

STATEMENT of TONIUEA, native of MATUPI, TAKEN by Lt. J. W. BACKHOUSE  
on 3 Dec 46 at RABAU.

I cannot remember the exact date because during the Japanese occupation the natives lost their methods of reckoning, but it was sometime in 1944, when I was out in the bush looking for wild fowl eggs near the RATUPIT Cemetery, when numerous Japanese arrived (I do not know the exact number) and dug a pit about 20 feet long.

The Japanese then lined up along the pit about 40 whites. I recognised Master BEN, an elderly man of the Pacific Hotel. They had tied their hands behind their backs and had blindfolded them with red cloth. The Japanese were standing very close behind the prisoners. They laid the captives on the ground and placed cotton wool over their mouths and nostrils, then poured some fluid on the cotton wool from a large bottle. The fluid used was the same as used in operations. I discovered this after the Japanese had left owing to the pronounced odour on the ground. After a little while the Japanese removed the cotton wool and the Prisoners appeared to be semi-conscious; the Japanese then threw them in the hole and filled the hole in with earth. The Japanese left as soon as the job was finished and I came out from the bush where I had been hiding. I went up to the mound and noticed the smell of anaesthetic. I was afraid to dig them up because Japanese vehicles were passing along the nearby road. I then returned to my village.

Q. Can you remember any of the Japanese who were present ?

A. I cannot because I was too far away.

Q. About how far away were you ?

A. About 100 yards.

Q. If you saw any of the Japanese again do you think you would be able to recognise them ?

A. No.

Q. Apart from Master BEN did you recognise any other man who was executed ?

A. No, the only reason why I recognised Master Ben was by his grey hair.

Q. Do you know where the 40 whites were situated before being taken to the cemetery ?

A. They had been employed by the Japanese and had been in various jails in RABAU, -- KOKOPO Area.

Q. Were the Japanese Army or Navy personnel ?

A. Army personnel, I do not know from which Unit they came.

(Signed) J. Backhouse, Lt. Witness.  
War Crimes Section, HQ 8 MD.

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(Fingerprint of TONIUEA).

I, W.O. 2 F. S. SPRATT of 3 N.G.I.B., certify that the above statement was made by the native TONIUEA in Pidgin English and that after same had been taken down in writing was read over to the witness before he signed it and that the translations are true and correct.

F. S. SPRATT, WO II.

INTERPRETER.