vessel, were captured and taken to JAPAN (620 names of men were included on ship's list supplied ex RAKUYO MARU - any story of her sinking and other sinkings is to be regarded as important).

"B" FORCE: CO Lt-Col WALSH - Strength 1,500.

Left SINGAPORE after "A" Force for SANDAKAN, BORNEO, there were many casualties.

"E" FORCE: CO Maj FAIRLEY - Strength 500.

Left SINGAPORE 26 Mar 43 for KUCHING and then to SANDAKAN, BORNEO. Probably 1,000 moved back to KUCHING (of "B" and "E" Forces). Remainder made "Death March" SANDAKAN to JESSELTON and fate unknown, but believed dead. (Forces were not made up by units, men taken from units under command generally in category of fitness - a proportion of each unit in all.)

"C" FORCE: CO Lt-Col ROBERTSON - Strength probably 500.

Left SINGAPORE at early date for JAPAN.

"D" FORCE: CO Lt-Col KAPPE - Strength unknown.

Left SINGAPORE May 43 - reinforcements for "D" Force, mostly of "B" category. Forced marches later combined with "D" Force, deaths were high, both reached as far as 133 KILO. Some were moved back to "A" Force hospital at 55 KILO, some were moved to KANCHANABURI etc, some moved back to SINGAPORE and some to JAPAN. (Many casualties in hospitals owing to lack of food, included a large number of amputation cases owing to Yaws).

"G" FORCE: Chiefly consisted of Medical Officers and NCOs - administering native working parties with Railway Forces. Moved from SINGAPORE.

"H" FORCE: Nothing known about them but believed to be with "G" Force.

"S" FORCE: It is believed that about 500 Australian PW were attached to "S" Force for maintenance work on the Railway. Information is not sufficient to indicate accurately that "S" Force actually existed.

A, D, F, G, and H Forces worked on railway BURMA - THAILAND. A certain number were, it is believed, taken to "S" Force for railway maintenance, after completion of railway.

JAVA FORCE: Moved to SINGAPORE. Two forces. BLACKS Force approx 700 under Lt-Col BLACK. WILLIAMS Force - approx 800 under Lt-Col WILLIAMS. Left SINGAPORE 6 Oct 42, joined "A" Force, lost identity and passed on to railway with "A" Force and to SAIGON and JAPAN.

GENERAL: SUMATRA - some men have been recovered and evacuated. 32 nurses are known to have reached SUMATRA alive. Some were probably sent to JAPAN. (NOTE: FORMOSA in Japanese is known as TAIWAN.)

5. JAPANESE CAMPS

Situated on Main Islands, KOREA and MANCHUKUO. Condition of camps were only tolerable, sick remained sick, fit remained fit, could not get relief supplies - few exchanges took place and some supplies were delivered. Later RUSSIA accepted supplies and passed them over to Japanese authorities (Feb 1944).

Camps were divided into five groups -

- Group 1 - HOKKAIDO (Main camp HAKODATE)
- Group 2 - TOKYO (Including 25 camps) Main camp KAWASAKI.
- Group 3 - OSAKA - KOBE including southwest portion of HONSHU Island.
Main camp OSAKA.
- Group 4 - FUKUOKA - Main camp UBI.
- Group 5 - ZENTSUJI (A model camp to which visitors were allowed for propaganda purposes).

Also camps on KOREA - at KEIJO and JINSEN (CHOSEN). MANCHURIA - at MUKDEN (HOTEN).

Pw numbers given to PoW by Japanese were not much of a guide as all were being continually re-numbered. (A Japanese number however might be of use and should be taken down).

In southern areas PoW organised into Kumoi (Companies) of 150 men.

6. INTERROGATIONS

Divided into 6 classes -

1. D P W & I (Incl meritorious action)
2. OZE (Persons missing and dead, information of men seen alive and well)
3. PAY (Money for work, paid etc, money or currency received for)
4. WAR GRAVES
5. WAR CRIMES AND ATROCITIES
6. MISCELLANEOUS (Including granting of campaign ribbons).

PAY Is computed on the basis as at day of capture and accrues while in capture.

All dependents are looked after, any allotments to other persons for specified purposes are all investigated; if not being used for specified purpose the allotment is discontinued.

RANKS If records indicate soldier of lesser rank than he now states, Part II Order will be put through by 2 Echelon, after investigation of claim.

LEAVE Ask soldier to indicate if he wishes to take leave in state other than state of enlistment. (For reconciliation of paybook in state DFOs.)

ALLOTMENT Wives allotment stopped if definitely proved unfaithful.

CAMPAIGN RIBBONS ETC GRO 339/43 ref Africa Star. PW is eligible if served on strength of any unit in the North African theatre west of SUEZ Canal, up to and including 15 May 43.

1939-43 Star available to men who served on strength of a unit for any period however short, in MALAYA from 8 Dec 41 to 15 Feb 42. (NOTE: Not JAVA, AMBON NEW GUINEA or TIMOR. Eligibility for these men is considered in Australia.) Endorsement when given Ribbon in AAB 83 - "Approved to wear ribbon of 1939-43 Star subject to later verification by 2nd Echelon LHM". Application forms for ribbons will be completed in duplicate.

AAF 4119 (Statement of Casualties) 4 copies required (Interrogating officer completes one copy).

Under particulars of casualty -

- Believed Dead)
- Believed Buried) unless informant was witness,
- "I read his name on list -- at --"
- Identified by photograph.

(Above is example only and to be used as a guide)

Personal particulars recommended: if not identified by photo,

Name (Nickname) Height weight colouring marital state
Home State Civil occupation sports and any other particulars considered useful

Also particulars of RAAF, RAN, Merchant Navy personnel and British, Dutch, American civilians, in fact, anybody who died.

TREATMENT IN CAMPS Ask men to identify individuals by name, or appointment or nickname; anything that can identify a war criminal when filling in the section for form on "War Crimes".

7. GENERAL INFORMATION - ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY POW

Interrogation officers should adopt a firm but tolerant and understanding attitude toward members who tender questions which are irrelevant and at a tangent to the interrogation being done. Answers to questions which involve 'delicate' subjects, should be treated with a diplomatic reserve of opinion or reply.

As officers interrogating POW will be 'au fait' with world affairs generally, most questions can be answered briefly and accurately, without loss of time.

Questions POWs may ask:

Why no Australian Red Cross parcels?

(American Red Cross was entirely responsible for parcels, Australian and British contributing payment)

Did radio messages reach Australia?

(Sent from Radio TOKYO, SAIGON, SINGAPORE and BATAVIA. Steady stream kept up by Japan and picked up by next-of-kin very often.)

Mail?

(safe to say half of cards reached next-of-kin. All mail to POW taken and if held up, was in JAPAN).

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