

Pacific Theatre

Part 14: Ichi-Go, Hong Kong, Dutch East Indies *In which we find nothing as usual.*

by Lestrade aka Unpopular Opinion



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My unpopular opinion, from internet research anyone can do.

This is just a quick spin around China and Indonesia prior to the Philippines. I'm not going to take this too seriously, given that I've essentially already broken the spine of the Pacific campaign. If you're not convinced it's fake yet I don't know what would do it. A signed confession from the CIA director? The ghost of FDR spelling out guilt in a séance? I'll let you know if I find one of those.

Operation Ichi-Go ("Operation Number 1" aka "Continent Cross-Through Operation") was the Japanese military campaign from April to December of 1944 to link up their land holdings in the north-east of China with Hong Kong down in the south-west. They were hoping to smash the Chinese Nationalists and hit the American-run airbases causing trouble (at least that's the narrative, at this point I have no idea if anything was happening at these alleged airbases or if pilots were just doing the Hump run and then getting blind drunk in Kunming while the cargo got sold on for profit). By mid-'44 you might think the Japanese would be taking the American threat more seriously given that they were systematically smashing every eastern island outpost going but no, high command said let's plough our resources into China.

First we behold the casualties:

Commanders and leaders	
 Shunroku Hata	 Tang Enbo
 Yasuji Okamura	 Xue Yue
 Isamu Yokoyama	 Bai Chongxi
	 Joseph Stilwell
Strength	
500,000	1,000,000 (400,000 in northern China) ^[4]
15,000 vehicles	
6,000 artillery pieces ^[2]	
800 tanks	
100,000 horses ^[3]	
Casualties and losses	
100,000 killed ^[5]	500,000-600,000
heavy materiel losses ^[6]	casualties (according to "China's Bitter Victory: War with Japan, 1937-45" ^[7] Armies totalling 750,000 'destroyed' or put out of action according to Cox ^{[8][9]}

The next time you hear about the number of casualties of the Pacific war please remember that it's in China that a lot of the numbers are pushed. The place supposedly with the most bodies has the least evidence, as I will now demonstrate. See also my previous papers in this series for the Unit 731 mad science stuff and why that was bogus.

The link for "100,000 killed" (wiki footnote number 5) gives us [this page](#), for a book written by the Japanese newspaper [Yomiuri Shimbun](#) in 1983 called "War: China Memorial". Let me use DuckDuckGo's translation software on the Japanese quoted here:

"The battle, known as Operation Xianggui, resulted in more than 100,000 deaths and illnesses. Eleven of the sixteen members of the trip were nationals who participated in the Xianggui Campaign. Dressed in grass-coloured uniforms with red lapel pins and hats with red stars, the Chinese, who were instantly recognizable as Liberation Army soldiers, had long since closed the door to their room. 146th In the summer of Showa 19, the number of deaths and illnesses in the battle of the Xiangkei operation exceeded 100,000. Thirteen former soldiers who survived this operation, along with Kishimoto and Shio, made a memorial trip to Changsha and Hengyang, which were fierce battlefields, but when the series began, "When I heard Hengyang's name, I took the pen with enthusiasm" and "Remembering the painful march... 229th The memorial service was held in secret. I hope that this book will help you feel the horror of war, which even the grief of losing your immediate family is still not overwhelmed decades later. 100,000 Kisuzuto were mobilized for this operation, but it is reported that 100,000 people died in battle or died of illness."

"Showa 19" is our calendars 1944 by the way. Shoah? So the justification for telling us 100,000 Japanese died in Ichi-Go comes from a Japanese newspaper quoting 13 survivors (what are the odds) who attended a secret war memorial service in Changsha and Hengyang provinces years later. Why secret? When was the memorial held? Who are these men? The paper itself isn't proving anything, it's just saying 100,000 died. This is a newspaper article, it isn't an official military report or an academic study or quoting a specific source, so we've got the Wikipedia statement resting on

another statement without evidence which we've seen before and no doubt will see many times going forward. You're not meant to follow it up or use translation software I guess.

Turning to "heavy material losses" (footnote 6) gives us a Wayback Machine archived page from [Memin encyclopedia](#), which has the following interesting quote:

*"The Chinese army had suffered huge losses during this operation. **Since accurate Chinese data is missing, one is dependent on the specifications of the American report of General Joseph Stilwell**, who, after the fighting in November 1944, the destruction of 4 complete Chinese armies, 6,723 guns, about 190 aircraft of the 14th Air Force and thousands of vehicles reported. According to report, about 300,000 Chinese soldiers had lost their lives during the fighting, while 100,000 were wounded and 80,000 fell into Japanese captivity, **but exact data are missing**. On the Japanese side, fell during the six months of operation, a total of about 50,000 troops, **but even here the exact number is unknown loss**. Also, around 400,000 Chinese civilians died, mainly due to Japanese artillery fire, but **also from hunger**, especially in the besieged cities of Luoyang, Hengyang and Guilin, and because Japanese massacre."*

Thank you, Memin Encyclopedia, for clarifying that to get an idea for Ichi-Go / China casualty rates we're relying on... Joseph Stilwell. The Chinese don't have an opinion, their entire military record system is mist. Of course it is. Instead the spook overseeing KMT operations gets to decide. I would not trust this man to tell me the time.

We use footnote 4 to learn from "China's Bitter Victory: War With Japan 1937-45" by James Hsiung that:

The damage inflicted upon China by Operation **Ichigo** cannot be over-emphasized. Altogether, about one million government troops saw combat and at least 500,000 to 600,000 were lost, including some from the government's very last strategic reserves.²⁹ The provinces of Honan, Hunan, and Kwangsi had been the major suppliers of food and conscripts left after Pearl Harbor. Their loss in 1944 cut deeply into the Chungking government's ability to feed the civilian population and supply conscripts to its armies.

Chinese troops paid a steep price for their victory in the Burma theater in 1944. The armies from Yunnan (the Expeditionary Force) alone suffered about sixty-five thousand casualties. In many units casualties claimed two-thirds of their normal strength.³⁰ Chinese forces in India suffered equally heavy losses.³¹ Since these were the best units left in the Chinese Army, and the ones given U.S. equipment, their losses were exceedingly detrimental to the overall military situation of the Chungking government.

They had their best men in Burma you see. Makes total sense. No crack Chinese troops in China to defend the motherland on the front lines. No Sir, they were in Burma where the action was! Sat around... watching the Ledo highway being built one inch at a time. Chatting with Orde Wingate while he ate a plate of raw onions and howled at the moon, that sort of thing.

Incidentally, Proper Historian™ [James C Hsiung](#) is a [Columbia University professor](#) and a member of the [Foreign Policy Research Institute](#). He is the "editor of **18** books on Pacific Asian international relations, U.S. Asian relations, Chinese foreign policy, and international law". He's written an awful lot more papers than he's edited books so why bother giving that number (of editorial roles) as the significant one in the bio? I assume this is mentioned as a spook marker.

Anyway, point being: incredibly flimsy hearsay + "what Stilwell told us in his report" should not be treated as solid evidence. The whole Ichi-Go campaign is a mirage when you try to find anything of

substance. What about photography, for example? Well, turn to the usually reliable website [WW2 Database](#) which normally has a load of images of the conflict to find:



Yep. Not sure what's going on here – a convoy... somewhere... unclear if it's Japanese or Chinese... or why a single stickfigure man is standing in the middle in front of... what is that, a wall of ice? A very steep sandy hill with two roads flowing around it to the left and right? God knows. Just one more paste-up/drawing.

Wikipedia tells me this is actually “Japanese mechanized forces advancing towards Luoyang” so go figure. They also have the luxury extended version:



Right. So that's a mash-up/collage of key pieces (the tank, the trucks) and a sort of charcoal landscape drawing it's slapped onto. And what is that figure to the left, next to the tank? **Is that a man with no legs bending over? A gorilla? Mothman?**

"But Lestrade, maybe that photograph is fake but the main campaign still happened! You've heard of fog of war, right? They were just busy and chaotic times and nobody recorded anything!"

Where are the official photographs then? We have the dual Chinese factions of the KMT and the Communists both of whom would have had cameras. We also have the Americans sneaking around in China with special forces and their Air Force flying bombers and scout aircraft – they all would have had cameras. Finally we have the Japanese themselves who love a good photo-shoot waving the flag and shouting banzai. We've seen before them filming themselves landing on Malaya and so on. Here we have a couple of hundred thousand troops off to war in China and no images? Really? Why?

Well, we can listen to the YouTube channel "Military History not Visualised" who did quite a good normie/Proper Historian-tier piece on Ichi-Go. It's an American and a German/Austrian dude talking and you can [watch it here](#).

At 16:00 we get the quote about the Chinese government corruption which I liked. He explains that one of "the oldest tricks in the book" was for the KMT to keep its units "under paper strength" so that the officers could "collect the salary" of non-existent soldiers. I would submit that this actually very neatly explains why the numbers are stacked so high in this conflict: it paid to over-report troop numbers and, inevitably, you kill those men off by inflating casualty reports towards the end of the war. Hence Ichi-Go. Hence lots of things. I'm looking at you US Navy, with your vanishing wrecks supposedly stacked full of sailors.

At around 27 minutes they talked about how the reason why we have no real evidence of what happened during Ichi-Go (other than Stilwell hearsay I mean) is because at the end of the war Imperial Japan "ceased to exist and the language is hard" so we couldn't get anything from them. That's ridiculous, but it's nice to know the conventional, canon talking-points provided by the Pentagon. Japanese is just too hard to read, OK, cool. What about the American allies, the Chinese? He explains that the Chinese records (all the photographs/video/official reports) are "hidden" in "Communist vaults" so nobody can see them – not even official Chinese historians presumably. What about the KMT (now Taiwanese) reports? Ah, well, they are "butt hurt" and didn't want to talk to anyone for "a very long time". Stirring analysis, there's me thinking I'm overly flippant but yes, a government is *butt hurt* and THAT is why, dear reader, you get a charcoal sketch of a road and the trustworthy report of Stilwell as your proof that anything happened in central China in 1944.

You may also wish to peruse their video [here](#) in which the chap explains that the German military helpfully designed and built the modern Chinese military from the ground up in exactly the same way the British/French did for the Japanese military. Interesting!

If you use the nice clear map of the Ichi-Go push on Wikipedia (see also the start of this paper) and google any of the major battle sites you'll see for yourself how plausible the Ichi-Go narrative is. For example, the [Defence of Hengyang](#) which gives us an amusing argument over casualties:

Casualties and losses	
17,000:	Japanese source: 19,000 dead and wounded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,700 killed in action • 2,900 died from wounds, disease, starvation, and other causes^[1] • 9,400 captured (including 8,000 wounded)^[1] 	Chinese source: 48,000 ^[1] –60,000 dead and wounded
3,100 civilians killed ^[1]	

Was it 19,000 total Japanese casualties or nearly 60,000? Bit of a difference there.

We read:

*“Japanese commander Lieutenant General Yokoyama planned to take the city within two days. On 22 June, the Imperial Japanese Army Air Service began dropping incendiary bombs on the city, and a **30,000** strong force made up of the Japanese 68th and 116th Divisions of the **11th** Army attacked the city at **eight** o'clock that night, with the 68th attacking from the south and the 116th attacking from the west.*

*Although faced with concentrated heavy artillery fire, the Chinese held fast. Only when the Japanese troops began assaulting the Chinese defensive positions did their commanders realize something was not right as **their troops rapidly fell to small arms fire from the Chinese.***

*Japanese 68th division veteran Yamauchi Iwao (山内 巖) recalled in an interview in 1995: During the attack, Japanese soldiers **fell one by one, making the sound of 'pa-da, pa-da'**. Later, our platoon commander was the first to reach the frontmost pillbox. Later, I reached it as well. Soldiers **as near as five metres behind me all fell - 'pa-da, pa-da'**. After withdrawing, almost our entire company had been killed: **there were only about 30 survivors.**”*

Let me guess: it was 33 survivors, right? Regardless, I like the *padapada* sound effects and Japanese being shocked that “small arms” could kill troops. What does that even mean? The Japanese soldiers had never gotten shot at with a pistol before? Handgun bullets were considered non-lethal? We then hear about how the Chinese were launching rocks(!) at the Japanese, carved into the shape of mortar rounds and fired like regular munitions. No, really:

*“I requested mortar fire. I waited for a very long time, until dusk, before a mortar platoon commander came. He **fired seven or eight rounds and stopped.** I asked him, “Why did you fire the mortar like that?”. He replied, “Sir, **we are out of mortar rounds.**” I said, “What is going on?” He replied, “What rounds do you need? My mortar is an **81** mm (3 in) mortar. We had used up all our 81 mm (3 in) mortar rounds ages ago. We still have some 82 mm (3 in) mortar rounds remaining [captured from the Japanese]. **Our staff are using rocks to grind them down by 1 mm (0.04 in), before loading them up to fire. How many rounds do you think they can grind down in a day? The staff's hands are already worn out from all the grinding.**”*

Grinding rocks... to fire... from a regular mortar. I'm sure that works exactly the same and is worth the time spent grinding. We read on:

“On the morning of **11** July, the Japanese launched their second try, and did not score any major success despite some small gains. On the other hand, while the Chinese were still able to hold the line, their ammunition shortages had become an increasingly severe problem by now: **their original supply of 10 days' worth of ammunition having been substantially depleted by half a month of intense fighting. Hence, they resorted to engaging the enemy in close quarters with hand grenades.**”

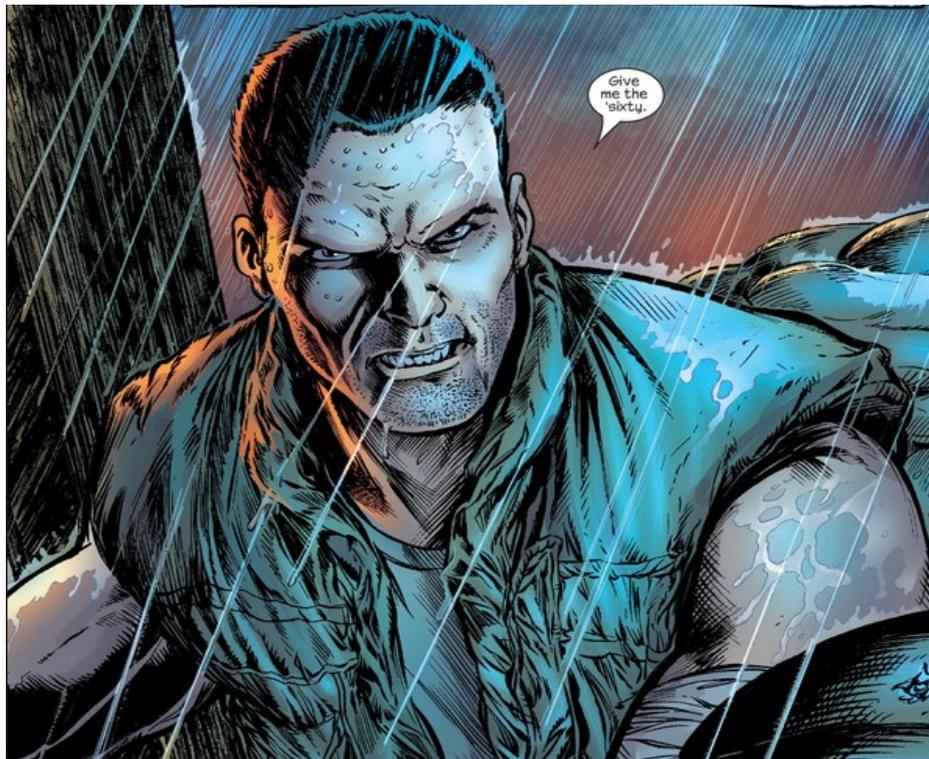
Those Chinese mad lads. I can imagine that would be an effective tactic, with the drawback you would rapidly run out of men. We read on:

“Zang Xiaoxia (zh: 臧肖侠), a company commander in the 10th Corps' reconnaissance battalion, recalled in an interview in 1995:

*At that time I saw that **we only had one pillbox left.** With no way to resupply, I, as the company commander, **could do nothing else but stay in the pillbox and defend it with my life. I jumped inside with a machine gun.** The soldier who was already there, said to me while firing at the enemy, “**Sir, what are you doing? You shouldn't be here. You should be at the company command post directing the entire company.**” I said, “**the rest of the company has been wiped out. This pillbox here is all we have left. I'll fight alongside you until death.**”*

*The pillbox had two firing ports. We each fired out of one of them. It was only until I entered the pillbox that **I saw the enemies' corpses piling up like mountains, blocking the firing port, making it impossible to shoot through. It was only after shooting the corpses to pieces that I could see through.**”*

So many Japanese corpses... he lets rip with his machine gun... shredding the corpses... to be able to shoot at more enemy troops and live to tell the tale. I mean that's pretty awesome, like something out of a “Punisher” comic... but it's also completely over the top and ridiculous and I don't believe him, frankly.



(Ah, that final Viet Cong siege at the end of the [Punisher: Born](#) run was so awesome.)

This is the thing – quotes like that one from Mr. Zang are made for a patriotic Chinese audience who read it, nod and go about their day. It's not meant to be held up to the cold light of sarcasm.

Moving on you can read about another fight, [The Battle of West Hunan](#), in which we learn:

*“After the battle, the Japanese first announced that they only had **11,000** casualties (5,000 KIA). **They later revised the figures** to include an additional 15,000 casualties "due to diseases". **Finally, they admitted** to a casualty figure of 27,000. **On the other hand, the Chinese claimed** to have inflicted on the Japanese 36,358 casualties, including 12,498 KIA. The Chinese sustained 20,660 casualties with 7,817 KIA, of which there were 823 officers.”*

Again, what is with the numbers being wildly different? This page has a bunch of dead links as references. Also no citations for the casualty chart at the top. You'd have the battle, you'd do a head count and look at the reports and you would know the casualties. I'm not talking about being off by a couple dozen men here, this isn't pedantry, this is me calling out them spamming random numbers at the audience and expecting them to go along with it.

The scale of Ichi-Go makes the lack of evidence hilarious. The [Battle of Changsha](#) for example was supposed to involve a clash between over 600,000 troops – in one city!

Strength	
300,000 troops in eight army groups <small>[citation needed]</small>	360,000 troops of the 11th Army <small>[citation needed]</small>
Casualties and losses	
90,000 (17,000 in Hengyang <small>[citation needed]</small>)	66,000 (Japanese claim: 19,000 in Hengyang <small>[citation needed]</small>)

Hell yeah citation needed! For an apocalyptic shoot-out between over half a million men in one location (imagine the noise!) you would expect some interesting photography, right? If not during then at least before and after. Nah, you get this:



“Chinese army in the battle” – original [here](#).

I suspect it would take quite a long time to transport 300,000 troops on two little fishing boats. What are we even looking at here? They’re never going to fit on that! Why is this the top photograph for this event? Regardless, that is only proof of about 40 people doing something, then being heavily pixellated.

Or the [Battle of Guilin-Liuzhou](#) which is supposed to involve another 500,000 plus troops shooting at each other, but only around 30,000 killed:

Strength	
400,000 troops	160,000 troops
	150 planes
	Numerous tanks and armoured cars
	Naval support from 2nd China Expeditionary Fleet ^[citation needed]
Casualties and losses	
25,000 killed 156 artillery pieces and 30 B-29s destroyed	5,665 killed

Wikipedia’s rubbish, image-less, stub note of an article (referencing Time Magazine of all things as the historical reference!) also claims another 600,000+ civilians were then affected:

“After 10 days of intense fighting, the Japanese occupied Guilin, and on the same day entered Liuzhou as well. Fighting continued sporadically as Chinese forces made their rapid retreat, and on 24 November the Japanese were in control of 75 counties in Guangxi, roughly two-thirds its area, and are said to have killed 215,000 civilians in reprisal and during crossfire, wounding more than 431,000.”

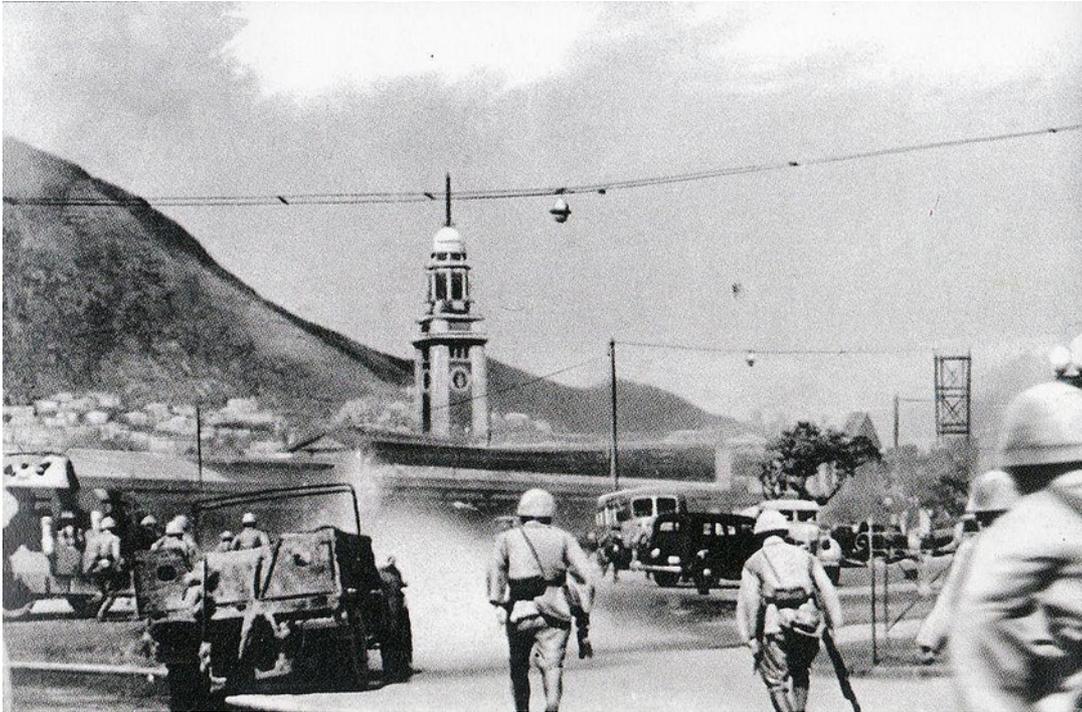
These numbers are insane. We’re talking about millions of people killed or injured or involved in these giant earth-shaking battles (imagine a resource-scarce empire like Imperial Japan firing off half a million rounds of ammunition just to do “reprisal” shooting of civilians!) and there’s basically nothing to substantiate it. By itself that is absurd and incredible. In the wider context of what we’ve found from the Aleutians to Singapore it’s obviously just made up in a Langley writing room.

“Nuh-uh Lestrade, this all happened! It’s just that all the proof is in records sealed in a SECRET underground COMMUNIST vault!”

- A Proper Historian, probably

Anyway I’m moving on, if readers think I need to dig deeper on Ichi-Go or any of the other parts of this fiction then please email Miles and let him know your frustration with me.

We turn now to the [Battle of Hong Kong](#) which we find is stupid and ridiculous like everything else. Seriously, they're not even trying. They open up the Wikipedia article using this image like I'm not going to see it's a paste-up:



“Japanese troops take Tsim Sha Shui” – original [here](#).

That's pretty ballsy they lead with that. I mean obviously Japanese troops would have physically walked around Hong Kong at some point during World War 2, that's fine, that doesn't break my theory. It's a fake stage-managed hand-over like with Burma and the Philippines and everywhere else. Real squaddies got shipped around, they put on their boots and their helmets and stomp around on patrol, fine, it's still a fake war. I just thought they might bother to pose for a real photograph. **And what is it printed on, an orange peel? Cameras back then had no resolution? No analog (film) photo should ever look like that.**

The hits keep coming as we also get these images:





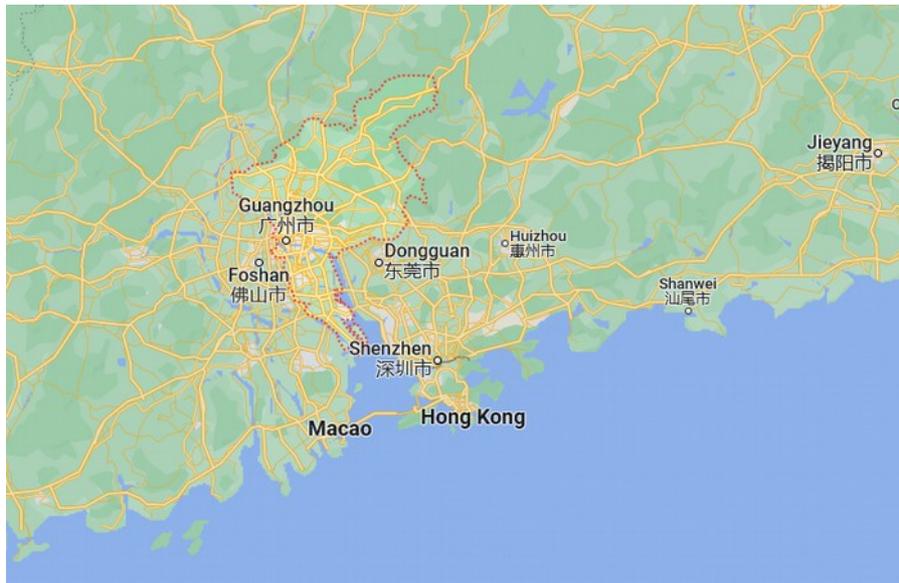
You see what I see, right? Glowing, flat Canadian troops on patrol pasted in on a steel floor and empty sky, a dreamlike hazy shot of some kind of artillery crew firing into a desolate city where even the smoke cloud is washed out... and in the third you've got, what, cutesy cow-print smokestacks and the lower row of men inserted in (lighting, resolution, literally fading out to blurred grey towards the right side of the image).

As the Zoomers say: I can't even.

Obvious armchair general moment is obvious: Hong Kong is important. Just like Singapore. The British should have defended it to the death and were in fact ordered to do so. Just like Singapore. They had a massive local population of Japanese-hating Chinese who would have happily formed a militia to defend the city, but this wasn't done properly, just like Singapore.

What else? Oh yeah: unlike Singapore, just to the north of Hong Kong island you've got this fairly enormous country called China, where some boys called the Kuomintang are working with the Americans to fight the Japanese. Quite handy, eh? You might think the British would want to coordinate defence of their major southern port. Any deficiencies in British numbers would then be offset by a couple hundred thousand Chinese troops.

However: we are told they couldn't send KMT reinforcements to help defend Hong Kong because to the north you have Guangzhou, a city of (at the time) over half a million people which the Japanese captured as part of the Canton Operation. As such, there was no way to get to the British.



Ah yes, definitely no way to get to Hong Kong if you control Guangzhou. I'm supposed to ignore the surrounding countryside. Or coastline.

The article on the [Canton Operation](#) on Wikipedia is amusingly dumb – look at the numbers:

Strength	
 Imperial Japanese Army: ^[4]	80,000 men ^[citation needed]
70,000 men	
27,000 horses	
Army aircraft: ^[5]	
4 direct support aircraft	
24 fighters	
27 light bombers	
Total aircraft: 55	

So the Japanese send 70,000 men to capture this enormous city of half a million Chinese, all of whom hate the Japanese. The KMT stationed to defend Guangzhou have... maybe 80,000 troops. Possibly. Citation needed, it says. So we don't know. They can't tell us this stuff, decades later. Then we turn to the casualties and losses:

Casualties and losses	
Official Japanese war records claim: ^[4]	Chinese claim: <i>[citation needed]</i>
173 killed	2,954 killed
493 wounded	5,645 wounded
1,264 sick	2,643 missing
Total casualties: 1,930	Total casualties: 11,242
1,069 horses killed, wounded or sick ^[4]	Official Japanese war records claim 1,340 captured. ^[8]
5 aircraft ^[7]	Official Japanese war records claim: ^[8]
	2,371 rifles
	214 heavy and light machineguns
	134 artillery pieces
	53 coastal artillery pieces
	21 tanks and light armored vehicles
	151 vehicles

OK, so you had a shoot-out between 150,000 men but you only had 173 Japanese killed? Iron Man armour strikes again. The Chinese have less than 3,000 killed. How do the Chinese lose the city if less than 4% of their troops (assuming it's 3,000 out of 80,000) are killed? Even if we round up all the casualties/injuries/captures/missing on the Chinese side as 12,500 that's around 15%. Would they really abandon the city with the vast majority of their army still able to fight? If 1,340 Chinese are captured then what happened to them? Did they survive the war? Were they in a POW camp? Are there no historians in China?

Again you'd think this enormous battle would have some evidence from a journalist or something but no, we get this:



“Japanese naval landing forces blasting Chinese pillbox and marching with the naval flag” – original [here](#).

Clear as mud. That doesn't look like a city, this looks like a large field with no visible pillbox. The gamma is terrible as always so no idea if those troops aren't just an insert. You can see the chap whose head was cut off by the flag... where are his legs? That seems to be a floating torso.

Any other useful photos? The normally useful [WorldWar2Database](#) site just gives us some images of ships. I Google around and come up empty. A washout. Nobody is expected to bother looking at China is the vibe I get. We have micro-detailing for Midway or the wistful stroll across Saipan but God help me find any insight on 900,000 screaming Asians killing each other with bayonets and levelling cities like Godzilla.

Anyway, so due to the very real and not at all fictional Canton Operation, Hong Kong is now isolated and ripe for assault. The British are of course busy preparing their cunning defences. This is the [Gin Drinkers Line](#). Fittingly, Wikipedia tells us the “concept” (what, a defensive line is a new concept!?) of the Gin Drinker's Line comes from the Maginot Line, which I believe Miles touched on previously as a ridiculous boondoggle used to justify the (fake) invasion of France:

*“The **concept** came from France's Maginot Line, built after World War I. The **British believed the line could protect the colony from Japanese invasion for at least six months** and even called it the **“Oriental Maginot Line”** (Chinese: 東方馬奇諾防線). The Japanese generals also believed the line would stop their advance **until the scouts found out the line was very weak.**”*

The line was quite large and was constructed over two years from '36 to '38.



“The Line was not a solid defensive line, but rather a series of defensive positions linked together by paths. Bunkers, concrete fortified machine gun posts, trenches, and artillery batteries were built along the line: however, this artillery support may have been insufficient”

You no doubt foolishly imagined that this line would be bristling with a mix of British troops, Indian troops and hastily-assembled Chinese militia teams on rotating round-the-clock shifts ready to sound the alarm and repulse any Japanese scouts. There would naturally be expected to be some typical British craftiness where we'd rigged up traps, pits, explosives and so on. The sun never sets on the British Empire because God doesn't trust an Englishman in the dark, as they say.

Nope.

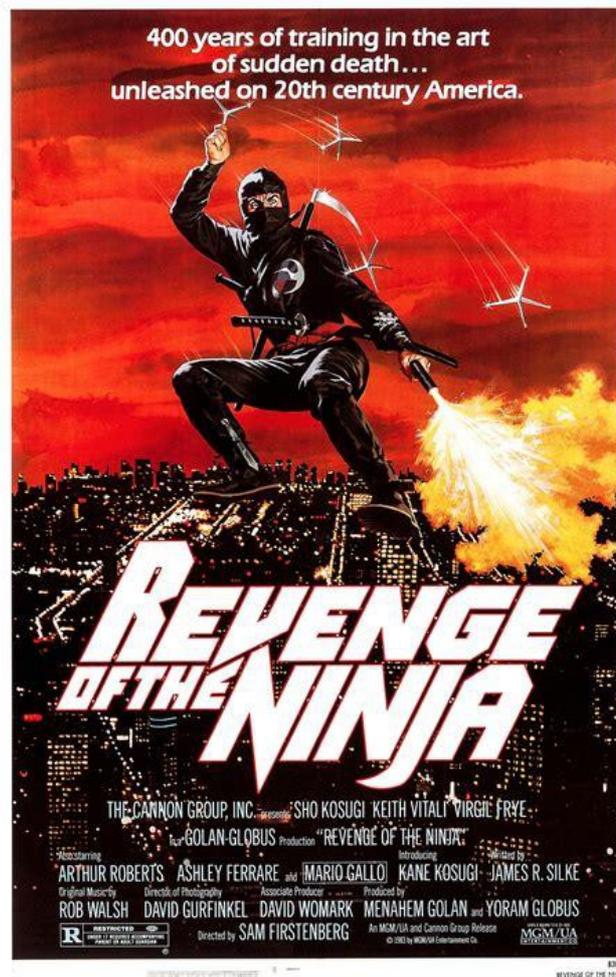
“On 9 December, Japanese advance scouts of the 228th Regiment headed towards Tai Mo Shan, and discovered that British defences were weak at "225 High Ground" near Shing Mun Redoubt and Shing Mun Reservoir. The high ground dominated all positions of the western portion of the Line. Therefore, the Japanese advanced a sneak attack.

At 21:00 that evening, the lieutenant in charge and ten elite soldiers began the sneak attack. Combat engineers successfully breached the barbed wire and destroyed bunkers. By 07:00 on 10 December, they had taken the high ground and 27 POWs, opening a breach in the Line. The success surprised Japanese commanders who had thought at least a month was required to break the British defences, and thereby diverted more forces from mainland China to boost manpower.”

And:

*“Japanese forces then opened a two-pronged assault on the Gin Drinkers Line. **By the next day, they had already claimed Kam Shan and Tate's Cairn.** Major General Christopher Maltby knew that the position was untenable and at noon decided to withdraw the garrison to Hong Kong Island to preserve its strength, signalling the defeat of the Line. **Defenders to the west of the Line began retreating towards the island at 20:00.** The Rajput Battalion stayed behind as a rear guard, only retreating on the morning of **13 December** towards Devil's Peak and Lei Yue Mun towards Hong Kong Island. **This was also the final retreat of British forces from the Kowloon Peninsula.**”*

Right. So **11** men took out multiple bunkers, breached the line and captured 27 POWS in ten hours. What? How? Are these... ninjas?



Pictured: Technical demonstration of a Ninja (not to scale).

*“The Gin Drinkers Line was and still is considered to be a complete failure. **The line and the whole of Kowloon were abandoned by the British troops in just two days.** There can be said to be three main reasons:*

- 1) **Insufficient troops:** although their weaponry was sound, **there were not enough British soldiers to maximise the Line's potential.** For example, the Shing Mun Redoubt could have garrisoned over **120 men**, but was garrisoned by just **30 troops**, **because many of the troops suffered from malaria**, since the area around the redoubt **was known to contain a lot of mosquitoes.***
- 2) **Underestimation of the Japanese:** **the British assumed that the Japanese did not wage night battles and relaxed their guard.***
- 3) **They were also overconfident in the Line's capabilities and believed that the Japanese could be easily repulsed.**”*

That's outrageously stupid. The British lose the line in 48 hours because less than a dozen men attack after nightfall. The line was essentially undefended. They blame mosquitoes. Absolutely ridiculous.

How long do you think the British held out against the Japanese before Hong Kong fell? Go on, you can guess.

It's [18 days](#).

I won't do a [blow by blow of the battle](#), it's mostly a lot of repetition of the British either retreating in the face of the Japanese assault or fighting fiercely, running out of ammunition and then retreating.

They re-use the same plot beat about reservoirs again, just like with Singapore:

*“At 08:00 on the 23rd the 5/7th Rajputs fell back leaving the 1st Middlesex units on Leighton Hill isolated and the Japanese bombarded them with mortar fire. Meanwhile, the remaining defenders on the north shore retreated west to Mount Gough. **With the main water reservoirs now controlled by the IJA and with artillery damage to pipes, water supplies began to run out.**”*

Between this and Singapore it seems the British never learned how to store water.

The whole “running out of supplies” thing is dumb and directly contradicts, for example, the [London Gazette](#) article written by Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham (Commander in Chief of the Far East). He wrote:

“Strength of Defences.

*32. The strength of the Hong Kong garrison is given in Appendix H. **The official period for which Hong Kong was to be provisioned, both in military stores and food reserves, was 130 days**”.*

- page 7 of 42 in the pdf.

The Japanese take Hong Kong and then occupy the city for the next couple of years. It wouldn't be a proper Japanese occupation without war crimes, so we get [the St. Stephen's College Massacre](#).

*“Several hours before the British surrendered on Christmas day at the end of the Battle of Hong Kong, **Japanese soldiers entered St. Stephen's College, which was being used as a hospital on the front line at the time.** The Japanese were met by two doctors, **Black and Witney**, who were marched away, and **were later found dead and mutilated.** They then burst into the wards and **bayoneted a number of British, Canadian and Indian wounded soldiers** who were incapable of hiding. **The survivors and their nurses were imprisoned in two rooms upstairs.** Later, a second wave of Japanese troops arrived after the fighting had moved further south, away from the school. **They removed two Canadians from one of the rooms, and mutilated and killed them outside.** **Many of the nurses next door were then dragged off to be gang raped, and later found mutilated.** **The following morning, after the surrender, the Japanese ordered that all these bodies should be cremated just outside the hall.** Other soldiers who had died in the defence of Stanley were burned with those killed in the massacre, making **well over 100 altogether.**”*

Not this again. Another ghost story where if nobody lived to tell the tale, how do we know what happened? You've probably already noticed the name joke of “black & white” for the doctors.

*“Lieutenant General Takeo Itō (伊東 武夫), the commander of the 38 Infantry Division during the incident, was held responsible for the atrocity committed by the unit. He was found guilty on the Military Court for the Trial of War Criminals at 1948 and **sentenced to twelve years of imprisonment.**”*

12 years for masterminding a war crime, eh? Quite lenient. We [follow the link](#) to Lt. Gen Ito's page and see this:

*“At the end of the war, Itō was taken into custody by Australian forces, and was tried as a war criminal in a military tribunal **for the murder of Chinese civilians**. He was **sentenced to death at Rabaul, New Britain on 24 May 1946**. However, Ito was **released on 28 October**, and sent to **Hong Kong**. In 1948, Itō was **accused of war crimes at the Hong Kong's War Crimes Court, found guilty and sentenced to 12 years in prison**. He died on 24 February 1965.”*

Just absurd. What even is this? You get sentenced to death by military tribunal but then nothing happens and they fly you to Hong Kong, to get a lesser sentence of imprisonment? What?

What sources do we have for the main article on the St. Stephen's College Massacre, eh? Let's see.

First link is for “*Roland, Charles G. (January 1997). "Massacre and Rape in Hong Kong: Two Case Studies Involving Medical Personnel and Patients"*”.

It has the affront to expect me to pay for the full article, so to the devil with it. I will simply screenshot this bit instead so you can have a good laugh:

The intent of this paper is to examine and compare two of these brutal assaults in order to try to discover how they came to happen. These events took place on Hong Kong Island on 19 and 25 December 1941. One was the murder of Royal Army Medical Corps and other personnel near the Salesian Mission at Shau Kei Wan, early on the morning of 19 December 1941. The second was the bloody rampage of murder and rape at the temporary hospital in St Stephen's College on 25 December 1941.

There were medical establishments overrun by the Japanese where no atrocities occurred. For example, the staff of the Kowloon Hospital were not ill-treated physically in any way, though for a few days they went very hungry. Dr Isaac Newton, the surgeon in charge of all civilian medical personnel on the Kowloon peninsula, recorded in his diary on 13 December 1941 that the

Doctor Isaac Newton. Diary extract from the **13th**. I mean. Come on.

There's a bunch of broken links or unhelpful fenced-off articles. [One of the links takes us here](#), to a page on the Hong Kong War Crimes Trials Collection, which gives me this quote:

“Allegations

*The Prosecution **alleged** that a number of atrocities were committed by Japanese troops in this period. These atrocities included the shooting and bayoneting to death of captured Allied troops and surrendered personnel, the unlawful killing of sick and wounded members of the Allied Forces, the unlawful killing of medical personnel, and the murder and rape of nurses as well as civilians (both British and Chinese). More specifically, the allegations were:*

*1. **During the attack on Repulse Bay**, Japanese troops committed various atrocities. When they took Sai Wan Hill, they **captured a number of prisoners**. They were placed in a concrete pill-box for several hours. **They were called out and were bayoneted and their bodies tossed over a stone embankment. Two survived and gave evidence in person.***

*2. When the Japanese took the Salesian Mission, which was occupied by medical personnel, both military and civilians were made prisoners. **Major Banfill**, by his affidavit, claimed that it was done by an order. He also **said that he saw them "butcher"** wounded British officers and soldiers.*

3. There was also wanton killing of two European residents at a reservoir pumping station.

4. At St. Stephen's College in Stanley, which was used as an ancillary hospital, the troops **allegedly raped and murdered nurses, and brutally killed wounded soldiers.**
5. Rape of nurses also occurred at the Jockey Club on the Race Course, where an emergency hospital was situated.”

Right. So... Allegation 1 witnesses: they bayoneted you, then threw you over a cliff. You survived somehow, lived in Hong Kong peacefully during the occupation without getting found and shot. Many years later you are alive in court to give testimony. Next Allegation: hearsay from a Major. OK.

You can read the whole trial transcript [here](#), beware though it's a large file. I've skimmed a fair chunk of it and it can be summarised as “general statements of hearsay by different people, nothing substantiating it”. The Japanese “defence” is laughable, he basically just asks the witnesses to restate what they just said, e.g. “so then the Japanese soldiers came along?” “yes” “In their uniforms?” “yes” “what colour were the uniforms?” “green I think” “thank you the defence rests” etc. There is no defence, it's just nodding along to whatever the Allies claim.

[Another link takes us here](#), for this quote:

“(Sgt. Maj. John Robert Osborn) who, also using a machine gun, allowed his unit to retreat while holding off several hundred Japanese soldiers. After miraculously escaping and rejoining his unit, they came under attack again, and he again fought with superhuman strength, killing dozens of enemy soldiers and throwing back grenades they had tossed into their midst, until finally one landed that he could not reach in time, and he threw himself on it to save his comrades.”

Call me cynical but when the testimony of what happened includes stuff like this I end up concluding the witness is not credible. When the entire prosecution rests on hearsay testimony of this nature you can't in good faith say the Japanese did anything they're being accused of.

How many Allied personnel died in the fall of Hong Kong? As usual nobody can give a straight answer, even decades later. You would think military records would be pretty easy to check especially after you win the war and can peek at the enemies homework but no:

“The Japanese officially reported 675 men killed and 2,079 wounded; western estimates go as high as 1,895 dead and 6,000 casualties overall. Allied casualties were 1,111 men killed, 1,167 missing and 1,362 wounded (sources vary; other figures given include 1,045 killed, 1,068 missing and 2,300 wounded, as well as 1,560 killed or missing). Allied dead, including British, Canadian and Indian soldiers, were eventually interred at Sai Wan Military Cemetery and the Stanley Military Cemetery. Total battle casualties of "Indian Other Ranks" is given to be 1164 out of a total of 3893 military personnel from India who were garrisoned in Hong Kong.”

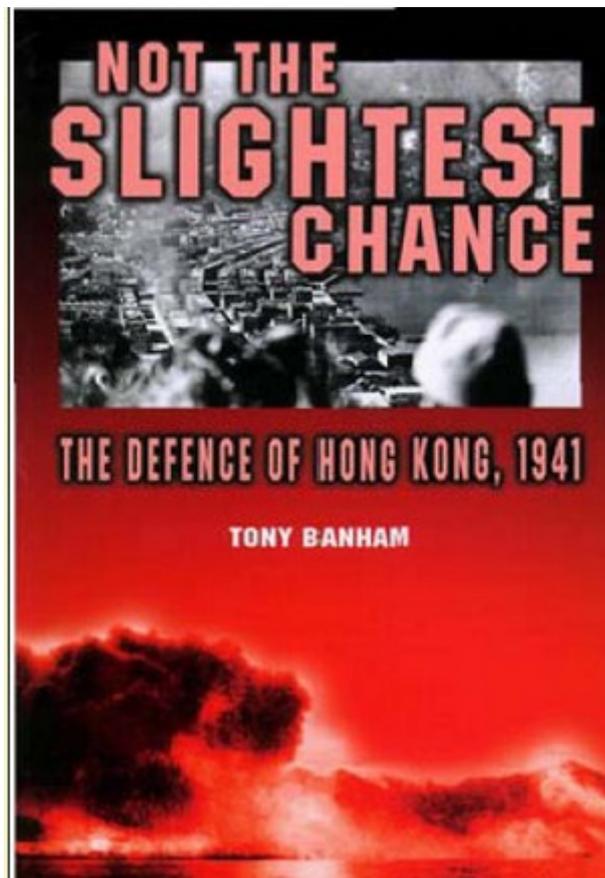
We're not talking a debate on whether it was 3,500 men or 3,480 men or something – a reasonable bit of uncertainty. We're talking completely different numbers. Also I appreciate fog of war or chaos of battle etc. but “missing” is just bizarre. Did they all run away? Were they cremated? Atomised by artillery? What happened? No idea.

They never want to give the context that at the time [the population of Hong Kong](#) was about one and a half million people. [The British had “6 battalions”](#) (page 7) thanks to 2 battalions of Canadian troops arriving prior to the battle. British MOD description of a battalion is 500 to 1,000 soldiers so we're looking at between 3,000 and 6,000 soldiers.

Wikipedia then gives us these figures instead:

Strength	
10,976 ^[5] -14,564 troops ^[6]	26928 troops ^[7]
5 planes	47 planes
1 destroyer	1 cruiser
4 gunboats	3 destroyers
1 minelayer	4 torpedo boats
8 MTBs	3 gunboats

11,000-15,000(?) men versus the Japanese bringing 27,000 men to the fight. So was it 3,000? Or 6,000? Or 15,000? I don't think I'm being dumb here. Wikipedia attributes the higher figure to the London Gazette article which I've already shown is talking about "losing six battalions" when Hong Kong fell i.e. a maximum of 6,000 men. The lower figure of just under 11,000 troops is cited from this book:



Obviously I loathe internet piracy so a warning to readers: please don't go on websites like [Anna's Archive](#) or you might end up with free copies of books. Libgen.is was shut down recently, which is good because publishing houses are very noble and not part of the Elite agenda. It's absolutely terrible that all the books you could get from Libgen are now available through Anna's site. The fiends!

Page 314 of the book gives us these charts:

Table 1. Fatalities listed in the text as December 1941.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	?	Total	
HQ														1					5	2		2											10	
Artillery										4		2		11	5			22	61	24	12	5	6	16	98					3		1	1	271
Engineers									1					1		2	4	12	12	1	1	6	2	2	5	2					2	5	58	
Royal Scots										3	1	29	2		2				23	10	9	9	12	10	1	1	1				2		115	
Middlesex																	1		22	6	1	1	21	22	48	2		1	1			4	130	
Signals																			8	2		1	2		6							1	20	
RAOC															1					2		23	4	3								11	44	
RASC																			4	2	3	8	5		2							13	37	
RAMC															1				13		1	1			2								18	
Volunteers											1				3		1	28	55	2	8	19	9	23	53	2				1			205	
Royal Rifles																		1	16	2	7	18	39	3	26	12	1	1	1				127	
Winnipeg											1								65	18	19	10	5	3	8				1	1			131	
Punjabis									1		5	2						33	5	6	25	1	1	1									80	
Rajputs										2								31	99	2	2	1	2		3						1		143	
Navy									1						1	2			31	2	5	1	5	1	21	1							71	
RAF																			2	5													7	
Police											1	4			2		2	8	22				1	2	3	1				1	1	3	51	
Civilians												7			1	2	2	3	3	3		2	2	2	5			1				9	42	
Nurses															1										3								4	
HKDDC															1		6		2	5	3	1											18	
Merchant N.																	1								1								2	
RAVC																								1										1
HKCR															1						1										2		4	
Total	0	2	4	7	35	19	0	18	14	14	9	140	451	93	94	108	116	89	285	21	2	3	9	2	5	49	1589							

Note that this table does not include the 55 St John's Ambulance personnel who died during the conflict at uncertain dates.

314 APPENDICES

This first chart has the author tallying up all the fatalities he could determine occurred from the anecdotes and records as totalling 1,589 people.

Table 2. From Maltby's Despatch (20)

	Officers				Other Ranks			
	KIA/DOW	Missing	Wounded	Strength	KIA/DOW	Missing	Wounded	Strength
HQ China Command	2	2	3	33				
HQ RA		1		6				
8 Coast Regt. RA			3	19	19	2	23	285
8 CR Indian						1	4	233
12 Coast Regt. RA	1	1	1	16	15	2	24	200
12 CR Indian					3		3	187
5AA Regt. RA		8	1	23	16	11	10	231
5 AA Indian					24	80	15	332
1st HKSRA	3	7	3	24	2	2	10	30
HKSRA Indian					144	45	103	830
965 Def. Bty. RA			1	3	2	4	8	58
965 Indian					2		4	86
22 Field Coy. RE		1		7	8	20	9	213
40 Field Coy. RE	2			7	2	7	1	220
RE Services		1	1	18	2	5	1	54
2 Royal Scots	12	4	11	35	96	45	188	734
1 Middlesex	10	2	4	36	94	25	110	728
Canadian Staff	2	4	3	14	6	10	5	78
Winnipeg	6	8	12	42	28	222	60	869

315 APPENDICES

Table 2 gives more info on the numbers for officers and other ranks.

Table 2. (Continued)

	Officers				Other Ranks			
	KIA/DOW	Missing	Wounded	Strength	KIA/DOW	Missing	Wounded	Strength
Royal Rifles	6	8	4	41	42	157	160	963
5/7 Rajputs	6	4	7	17	150	109	186	875
2/14 Punjabis	3		5	15	52	69	156	932
RIASC							1	13
Royal Signals	1			7	16	5	14	177
RAOC	3	2	1	15	13	26	4	117
RASC	2		3	24	23	10	11	183
RAVC				2	2			3
RAMC	2	1		28	13	3	3	146
Dental Corps				4				6
RAPC				5			2	25
Military Provost						1		3
Military Police								18
Education Corps								8
Mule Corps			1	3	1	5	5	250
IMS/IHC		1		5		2		55
HKVDC	13	6	13	89	196	139	135	1296
TOTAL	74	61	77	538	971	1,007	1,255	10,438

Note: This table combines three separate tables in the original document, and removes the summation error.

Finally we get this on page 316. Table 3 gives us a total of 14,421 people for all the various Allied groups including things like the Dental and Education corps. Incredible that the Japanese were supposed to have only lost 675 troops when they took Hong Kong. Unlikely. He then goes on to express some polite confusion at [Major General Christopher Maltby's](#) numbers:

APPENDIX 6. BRITISH MILITARY LOSSES

Maltby's estimate of 2,113 military dead or missing does not correspond well with the approximately 1,560 listed in this book.

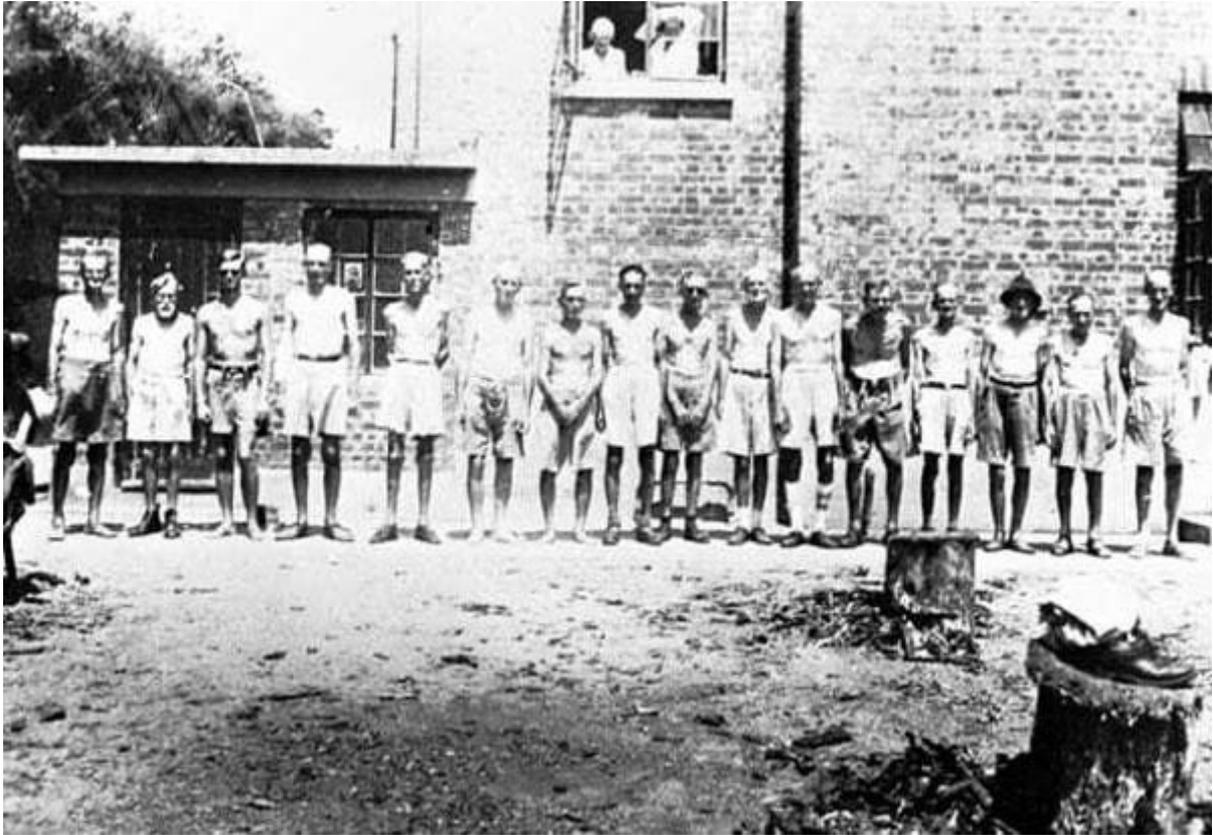
While there may well be some slight errors of omission (particularly in Naval and RAF records, and possibly with the Indian army — especially for the Rajputs, who were overrun so effectively and the majority of whose officers were lost), the biggest single anomaly lies in the fact that Maltby's estimate was made very shortly after the battle. Some of the missing simply had not yet turned up, and the majority of the others were in hospitals. It appears that Maltby did not cross-reference the hospital records, but solely made use of the units' individual records that were prepared at the same time.

Take 22 Fortress Company Engineers as a simple example. Of the 219 officers and men they entered battle with on 8 December, they reported 24 missing. Of these, 5 were actually alive (though 3 died before the war was over). Applying the same rough percentages to the **total** garrison of approximately 12,000, we can estimate that 1,200 would have been listed as missing in total, and of these some 240 and forty would have actually been alive at the surrender.

The War History Division of the Defence Agency of Japan states that the invaders counted 165 bodies on Kowloon side, and 1,555 on the Island. The former is certainly an exaggeration, though the latter is surprisingly accurate.

We might note that Maltby gave a number immediately after the surrender which by pure coincidence contains both 11 and 13.

Anyway, the British surrender then a bunch of westerners get rounded up and put in camps:



“Stanley Internment Camp during Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in WW2” - original [here](#).

Question: why is it that the vast majority of the POW's here are geriatrics? They're not the normal fighting age for soldiers that's for sure. Most of them are, what, at least late 50's? The chap third from the left is wearing sunglasses and has neatly combed hair looking like he's just walked off the beach so I'm unclear why his standard of personal hygiene/dress is so much better than the rest.

I guess they were going for Holocaust-chic with the skinny bodies to shock the casual student of history. If you read the main page on [Stanley Internment Camp](#) you get a different picture. The Japanese were very hands off and let the prisoners get on with it:

*“The camp was under the control of the Japanese Foreign Affairs Department, but according to historian Geoffrey Charles Emerson, **the Japanese forces had not made plans for dealing with enemy civilians in Hong Kong.** As such, the camp was provided with few necessities, and **the internees were left to govern the camp themselves. Committees were formed** for such matters as housing, food, and medical care. The national groups remained mostly independent of each other except for matters of welfare and medical care. Very few government servants were selected to serve on these committees, due to anti-government sentiment; most internees blamed the government for the quick surrender of Hong Kong.*

***The biggest concern was food;** ensuring there was enough food occupied most of the internees' time. Little food was provided by the Japanese authorities, and it was of poor quality – frequently containing dust, mud, rat and cockroach excreta, cigarette ends, and sometimes dead rats. Every day, the internees were served rice congee at 8 am, and meals consisting of rice with stew at both*

11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Additionally, they relied on food mailed from friends or relatives in the city, Red Cross aid, garden-grown vegetables, and bought food from the canteen or the black market.

Another concern was the health and medical care of the internees. Although medical facilities were inadequate, the internees counted amongst them about 40 doctors, two dentists, six pharmacists, 100 trained nurses, and a large number of volunteer auxiliary nurses. Because of this, according to historian G. B. Endacott, no major epidemic occurred. The most common sickness amongst the internees were malaria, malnutrition and its associated diseases, beriberi, and pellagra. The shortage of medical supplies and equipment posed a challenge for those in charge of medical care, with the lack of soap and disinfectant being a particularly troublesome concern.

*The women and children contributed to a sense of normality as their presence provided conventional social, family, and gender relations. The internees believed the children's presence made them less selfish, as it forced them to think of the latter's welfare. **The women organised Christmas and birthday celebrations. Other diversions such as musicals, plays, recitals, and variety shows were also staged.** Although the camp lacked books and educational supplies, the teachers and educational administrators amongst the internees were able to provide lessons for the children at the primary and secondary levels. Additionally, extensive educational opportunities were available for the adults: language courses for Chinese, Malay, and French, and also lectures on photography, yachting, journalism, and poultry-keeping."*

I'm not saying I would want to be kept in a Japanese internment camp, but I think it's reasonable to say the prisoners at Stanley were not having the worst time of things, comparatively. Having to eat congee for breakfast every day is a form of torture though, to be fair.

[North Point Internment Camp](#) doesn't even have a memorial, which I think is strange. No-one commemorates their relatives who died here?

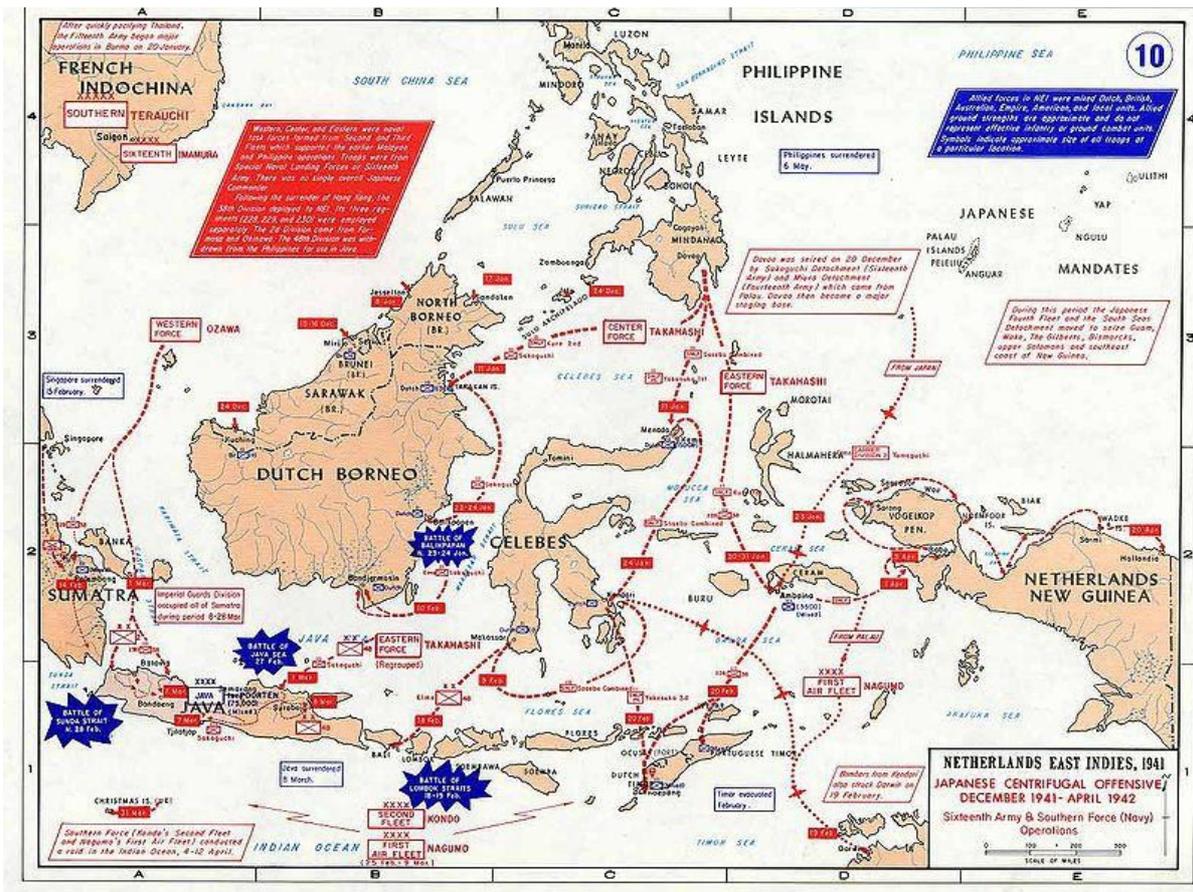
[Sham Sui Po Barracks](#) at least has a plaque. The original site was bulldozed and turned into housing.

[Argyle Street Camp](#) was scrapped mid-war and has no memorial.

[Ma Tau Chung Camp](#) was closed mid-war and the Indian prisoners shipped to Argyle Street... which was also closed mid-war... so then they all presumably got shunted to either Sham Sui Po or Stanley. Stanley meanwhile was repatriating the "prisoners" on ships back West so again we're not exactly looking at a death camp here, it's weird to think of a POW camp that pops the prisoners on a ship home while the war still rages.

I'll leave Hong Kong there for now – if you're outraged that I didn't cover some aspect of the invasion in particular then by all means write in. Again, fake event, scripted defeat, swap the troops patrolling the streets for a different coloured hat and on it goes.

Now we're going to have a quick look at the Dutch East Indies.



The technical overview of the strategy here is “we ran away slowly while getting shot and eventually got caught in Java”.

With the [Dutch East Indies Campaign](#) we get the usual mix of fan fiction, Japanese elites walking away scot-free, Terrible Naval Photography and some good old fashioned Atrocity Propaganda to round it off. Again, forgive me, not full blow-by-blow we'd be here for hours.

You might think the rag-tag underdog ABDACOM fleet might make good use the vast coastline of the region – the secluded bays, jungle nooks and so on – to a) evade the Japanese for years and b) launch a series of crafty guerilla ambushes. Failing that they would have all escaped to northern Australia to have a cigarette and a nap. Instead the bulk of the land forces get arrested by the Japanese on the spot and the fleet, based out of Java, gets bombed by Japanese aircraft.

The Dutch East Indies was the epicentre of Japan's oil grab:

“The East Indies was one of Japan's primary targets if and when it went to war because the colony possessed abundant valuable resources, the most important of which were its rubber plantations and oil fields; the colony was the fourth-largest exporter of oil in the world, behind the U.S., Iran, and Romania. The oil made the islands enormously important to the Japanese, so they sought to secure the supply for themselves.”

Oil was the whole point of the war. It was literally what the Japanese were after, to keep the Empire going:

“Access to oil was the main goal of the Japanese war effort, as Japan has no native source of oil; it could not even produce enough to meet even 10% of its needs, even with the extraction of oil shale in Manchuria using the Fushun process. Japan quickly lost 93 percent of its oil supply after

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order on 26 July 1941 which froze all of Japan's U.S. assets and embargoed all oil exports to Japan.”

The Japanese also decimated the Allied forces when they invaded:

Strength	
148,000 ^[2]	52 warships ^{[7][8]}
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100,000 local forces^[3] • 40,000 Dutch regulars^[3] • 8,000 Anglo-American regulars^[4] 	18 submarines ^[6]
33 warships ^[5]	107,800 personnel
41 submarines ^[8]	193 tanks & tankettes
234 aircraft ^[3]	2,017 guns & mortars
	5,898 motor vehicles
	11,750 horses
	609 aircraft ^[9]
Casualties and losses	
2,384 killed	671 killed ^[12]
100,000+ captured ^[10]	
24 Allied ships sunk (9 American, 9 Dutch, 5 British, 1 Australian):	
1 seaplane tender	
2 heavy cruisers	
3 light cruisers	
1 coastal defense ship	
15 destroyers	
1 oil tanker	
1 gunboat	
5,000-10,000 sailors and Marines killed on the sunken ships	
thousands of sailors and Marines captured ^[11]	

671 killed after attacking 150,000 men. Incredible. Those ninjas again. Or Iron Man suits. 100,000 captured links to [this article](#) which clarifies it's referring to 100,000 native tribesmen. No proof/citation of that, just a bold claim:

“On March 9 the last Allied ground and air forces in the Netherlands Indies, almost 100,000 men (mostly native troops, but including one U.S. National Guard field artillery battalion on Java) surrendered to the invaders.”

So yeah... I'm sure they had 100,000 tribesmen running around in formation drills with rifles. Credible. Sure. But anyway, this is the canon narrative – super important location, big number of POW's, rag tag fleet getting wiped out slowly. Despite this nobody gave a fig:

“Allied forces did not attempt to retake the islands of Java, Sumatra, Timor, or Bali during the war.”

Big oof. What, they just left the POWs there? That's cold. They didn't even prioritise shutting down the oil extraction, eh? Weird. Well anyway, I'll bet those crazy Japanese fought to the last man, right? Or if there were any who surrendered they would all be tried and imprisoned/executed? Nah:

*“Japanese forces on those islands **surrendered** at the conclusion of World War II. **Most of the Japanese military personnel and civilian colonial administrators were repatriated** to Japan following the war, **except for several hundred** who were detained for investigations of war crimes, for which **some were later put on trial**. About 1,000 Japanese soldiers deserted from their units and **assimilated** into local communities. **Many of these soldiers provided assistance to Indonesian Republican forces during the Indonesian National Revolution.**”*

So if anyone cares, that's the start of a thread to pull: Indonesian National Revolution, pre-seeded with helpful military personnel from the Japanese Army. Just saying. Shall we take a look at the bad guys roster and their outcomes?

Commanders and leaders	
 Archibald Wavell	 Hisaichi Terauchi
 A. T. van S. Stachouwer 	 Kiyotake Kawaguchi
 Hein ter Poorten 	 Ibō Takahashi
 Thomas C. Hart	 Hitoshi Imamura
 Conrad Helfrich	 Shōji Nishimura
 Karel Doorman †	 Jisaburō Ozawa
 Richard Peirse	 Takeo Takagi
 George Brett	 Nobutake Kondō

Count [Hisaichi Terauchi](#) was the commander of the Japanese forces. As per his bio page he loafed around during the war and exited scene left via a conveniently timed stroke:

*“Terauchi thought the army should stay out of politics, by which he probably meant that the politicians should keep their hands off the army. In other respects he was a typically ruthless Japanese Army officer. Neither the Americans nor his own peers thought much of him, but his staff were impressed by the fact that such a wealthy man chose to live so frugally. Yamashita felt otherwise, **writing in his diary that "... that damn Terauchi lives in luxury in Saigon, sleeps in a comfortable bed, eats good food and plays shogi"**. Yamashita added that: ‘If there are two ways of doing something, trust Southern Army to pick the wrong one.’*

*When told that Terauchi was in too poor health to attend the surrender ceremony at Singapore, Mountbatten sent his own doctor to examine Terauchi. The doctor confirmed his fragile health, and Mountbatten had him transferred to a bungalow in Malaya in March 1946. On **11** June 1946, Terauchi became **angered by a report of a Kempeitai lieutenant colonel who had threatened to disclose Japanese war crimes to the Allies, and he suffered a second massive stroke and died early the next morning**. As a consequence, **he never stood trial for war crimes**, such as his responsibility for mistreatment of labourers on the Burma-Siam Railroad and his order that all Allied prisoners of war in his command area were to be massacred if Japan was invaded.”*

To clarify, he goes “ooh I'm feeling ill”, Mountbatten goes “Fair play old chap sleep in my bungalow over here instead” and then before trial he “dies” and that's the last we see of him. So he definitely died and totally did not live out his retirement somewhere.

General [Kiyotake Kawaguchi](#) is next, we saw him before in Guadalcanal. His bio ending simply gets the stub note of: *“Kawaguchi was relegated to the reserve list in 1943. After recovering from a*

long illness, he was placed in command of the defences of Tsushima Island in March 1945. Kawaguchi died in Japan in 1961.”

So no arrest / trial / punishment then.

Admiral [Ibo Takahashi](#) at least got arrested: “On 2 December 1945, in Tokyo, he was accused of war crimes and arrested by the American occupation forces.” They have him die at the rather young age of 58, on the date of March 18, 1947.

[Hitoshi Imamura](#) we’ve seen before (the shark cage guy) who for being an evil war criminal was sentenced to ten years in prison(!) but only served seven. He then goes and builds a scale model of the prison in his back garden and sits in it voluntarily for the rest of his days because he’s so guilty: “he had a copy of the prison built in his garden and stayed there until his death”.

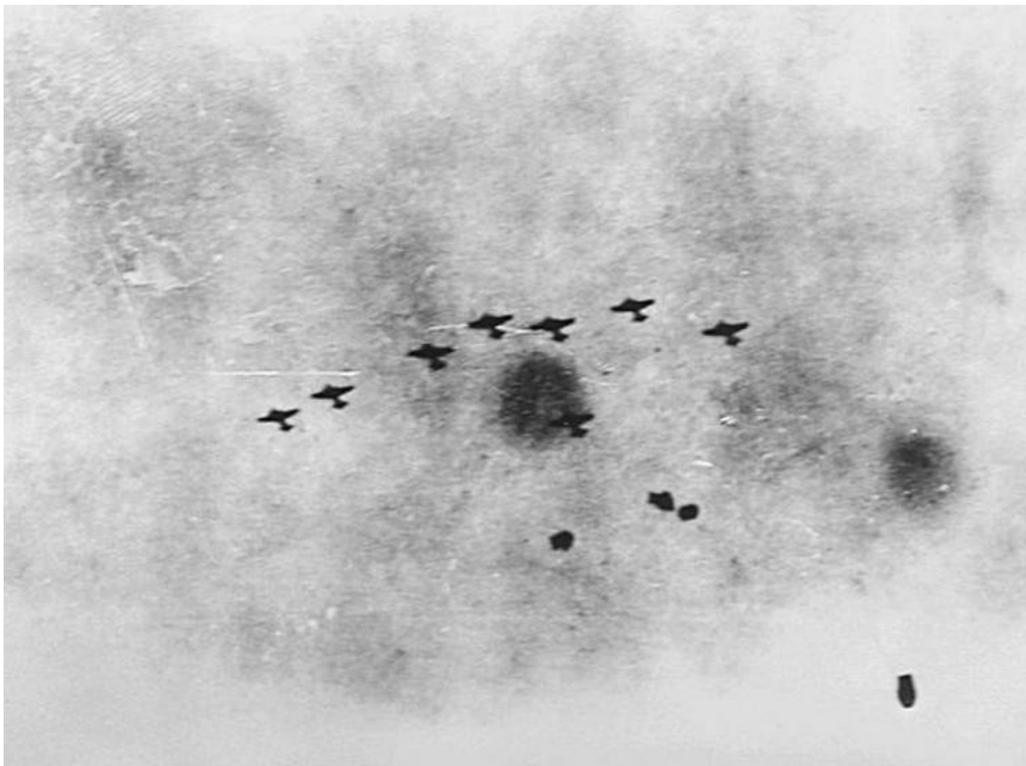
[Shoji Nishimura](#) goes down with the ship at Leyte Gulf but we’ll get to that.

[Jisaburo Ozawa](#) is the giant (for Japanese, i.e. well over 6 feet so I assume he’s mixed race) whose stub note of an article says nothing about trial or punishment. The guy lives until 1966 supposedly so again, no execution.

[Takeo Takagi](#) we covered back in Saipan (Bond villain escape submarine).

And finally that brings us to [Nobutake Kondo](#) who we’ve again seen before, lived for years after the war and has nothing on his bio to mention even temporary inconvenience by the American military / justice system.

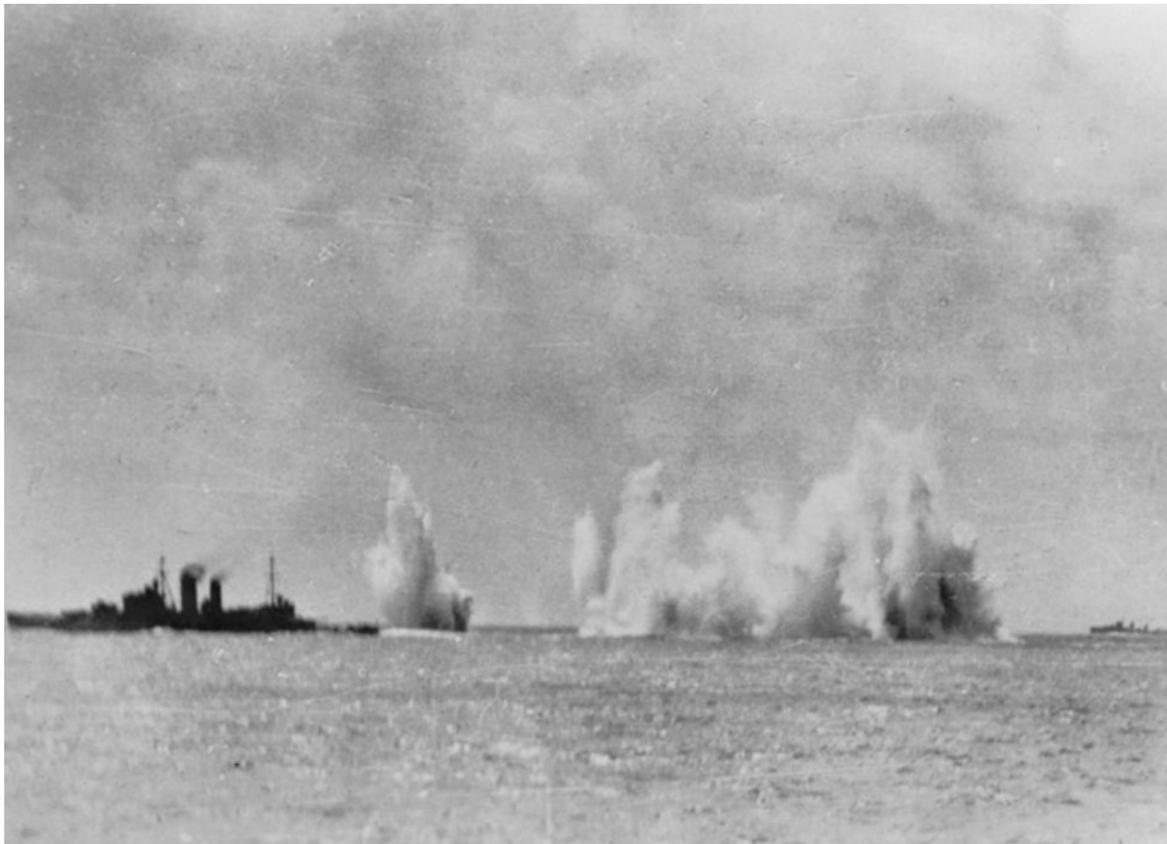
What else is there to say? Loads of things, as always, but I’ll just pick a few: we have the obligatory Terrible Naval Photography with the [Battle of the Java Sea](#) where we get this:



“A formation of Japanese twin engined land based bombers taking anti-aircraft fire whilst attacking ships in the Java Sea on 15 February 1942; seen from the Australian cruiser HMAS Hobart.” - original [here](#).

Drawn on in felt tip pen.

Or this:



“Cruiser Exeter under air attack by B5N aircraft in the Gaspar Strait, 15 Feb 1942; note bombs falling astern of the cruiser.” - original [here](#).

Love the cheap insert water plumes.

Or this:



“HMS Exeter sinking south of Borneo, Dutch East Indies, 1 Mar 1942” – original [here](#).

I don't really need to comment on any of this in depth, right? Speaks for itself. Also presented without comment is this quote from the [Battle of the Java Sea](#) article:

*“As of 2002 the location of the wreck of only one of the **eight** ships sunk during the two so-called Java Sea Battles, HMS Jupiter, was known and plotted on an Admiralty chart. However, given her location in very shallow water so close to shore she had already been heavily salvaged.*

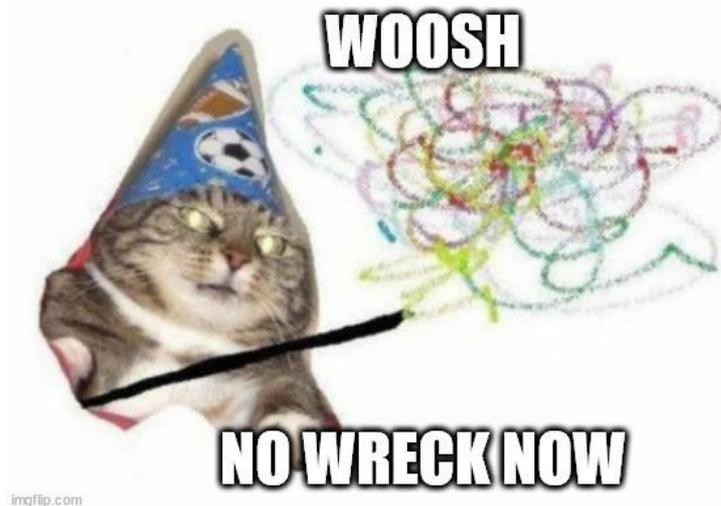
In December 2002 the wrecks of HNLMS Java and HNLMS De Ruyter were discovered by a specialist wreck diving group aboard the dive vessel MV Empress. Empress then went on to discover the wrecks of HMS Electra in August 2003; HNLMS Kortenaer in August 2004; and HMS Exeter and HMS Encounter in February 2007. When discovered these wrecks were all in a very well-preserved state, save for battle damage. In late 2008, Empress discovered remnants of the last wreck, USS Pope, which had already been largely removed by illegal salvage diving operations. Although the MV Empress team kept the locations of their discoveries secret, by 2017 all eight ships had been reduced to remnants or even entirely removed by illegal commercial salvage operations.”

Swiftly following that quote with this one from the [Second Battle of the Java Sea](#):

“The wrecks of HMS Exeter and HMS Encounter were discovered by explorers – who had been looking for the wrecks for five years – in February 2007 only several miles apart, 90 miles (140 km) north-west of Bawean Island, 60 miles (97 km) from Exeter's captain's (Oliver Gordon) estimated sinking position, at a depth of approximately 60 m (200 ft). The remains of the wreck of USS Pope was discovered in late 2008, but was found to have already been heavily salvaged.

In November 2016, a diving expedition discovered that the wrecks of HMS Exeter and HMS Encounter were missing from the ocean floor. The Guardian newspaper subsequently reported that the wrecks of HMS Exeter, HMS Encounter, and part of HMS Electra, as well as the submarine USS Perch were missing and presumed illegally scavenged. Commenting on their removal, one of the men involved in their original discovery is stunned at the magnitude of the salvaging that appears to have taken place.[13]”

All gone.



Pesky wreck thieves. Footnote 13, obviously.

You get the usual stuff in the [Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies](#) article about massive loss of life, literally millions of people starved, worked to death or shot:

“The Dutch surrendered on 8 March. Initially, most Indonesians welcomed the Japanese as liberators from their Dutch colonial masters. The sentiment changed, however, as between 4 and 10 million Indonesians were recruited as forced labourers (romusha) on economic development and defense projects in Java. Between 200,000 and half a million were sent away from Java to the outer islands, and as far as Burma and Siam. Of those taken off Java, not more than 70,000 survived the war. Four million people died in the Dutch East Indies as a result of famine and forced labour during the Japanese occupation, including 30,000 European civilian internee deaths.

In 1944–1945, Allied troops largely bypassed the Dutch East Indies and did not fight their way into the most populous parts such as Java and Sumatra. As such, most of the Dutch East Indies was still under occupation at the time of Japan's surrender in August 1945.”

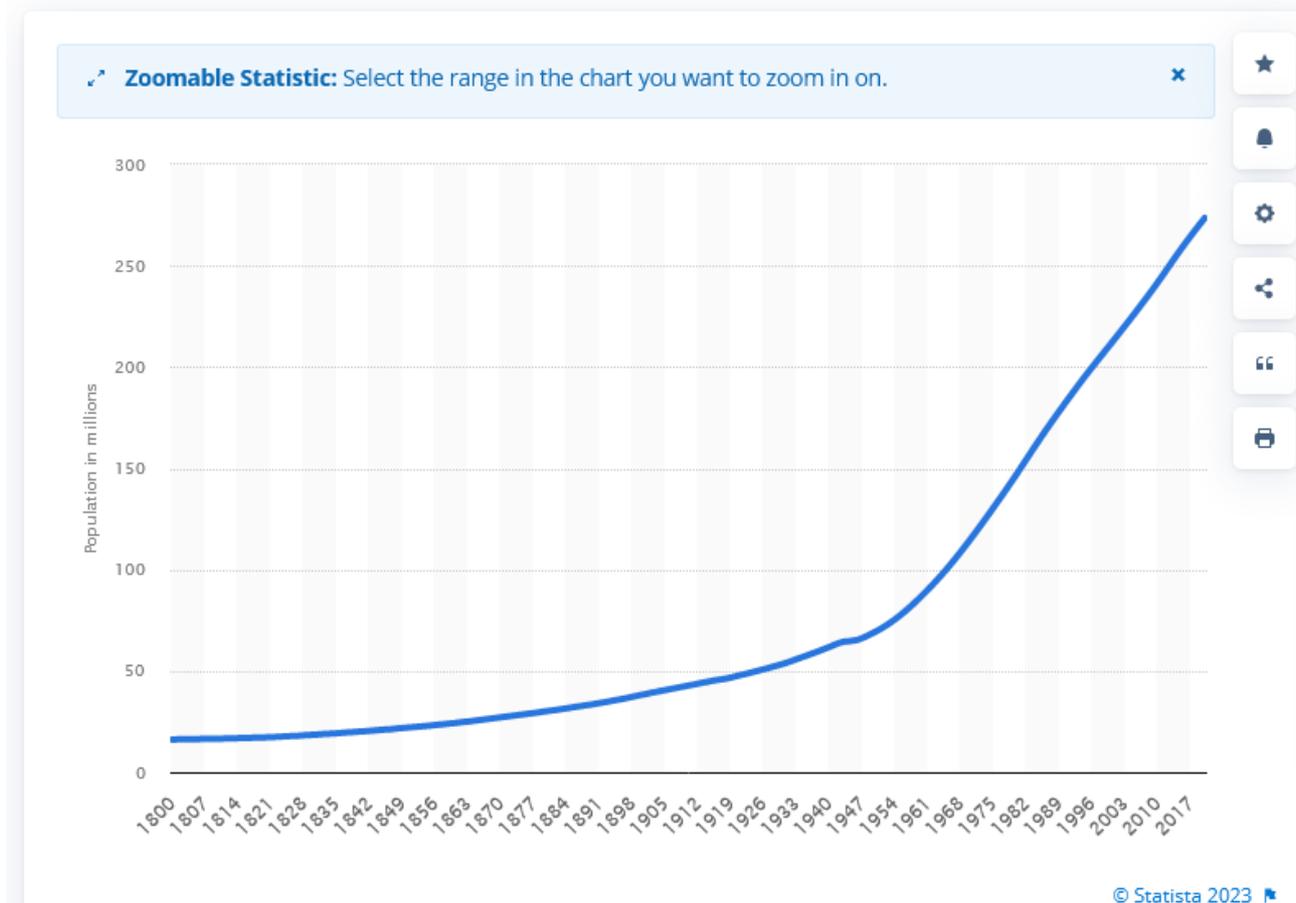
Incredible. Apocalyptic. We read on:

“Expecting that Dutch administrators would be kept by the Japanese to run the colony, most Dutch had refused to leave. Instead, they were sent to detention camps and Japanese or Indonesian replacements were installed in senior and technical positions. Japanese troops took control of government infrastructure and services such as ports and postal services. In addition to the 100,000 European (and some Chinese) civilians interned, 80,000 Dutch, British, Australian, and US Allied troops went to prisoner-of-war camps where the death rates were between 13 and 30 percent.”

So at least 23,000 Allied dead, or possibly as many as 54,000. You'd think the Americans might have swooped in to save them. Or the Australians. Shame that. Also millions of Dutch East Indies natives (Indonesians) wiped out, that must have put a dent in the birth rates. Impressively villainous stuff, Japan. Why do we see this, then?:

Population of Indonesia from 1800 to 2020

(in millions)



You can see the chart yourself [here](#). This tells us that Indonesia has a population of 61.8 million people as of 1940, i.e. pre-invasion. We then have these numbers:

1941 – 62.8
1942 – 63.7
1943 – 64.4
1944 – 64.6
1945 – 64.9
1946 – 65.3

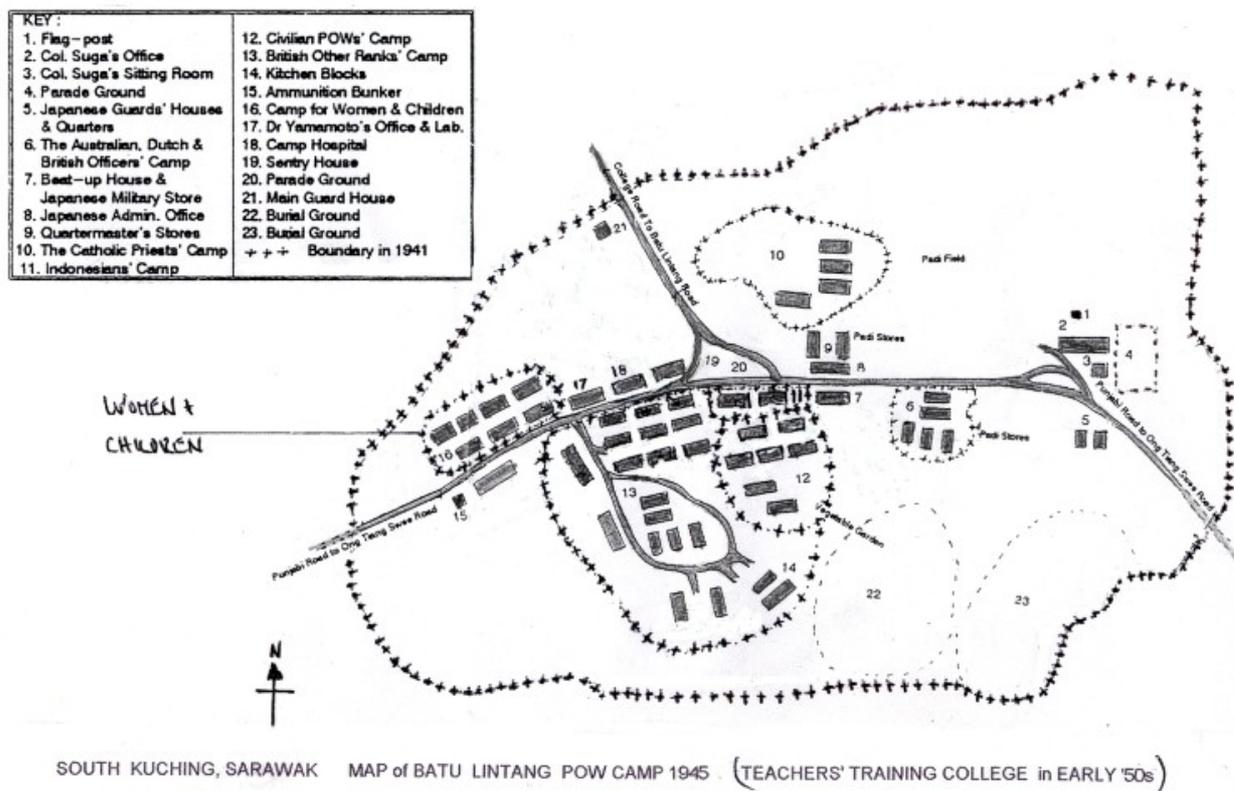
So... yeah... they lost over 4 million people... except they didn't... the population increased year on year... it kind of slowed a bit under occupation... in a remote, third-world tropical archipelago without great infrastructure or sanitation. During a famine.

As usual, nobody expected the Corpse Math to be challenged.

The Allied forces (Dutch, mostly) hiding out down in Java eventually get steamrolled after the very genuine naval battles of the Java Sea we've seen above and [surrender](#). It's unclear why in the

face of the Japanese invasion the Allies didn't base themselves out of... Australia, directly south of the battle zone. Quite a lot of room in Australia. Ports too. Supplies. Medical aid. The sort of thing you might think they'd seek out. I hear Darwin was supposed to be an important place.

A bunch of Allied folk were kept in [Batu Lintang Camp](#).



Original [here](#), from the entries on [captive Ms. Baldwin](#), of the POW camp.

“Batu Lintang camp (also known as Lintang Barracks and Kuching POW camp) at Kuching, Sarawak on the island of Borneo was a Japanese internment camp during the Second World War. It was unusual in that it housed both Allied prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees. The camp, which operated from March 1942 until the liberation of the camp in September 1945, was housed in buildings that were originally British Indian Army barracks. The original area was extended by the Japanese, until it covered about 50 acres (20 hectares). The camp population fluctuated, due to movement of prisoners between camps in Borneo, and as a result of the deaths of the prisoners. It had a maximum population of some 3,000 prisoners.”

If you're interested [the article on Wikipedia](#) is worth a read.

“The entire camp was surrounded by an 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) perimeter barbed wire fence. The internees were segregated into categories and assigned separate compounds, each of which was also surrounded by barbed wire fencing. There were 8–10 compounds, although their make-up varied through the period of operation of the camp. The make-up was determined by the arrival and departure of different groups of prisoners as Batu Lintang camp was also used as a transit camp: at one point some of the Australian and British soldiers who were later to die on the Sandakan Death Marches were held at the camp. Contact between the inhabitants of the different compounds was forbidden and transgressors were severely punished.”

There were soldiers, women, children and even priests at the camp.



“Priests waiting to welcome the liberating forces, 11 September 1945” - original [here](#).

9/11, eh? You can see how they’re visibly near death from starvation and with no access to sanitation for months.

There were young boys at the camp but we can’t possibly remember how many there were:

*“Accounts mention a British civilian internee named **Don Tuxford** whose **eight**-year-old son was in the compound with him, while Tuxford's wife and daughter Julia were in the women's compound; other sources state that Dutch boys over the age of ten were sent to the men's compound rather than being placed with the women, as the Japanese considered them men at that age. **The total number of male children held in the men's camp is uncertain.**”*

Donald Tuxford is such a fake name it glows off the page at me. That’s when you have an American who’s never been to England trying to make up a British name and they pick the most ridiculous combination of sounds possible. Tuppy Chortleton, Marmadumpling Poundsbury, etc.

The women, nuns and female children were kept together. It was very crowded but no children died during their imprisonment and they received regular education from the nuns:

*“**In March 1944, the women’s compound comprised 280 people: 160 nuns, 85 secular women and 34 children. By September 1944 the population had declined to 271; at liberation there were 237 women and children in the compound. Of the nuns, the large majority were Dutch Roman Catholic sisters, with a few English sisters. Initially there were 29 children in the compound, but by April 1943 there were 34. The oldest of these was seven when she entered the camp. None of the children died in the camp; the women often went without provisions to ensure the children's***

survival. A Roman Catholic priest from the nearby priests' compound came to the women's compound daily at 7am to say mass, and **the children were taught by the nuns.**”

The officers and NCO's had a considerable amount of space, including land for growing food:

“This was described as **“perhaps the most commodious”** compound, with a fair amount of workable land. At first the officers were with the British other ranks, but they were separated out into this compound on 5 February 1943. Including the three huts, **the compound was 2½ acres (1 ha) in area with 1½ acres (0.6 ha) of cultivable land.** The Officer in Charge and overall British Military Authority was **Lt.-Col. M. C. Russell**, until his death on 5 June 1943; Lt.-Col T. C. Whimster took over the role thereafter. The compound held 134 men in September 1944.”

A Russell, of course. Every paper needs at least one.

The [work section](#) of the article explains how the internees did a variety of tasks:

“Work included wood-gathering parties, latrine duties, working as cookhouse staff and medical orderlies.”

And:

“POWs and male civilian internees were forced to work **as stevedores and in timber yards** at Kuching harbour on the Sarawak River and from October 1942, on the extension of the two runways at the Batu Tujoh landing ground to the south of Kuching, where a small sub-camp was constructed. Another sub-camp was made at Dahan, where the Japanese re-opened **an old mercury mine**, and used POWs to **construct access roads.**”

And:

“Other forced labour included **refuelling the Zero fighters** that used the runways; however, this happened only once as the men sabotaged the operation by adding urine and water to the fuel.”

From gathering firewood to mining to building roads and refuelling aircraft, they did a lot. The Japanese paid them in camp currency (like [Disney Dollars](#)) to buy food at the canteen and suchlike. They say they were all on starvation rations, of course.



*“After liberation, ex-POWs throw away **the pig trough** in which the daily ration of boiled rice for 1200 men was served. The ration only half filled the trough, and was mixed with sweet potato tops.” - original [here](#).*

Why are the faces of these men all very similar? From the left side number 2 and 3 have the same smile and nose. The hat of 4 is either enormous or pasted on at the wrong scale given how it dwarfs his head. 2, 3, 5 & 6 all appear to have the same forehead, nose and brow. The villainous Japanese giving them rice out of a pig trough makes little sense to me – there’s a canteen area and huts and a medical centre. Just plate it up normally. Is it to be spiteful? If you hate them so much why not just have them shot, why keep them prisoner at all? If it’s “for labour” then why keep the priests, nuns, women and children alive? They’re not doing anything useful. Why is the trough scrubbed spotlessly clean? There’s nothing in it, that’s dry wood. You’d think it would be stained or damp from having loads of boiled rice dumped in it every day.

*“Rations were always meagre but decreased in both quantity and quality as the war progressed. The women and children drew the same rations as the men. The Japanese controlled all food supplies, releasing only what was needed for the day. **At the beginning, the rations comprised rice and local vegetables (such as kangkung), with every 10 days or so some pork (such as offal, or a head, or some poor-meat bearing part of the animal).** The daily rice ration in late 1943 was **11** ounces (312 grams) a day; by the end of the war the rice ration was about 4 ounces (**113 grams**) per man daily. In September 1944, children were recorded as receiving 50 millilitres (**1.8** imp fl oz; 1.7 US fl oz) of milk a day.”*

Again if you want them for labour, why not feed them properly? If you can’t feed them, why keep the women and children around? I’m no expert in diet/nutrition but I’m sceptical how useful a grown man would be for manual labour after months in a tropical climate eating 100 grams of rice a day. That’s nothing. They’d have no muscle mass.

“A black market emerged in which the main merchants were a Dutch-Indonesian couple, who obtained goods from a Japanese guard and sold them for a profit to those with cash or tradable goods.”

A lot of tradeable goods in a death camp. Wristwatches, Nintendo game systems, gold coins.

*“At the times of greatest hardship the internees were so hungry that **they were reduced to eating snakes, rubber nuts (which were believed to be poisonous), snails and frogs, and rats, cats and dogs if they could be caught.** On special occasions an extra ration would be introduced. In the British POW compounds 58 chickens were provided for 1,000 men for Christmas 1942; the next Christmas the women received a single turkey to share between 271 women and children. **At Christmas 1944, their last in captivity, the internees received a single egg each.**”*

Poor cats. The writer was laying it on a bit thick at this point.

*“Only one Red Cross supply of parcels was received by the prisoners between March 1942 and September 1945. This arrived in March 1944 and worked out at one sixth of a parcel per person: a single tin of food. **Prisoners occasionally were able to buy or barter chicks** which they raised on worms and beetles and rice sweepings from the quartermaster's store floor (other edible food scraps being too precious to use). Those which were female provided much-needed eggs.”*

Again it’s a case of “either kill them or feed them properly”. Everyone would have been semi-conscious, sprawled around with heatstroke and malnutrition. In the heat as well, all these people would have needed gallons and gallons of clean water daily or they’d be dead.

*“Little medicine was available to the internees from the Japanese: they provided small amounts of quinine and aspirins. **Morris recounts how [Lestrade: the camp Doctor] Yamamoto would quite often beat sick men until they fell down, especially if they approached him for drugs.** Few Red Cross supplies were available and most medication was bought or bartered from the outside world or from the guards themselves. No anaesthesia was available for operations. **The main source of medical supplies in early 1943 was a pro-Allied ethnic Chinese family who lived nearby and were assisting in the provision of materials for the construction of a radio.**”*

Again, what’s the point? You have a doctor in the camp but if anyone approaches him looking for aid he just beats them unconscious? Why? Just mean I guess. Remember that 8 km fence? Yeah, doesn’t stop them going on day trips to visit a Chinese family who trade with them and provide radio parts.

It goes on to talk about rampant [disease](#), [malnutrition](#) causing people’s eyesight to fail and the lack of resupply meaning that people’s clothes literally fell apart over time and led to people wandering around [in loincloth](#). Despite this (and endless beatings) an underground trade network flourished:

*“Prisoners were able to buy a small range of provisions from their captors at Japanese prices, which escalated as the war went on. Black marketeering was sometimes tolerated by the guards, as they themselves were involved in the buying or exchanging of goods, and at other times punished severely. **Although contact with the outside world was forbidden, there were plenty of opportunities to communicate with the locals.** Firewood-gathering gangs in the jungle were able to make **contact and arrange purchases** when the guards were not paying attention; at other times these transactions were permitted with the permission of and in the presence of a lenient Japanese guard. **Gold, in the form of rings and jewellery, and British pounds were in demand by the Japanese guards.** Such was the desperation of the prisoners towards the end of their internment that two soldiers disinterred a recently buried body in order to retrieve the dead man's wedding ring.*

*Smuggling became an integral part of camp life, and despite frequent searches, **foodstuffs in particular were smuggled into the camp (for example, dried fish was nailed to the underside of wooden bins, and the inside of a hat was a favourite hiding place).** Occasional dangerous night-time forays to outside the camp netted foodstuffs such as a chicken or eggs or fruit. The Japanese currency (the "camp dollars") was used by the prisoners illicitly to purchase supplies from the locals.”*

Just take a step back and see it for what it is: this is prose. Badly thought out fiction, given that we’ve got an inherent contradiction between a death camp surrounded by barbed wire where even the camp doctor cracks your skull if you speak to him and people are walking around in rags and eating a single egg for Christmas... yet on the other hand they’re walking out into the local villages to buy produce and wearing gold jewellery and flashing pound notes.

Again, worth a read in full if you have the time, I don’t want to get too sidetracked. I especially enjoyed the *Ocean’s Eleven*-style section on how they used a cat-burglar to source parts for [first a radio and later an entire power generator](#) to allow them to listen to the news and have a morale-boosting gossip around the camp. It’s all ludicrous and quite funny when you realise it’s not a real event, just a story.

You then get a lot of talk about the [Death Orders](#). Allegedly the Japanese had Super Secret Evil Orders that they needed to kill every single person in their POW camps before they could be freed.

*“Official orders to execute all the prisoners, both POWs and civilian, on 17 or **18 August** 1945 were found in Suga's quarters after the liberation of the camp. The orders were not carried out, presumably as a result of the unconditional surrender of Japan on 15 August. A "death march", similar to those at Sandakan and elsewhere, was to have been undertaken by those male prisoners physically able to undertake it; other prisoners were to be executed by various methods in the camp:*

- 1 All POWs and male internees to be marched to a camp at milestone 21 and bayoneted there*
- 2 All sick unable to walk to be treated similarly in the Square at Kuching [in the square at the camp rather than in Kuching town]*
- 3 All women and children to be burnt in their barracks*

Revised orders for the execution on 15 September 1945 of all the internees were also found, this time in the Administration Office at Batu Lintang:

- Group 1 Women internees, children and nuns – to be given poisoned rice*
- Group 2 Internee men and Catholic Fathers to be shot and burnt*
- Group 3 POWs to be marched into the jungle, shot and burnt*
- Group 4 Sick and weak left at Batu Lintang main camp to be bayoneted and the entire camp to be destroyed by fire*

*The camp was liberated on **11 September** 1945, four days before the revised proposed execution date of over 2,000 men, women and children.”*

“Suga” is Lieutenant-Colonel [Tatsuji Suga](#) who can be seen here at the camp liberation. Very interesting photo if you look at the expressions and generally casual demeanour of everyone:



Looks like everyone's in on a big joke to me. Original [here](#).

We learn that he was actually very sad at this point as he thought his family was dead from the Hiroshima bombing and committed suicide six days after this photo was taken.

*“The following day Suga, together with several of his officers were **flown to the Australian base on Labuan**, to await their trials as war criminals. **Suga died by suicide there on 16 September**. Other officers were later tried, found guilty and executed. Southwell wrote: Now, with the end of the war, he awaited a military tribunal. His country had been destroyed; his army defeated; his family lost. And, apart from the despair in his heart, the bushido tradition, the code of the Japanese warrior, had deep roots. The fateful day came on September 16th, one week before his 60th birthday, traditionally a time when a family would gather round in celebration. Colonel Tatsuji Suga believed he had no-one to gather around; and he had no desire to see that day alone.”*

Translation: the Allied military flew him out of the area and he was never seen again.

*“As Commander of all POW and civilian internee camps, Suga was legally responsible for the many atrocities that took place in these camps, **including the Sandakan Death Marches**. **As the war closed, Suga was given multiple orders to execute all prisoners within the camp, orders which he failed to carry out.**”*

He was pure evil you see, except he refused the Death Orders because he was actually nice. Then he felt guilty for being pure evil and offed himself after posing for a jovial picture.

Wikipedia heavily leans on a specific text for the camp article (which I cannot, annoyingly, get a copy of at this time): “Ooi, Keat Gin (1998) *Japanese Empire in the Tropics: Selected Documents and Reports of the Japanese Period in Sarawak, Northwest Borneo, 1941–1945* Ohio University Center for International Studies, Monographs in International Studies, SE Asia Series 101 (2 vols) ISBN 0-89680-199-3”. The description in the references section says the text “Contains many accounts by British POWs and civilian internees”. I would bet money it's going to be another joke of a pamphlet containing hearsay statements that contradict each other, as we saw with things like [“The Knights of Bushido”](#) by Lord Russell.

Rummaging around a bit online I found the “evidence” for the Death Order claim. It's a translation of a copy of the orders from a Japanese base in Taiwan at the end of the war. You can read it [here](#). It says this is an *accurate translation* by someone called Stephen H. Green. No idea who that is, but [the name recalls the millionaire Jew who owns various British clothing chain stores](#). We're told that ALL the camps had this “Death Order” sent out.

You can also read the translation [here](#) and see a photograph of the “original” document. This second link is interesting as the description reads it was seen by Allied POW's – “our men saw posted in their camps” - so... what... it's a secret kill order that the Japanese make photocopies of and staple on the side of prisoners huts? For everyone to see and read?

The funny thing is the translation doesn't even say what they tell you it says. Have a look: it's a general order that in the event the guards are going to lose control of a facility to the point that the prisoners are going to escape, arm themselves and form a guerilla army to kill the Japanese personnel occupying an area then the camp commander is justified in ordering the liquidation of the prisoners. Brutal, but logical. It's also not the same thing as what they're being accused of. This isn't saying “ooh we're really really evil and we won't let anyone survive our doom camps”.

Batu Lintang camp is later converted into a teacher training school (which feels weird, can you imagine if Auschwitz got reused as a school?) and the bodies were interred in the [Labuan War Cemetary](#). The article for this notes it contains all the bodies recovered from Batu Lintang and the Sandakan Death Marches... the combination of which gives us 1,752 people (as that's the total number of bodies interred here from the World War 2 conflict).

Location	 5.2870°N 115.2619°E Labuan, Malaysia
Total burials	3,908
Unknowns	2,156
Burials by nation	
Specific figures are not available	
Burials by war	
World War II: 1,752	

Note 2,156 unknowns. Potentially, everyone buried from World War 2 would fall under that. The cemetery neatly leads us over to the other major atrocity of the Dutch East Indies Campaign – the Sandakan Death Marches.

The [Sandakan Death Marches](#) were:

*“...a series of forced marches in Borneo from Sandakan to Ranau **which resulted in the deaths of 2,434 Allied prisoners of war held captive by the Empire of Japan during the Pacific campaign of World War II at the Sandakan POW Camp, North Borneo. By the end of the war, of all the prisoners who had been incarcerated at Sandakan and Ranau, only six Australians survived, all of whom had escaped. It is widely considered to be the single worst atrocity suffered by Australian servicemen during the Second World War.**”*

The idea is that when Singapore fell a bunch of mostly Australian and some British prisoners were shipped to north-east Borneo to build an airfield or something. Quite why the Japanese needed an airfield in Borneo I don't know. Or why they needed white labourers when they had a) their own engineers capable of building multi-storey underground bases out of solid rock for thousands of troops and b) a seemingly endless supply of compliant Korean labourers. Anyway, they had a bunch of lads imprisoned and it's all very brutal and tragic were it real and not fan-fiction from the ONI.

The tale continues: when the Japanese got wind of potentially losing the war they decide to kill the captives. That dastardly Death Order again. Alright, so they were taken out and shot? Locked up in their huts and set on fire? No, rather than kill them there and then, the Japanese decide on an elaborate scheme to tell the men they're going somewhere lovely, march the prisoners in batches of several hundred at a time over hill and dale (or in this case through tropical rainforest and over mountain ranges). Anyone flagging from exhaustion got shot/bayoneted on the spot.

*“In 1942 and 1943, Australian and British POWs who **had been captured at the Battle of Singapore in February 1942 were shipped to North Borneo to construct a military airstrip and prisoner-of-war camps at Sandakan, North Borneo (Sabah). As on the Burma Railway the prisoners were forced to work at gunpoint, and were often beaten whilst also receiving very little food or medical attention. In August 1943, with the intention of controlling the enlisted men by removing any commanders, most officer-ranked prisoners were moved from Sandakan to the Batu Lintang camp at Kuching. Conditions for the remaining prisoners deteriorated sharply following the officers' removal. Rations were further reduced, and sick prisoners were also forced to work on the airstrip. After construction had been completed, the prisoners initially remained at***

*the camp. In January 1945, with approximately 1,900 prisoners still alive, the advancing Allies managed to successfully bomb and destroy the airfield. It was at this time, with Allied landings anticipated shortly, that camp commandant **Captain Hoshijima Susumi** decided to move the remaining prisoners westward into the mountains to the town of Ranau, a distance of approximately 260 kilometres (160 mi)."*

The marches were brutal and nearly everyone died in the process:

"The first marches

The first phase of marches across wide marshland, dense jungle, and then up the eastern slope of Mount Kinabalu occurred between January and March 1945. The Japanese had selected 470 prisoners who were thought to be fit enough to carry baggage and supplies for the accompanying Japanese battalions relocating to the western coast. In several groups the POWs, all of whom were either malnourished or suffering serious illness, started the journey originally under the intention of reaching Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu). Although the route took nine days, they were given enough rations for only four days. As on the Bataan Death March, any POWs who were not fit enough or collapsed from exhaustion were either killed or left to die en route. Upon reaching Ranau, the survivors were halted and ordered to construct a temporary camp. As one historian later commented: "Those who survived... were herded into insanitary and crowded huts to then die from dysentery. By 26 June, only five Australians and one British soldier were still alive."

If they don't have food for the entire trip how does anyone survive? It's one thing to lie around somewhere slowly starving, quite another to try to trek up a mountainside. You also have a little thing called dehydration. White people working out in 30+ degree temperatures and high humidity need a lot of water. Clean water. We can't just eat a grain of rice and keep going indefinitely. Physical exhaustion aside, if they need to build a camp when they arrive what was at Ranau? Why there if no existing Japanese facility exists? What's the point of the entire thing?

"The second marches

A second series of marches began on 29 May 1945 with approximately 536 prisoners. The new Sandakan camp commander, Captain Takakuwa Takuo, ordered the prisoners towards Ranau in groups of about fifty with accompanying Japanese guards. The march lasted for twenty-six days, with prisoners even less fit than those in the first marches had been, provided with fewer rations and often forced to forage for food. Compound No. 1 of the Sandakan camp was destroyed in an attempt to erase any evidence of its existence. Only 183 prisoners managed to reach Ranau. Upon their arrival on 24 June 1945, participants of the second marches discovered that only six prisoners from the first series of marches during January were still alive."

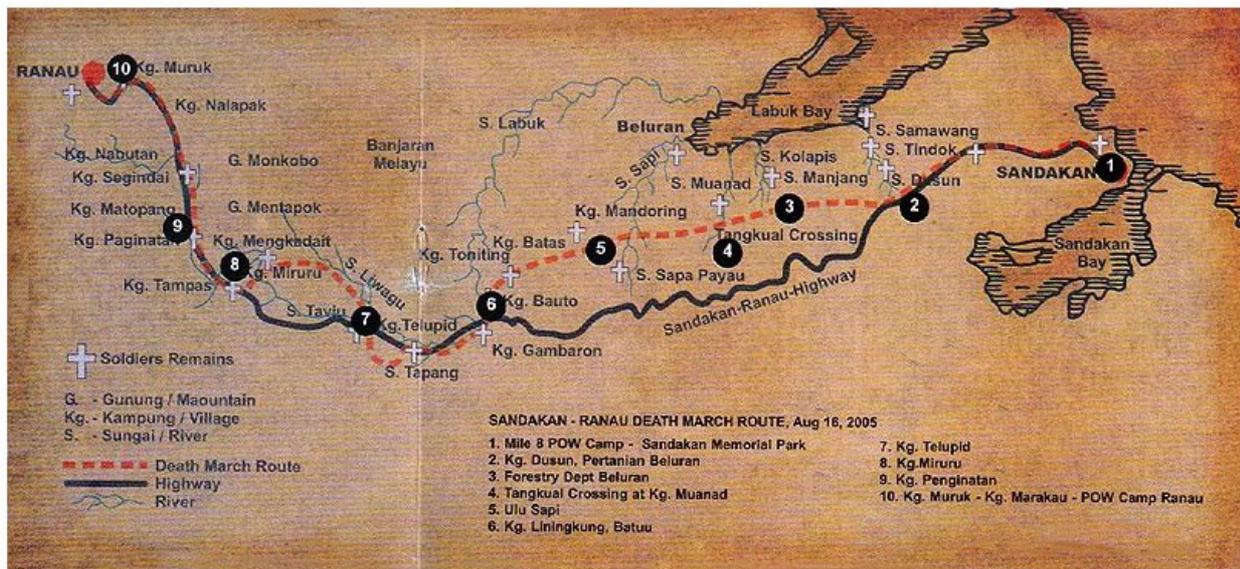
Interesting they wait for two months before the second batch are sent. Also interesting that it's a route march to the death and yet the guards let you walk off into the forest to scavenge for food. Did nobody think to, I don't know, hide behind a tree until nightfall and slope off? Conveniently, the destruction of the camp helps to destroy records and evidence.

"The final march

Approximately 250 people were left at Sandakan after the second march departed. Most prisoners were so ill that the Japanese initially intended to let them starve to death, forcing many to scavenge in the surrounding forest for food. However, on 9 June 1945 it was decided to send another group of 75 men on a final march. The remaining men were so weak that none survived beyond 50 kilometres (31 mi). As each man collapsed from exhaustion, he was shot by a

Japanese guard. All remaining prisoners left at Sandakan who could not walk either were killed or died from a combination of starvation and sickness before the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945. Many Japanese soldiers also died from starvation, with some even turning to cannibalism in order to preserve their fighting effectiveness.”

Ah, I missed the cannibalism accusations, we haven't seen enough of that recently. Another “none lived to tell the tale” spook story. There's a lot that's wrong with this. If the intent is to absolutely kill them all then why not just walk a short distance from camp, have them dig a trench, shoot them and burn the bodies? If you need to march them into the woods in batches, fine, but why the elaborate nature trek? They're walking for miles:



Original [here](#).

They then have to justify how the Sandakan camp was never liberated (we're talking mid-'45 at this point, there are Allied forces in the region) and why it was reported by scouts that the camp was empty:

“Operation Kingfisher was a planned rescue operation for servicemen at the Sandakan camp that was abandoned in early 1945. The operation is said to have been derailed by inaccurate intelligence. The exact details of the proposed operation are unclear as the operation itself was top-secret, but is said to have involved Australian paratroopers being dropped into the vicinity to evacuate prisoners.

There is no specific recorded date for the cancellation of the operation, though the reassignment of the Agas I team to a West Coast mission due to "information received about the POW's" places the time period of the abandonment at around 16–19 April. Agas reconnaissance missions continued to compile reports and survey the camp until early June, with Major Gort Chester requesting advice on how act on his compiled evidence to no response. The Agas team would later, incorrectly, report that there were no prisoners left in the camp, leading to the official end of any planned operation.

There are arguments as to whether the operation itself was feasible. Reports produced by the Agas team in May 1945 ruled the evacuation of prisoners by air infeasible due to the destruction of the Ranau airfield. Evacuation by land to awaiting submarines was considered, but quickly abandoned of the grounds of the terrible condition of the men. Australian paratroopers, as well as Royal Marines, were placed on standby for the operation and were ready to go ahead upon receiving up-to-date information from the Agas team, but said intelligence was never received.”

So they were scouting the death camp and would have seen the prisoners but never bothered to rescue them... somehow sending the message back to HQ that nobody was in the camp. Right.

So what was the fate of the prisoners?

*“Due to a combination of a lack of food and brutal treatment at the hands of the Japanese, **only 38 prisoners were left alive at Ranau by the end of July**. All were too unwell and weak to do any work, and it was ordered that any remaining survivors **should be shot**. They were killed by the guards during August, possibly up to 12 days after the end of the war on 14 August. It has been estimated that in total, **approximately 16% of the population of North Borneo were killed during the three years of Japanese occupation.**”*

Yep. So you expected them to do manual labour after starving them to death? Sure. So the Japanese are not just mean and evil, they're insane and stupid. As for the “16% of the population” line, tell that to Statista. We're not seeing a population drop for Indonesia.

*“In total, **only six Australian servicemen managed to escape**. During the second marches, **Gunner Owen Campbell and Bombardier Richard Braithwaite managed to escape into the jungle**, where they were assisted by locals and eventually rescued by Allied units. During July, Private Nelson Short, Warrant Officer William Sticpewich, Private Keith Botterill, and Lance Bombardier William Moxham managed to escape from Ranau and were also helped by the local people, who fed them and hid them from the Japanese until the end of the war. Of the six survivors, **only four (Sticpewich, Botterill, Short, and Campbell) survived the lingering effects of their ordeal to give evidence at various war crimes trials in both Tokyo and Rabaul**. The World was able to receive eyewitness accounts of the crimes and atrocities committed. Captain Hoshijima was found guilty of war crimes and hanged on 6 April 1946. Captain Takakuwa and his second-in-charge, Captain Watanabe Genzo, were likewise found guilty of perpetrating the murder and massacres of prisoners-of-war and were hanged and shot on 6 April 1946 and 16 March 1946, respectively.”*

Miles may know some genealogy lore for those last names. I recognise [Campbell](#) of course as prominent from Scotland. [Botterill](#) is also peerage. As is [Moxham](#). Again we're looking at a scenario of a big accusation, made in the post-war military trials, based on testimony from a very small number of military eyewitnesses. You can see photos of some of the survivors [here](#).



Dick Braithwaite is a dead ringer for [Firefly](#) actor Adam Baldwin.



Owen Campbell is another trustworthy looking gent, looking every bit an Owen and a Campbell.

[This site](#) has an interesting log of the marches with Warrant Officer William Sticpewich not getting the numbers right:

First March

**WO1 Sticpewich -
*PoW***

470 PoW (370 Australian, 100 British) departed Sandakan 14 February 1945. 120 PoW died on the track and 350 reached Ranau.

**1 Lt Watanabe - *In
Command of march***

First March, states 450 PoW (320 Australian, 130 British) departed Sandakan 14 February 1945. 220 PoW died on the track and 230 PoW reached Ranau.

Second March

**WO1 Sticpewich -
*PoW***

Approx 500 Australian and British PoW departed Sandakan 29 May 1945. Approx 290 died on the track and 204 (143 Australian, 61 British) reached Ranau. 6 PoW from the First Party were still alive at Ranau when they arrived.

**Capt Takakuwa - *In
Command of march***

537 Australians and British PoW departed Sandakan 29 May 1945. Approx 354 died on the track and 183 reached Ranau. 9 PoW from the First Party were still alive at Ranau when they arrived.

Third March

**WO1 Sticpewich -
*PoW***

No knowledge of this march.

**Capt Takakuwa - *In
Command of march***

75 Australian and British PoW departed Sandakan on 11 June 1945. They all died on the track. Lt Suzuki, i.c Third March, reached Ranau but since deceased.

That article continues with some interesting statements by various tribes-people of the area that contradict the narrative. For example the first one, by a tribesman called Kabirau states that he found two graves off from the forest trail which he led the Australian forces to after the war. The graves although disturbed by wild animals were found to contain multiple bodies – a mass burial of

soldiers who died on the death march. Other statements talk about finding graves. The Japanese were not burying anyone, they were shooting or bayoneting people where they fell.

Even Wikipedia is having trouble telling this story with a straight face. [This section](#) is very telling:

“After the war much of the information surrounding the event's of the marches were kept from the families and the general public. In the beginning this was attributable to the conflicting information between the records provided to the Army and those recovered at the camp, as well as the conflicting survivor testimonies. These differing accounts meant that many men had the wrong recorded date or wrong cause of death recorded as the records at the camp would often record the deaths of executed prisoners to as a result of illness. Although, records were eventually rectified the information immediately proceeding the war presented a very complex and contradictory recounting of the camps events.

However, after the war crimes trials in 1946, the reasoning behind this concealment changed from lack of reliable information to that of sparing families the grief and torment, with the rationale that the events of the marches were too terrible to be disclosed. In the midst of the trials, the Press, while not explicitly asked to conceal information, agreed with the government to only disclose the basic details of the camp. Most notably, the Army record keepers were also kept in the dark and relied upon press releases in order gain access to testimonies, records and general information associated with the war crimes investigations.

It was during this time that investigations into the camp were undertaken. This included collecting bodies for the war graves commission and the recovery of the camp records. The results of this inquiry, after investigations concluded in 1947, were released to the relevant government agencies to be sealed for a minimum of 30 years. It is worth noting that there are some that attribute this withholding of information as an attempt to conceal the military's lack of intervention in this matter both in regards to the relative failure of the Singapore campaign and the abandonment of Project Kingfisher. Although these allegations have not been confirmed.

Very little information was released to the public in the time between this sealing and the eventual upsurge of the narratives in the 1980s. While some books pertaining to the movements of these units during the war were released earlier, these did not pertain to the time that these units spent in captivity. Family members attempting to gain information from 1945 to the unsealing of these documents were presented with very little information, usually only being provided a confirmation of death. British families found gathering this information particularly difficult. It wasn't until the efforts of investigators, historians and soldiers brought these narratives to light in the 1980s and 1990s that Sandakan entered the public consciousness again and, for many families this was their first exposure to a full account of what happened to their relatives.”

Wow. Talk about dodgy. They're doing the “Door number 1 or door number 2” false choice ruse with that middle bit where it's a case of “ooh they kept it quiet because of Kingfisher – the military made a mistake and covered it up!”. I'm going with door number 3: it's a fake, another piece of Atrocity Propaganda. In this case, one that seems to have been more important to present to Australian people in the 80's.

You can read more about the Sandakan camp [here](#) which quotes dear old Lord Russell from Knights of Bushido.

[This link](#) is a record from Jim Vane, Australian forces veteran. A short video, his testimony is very interesting as he launches into explaining how he met the survivors of Sandakan. All 8 of them. He says that he met “six of the eight” survivors of Sandakan... the Death March that took place in

Malaya. He explains that there were 8 survivors of Sandakan but they brought back seven... then one died overnight. Thank you for that Jim.

You can also read about [the adventures of Mr. Stan Roberts of the Australian War Graves Unit](#) via the Sydney Morning Herald who helped recover the bodies and bury the dead of Sandakan. The 8th War Graves Unit, naturally. How many men were in the division you ask? Eight.

*“In **May 1945**, with work complete at Atherton, his unit, consisting of just **eight** members, was transferred to Tarakan, in Dutch Borneo, where the Australian 9th Division had landed on 1 May. For the next few months **8** AWGU had the unenviable task of locating and recovering 225 Australian war dead for reburial in a proper cemetery.*

*After home leave, Roberts, now a staff sergeant, was redeployed in **June 1946** to Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu), on the west coast of British North Borneo (now Sabah).”*

Note that: June of ‘46. They wait a year after the war to find the corpses. In a tropical rainforest full of wild animals. Right.

*“Stan’s responsibility was to ensure the transition of the dead from the field to the cemetery. However, his task this time was not the recovery of battle casualties but the soul destroying search for hundreds of Australian and British POWs, **who had died along a mostly mountainous 70-kilometre stretch of the death march track, or in one of three ad hoc camps in or near Ranau.***

*Leaving his commanding officer and one other in a base camp near Jesselton, **Roberts and the remaining six** began an arduous trek across the towering Crocker Ranges, to the tiny village of Ranau. Accompanying them were Dusun tribesmen, employed to help ferry supplies, and remains, to and from Ranau – a round trip of nine days.”*

So the Australian War Graves Unit (no British unit for some reason) have six or seven men walking the entire length of the march to look for bodies, a year after the war is over. Clearly a high priority recovery.

*“Roberts then began the painstaking task of overseeing the search for remains of POWs, **buried in various jungle clearings**, now overrun with vines and creepers. Once the remains were exhumed, they were wrapped in lengths of hessian and **carried back to Ranau**, where Roberts searched for any clues as to the soldier’s identity. **There was precious little to help him, as all the army identity discs had long since rotted, being made of a kind of compressed cardboard.**”*

Compressed cardboard dog tags. OK. Kind of defeats the point of a dog tag if it rots when exposed to the elements, but go on.

*“With the cemeteries cleared, a search began for those who had died or been murdered along the track. **Almost all were unburied and, as Roberts later recorded, were fortunately reduced by time and the elements to a skeletal state.** Because they were unidentifiable he drew small sketches, showing the precise location of the bodies in relation to the track, along with any nearby landmark, and the distance from the nearest village.*

*As far as can be ascertained, **no one else made pictorial records or was as conscientious or as diligent in their recording as Stan Roberts.** And it was this devotion to duty, to record as accurately as possible where the remains of those who died outside a cemetery were found, **that allowed historian Lynette Silver, sixty years later, to match up his data with death records and identify at least 20 prisoners of war who had been reburied as ‘Known unto God’.**”*

Yes. So. In 1946 a half dozen guys walk this 70km track to find hidden skeletons under vines. No real way to tell them apart given that the dog tags are made of cardboard. Only Stan bothers to write anything down or sketch locations. You might think the Army would have a standard process that everyone on the team would need to adhere to, but no. All highly credible.

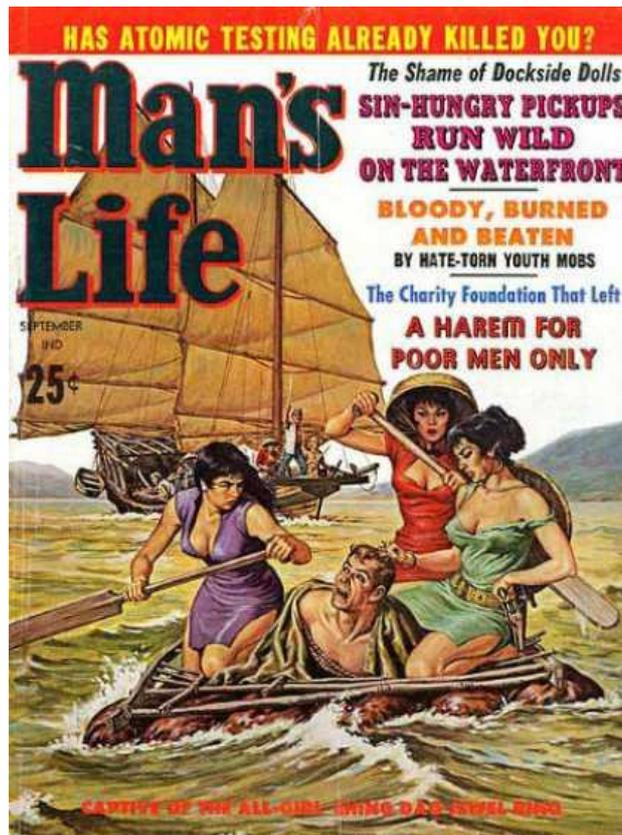
Speaking of Lynette Silver if you'd like to read a lovely bit of fan fiction buy her book "Sandakan – a Conspiracy of Silence" which you should pay for and [not download](#). Very quotable:

*"With the food ration at Sandakan set at **70 grams of rice a day**, the prisoners' condition had deteriorated alarmingly in February, **making it impossible for Colonel Suga to carry out an order to put 50 men to work repairing the airfield**. Rather surprisingly, **Hoshijima allowed the prisoners to go fishing in the fresh-water drains near the camp twice a week**, but the catch was hardly worth bothering about — generally no more than 40 tiddlers, averaging about 2 centimetres each, just enough to give half-a-dozen hospital patients a taste. **Men became so hungry that they ate anything that moved — grasshoppers, snails, beetles and, if they were lucky enough to find them, rats. nelson short had discovered that slugs, lured from their hiding places with damp leaves placed on the ground, were quite palatable when threaded onto a piece of wire and roasted over coals.**"*

It goes on like this for hundreds of pages. One more example:

*"Not long after moving off, **Braithwaite heard shots ring out**. He was sure that unless he could escape he would be next. carrying on for about a kilometre and a half **in a state of near collapse**, he reached a gully where large trees blocked the way, necessitating a difficult detour which unexpectedly **created a gap** in the column. **Finding himself alone, Braithwaite ducked off the makeshift path to the left and into the jungle**. He had gone no more than 15 metres when he **heard the guards coming along the track**. With his progress blocked by a fallen tree, he dropped to the ground and froze. it was not a good place to lie 'doggo'. **There was hardly any cover and the leaf litter was swarming with huge ants which, although they crawled all over Braithwaite's body, fortunately did not bite**. His throat began to tickle, the irritation becoming so bad he could no longer ignore it. **Lifting his head to cough**, he found himself **staring at a guard who unslung his rifle and gave the impression he had seen the fugitive**, yet moved on. after the last of the Japanese had passed by, at about 3.00pm, Braithwaite left his hiding place and started back down the track. Rounding a sharp bend he almost ran headlong into **a lone Japanese**. Luckily, Braithwaite saw him first. **He hit the guard with a heavy branch, smashing his head again and again as he unleashed three years of pent-up hatred and anger**. When it was over, he dragged the body from the track and concealed it as best he could. He returned to the river and scanned the area carefully for any signs of life. a couple of Japanese were resting in their overnight shelter on the opposite bank, but that was all. Mildenhall, Hodges and the others were nowhere to be seen."*

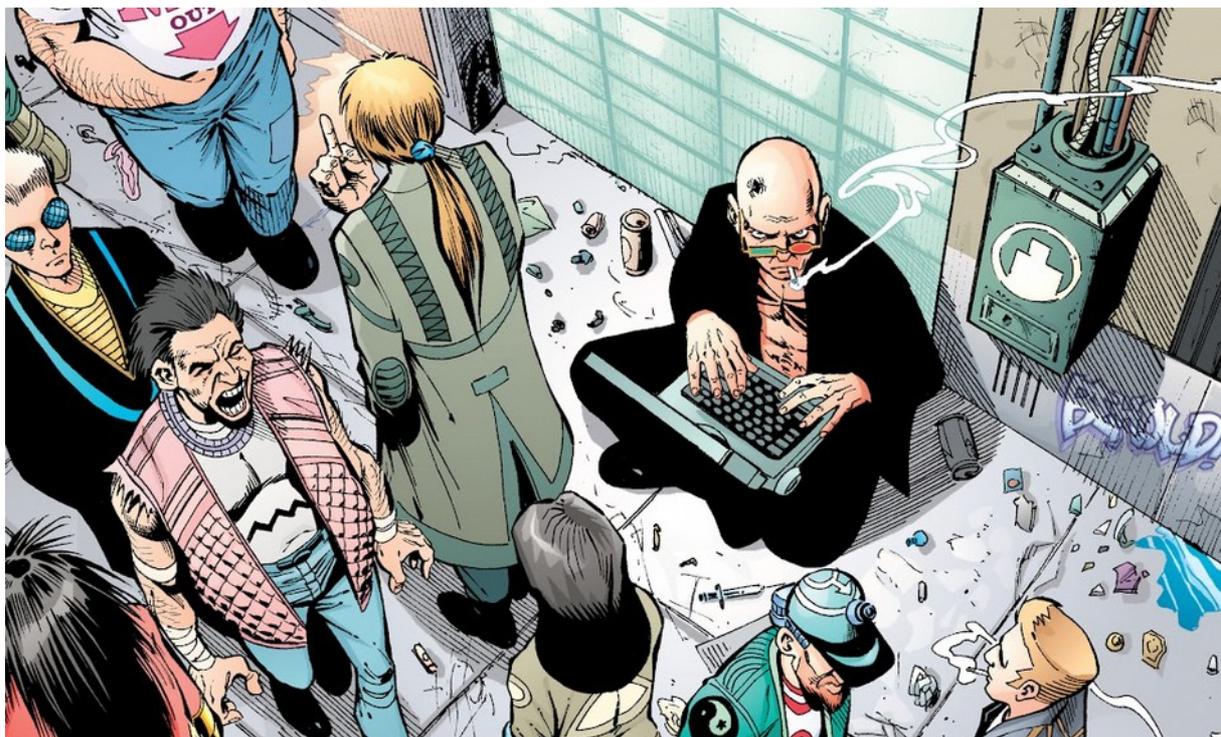
You get the point. She's writing fiction. It's like something out of "Man's Life" adventure stories – just without the awesome cover artwork.



I could go on but I think I've had a fair crack at this part of the conflict. There's always more to write about but enough for now. Laptop off. Sleep.

More to Come.

[Outro Music](#)



Addendum: My sincere apologies to all readers that in the previous paper when suggesting music tracks to accompany a theoretical direct naval assault on Singapore (battleships firing *all* cannons simultaneously, naturally) I forgot the [obvious track choice](#). This is now corrected.