

## **36 Eyewitnesses of an extremely cruel Japanese war crime**

**An appeal in the News Magazine from the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts in April and December 2003 and May 2004.**

**"It happened in the former Dutch East Indies 1942/43, the drama of the Kempeitai Pig Basket Atrocities, when POWs were transported in Bamboo Baskets and then been thrown in the sea where they all drowned.**

**We are looking for eyewitnesses of the Australian and Dutch POWs incarcerated in too small bamboo pig baskets by the Japanese military in the former Dutch East Indies during the Japanese occupation."**

Please contact Mrs. E. van Kampen

### **The eyewitnesses:**

#### **No. 1:**

I remember those stories also my fathers stories who had been POW on the island Flores during WWII.

He once told me that the Japanese have pushed people in cages and then let them drown.

My father was born in 1911 and died in 1998. He was an administrator in the former Dutch East Indies, first in Garut and later on in Buitenzorg, today called Bogor.

#### **No. 2:**

I saw your appeal in the SJE news magazine about "The Kempeitai Pig Basket Atrocities". I am not certain if my story is really useful to you.

In 1942 we lived at the Van Den Boschlaan 22 in Surabaya.

At the back of our house was a boy school before the war, at the Coenboulevard.

But now in 1942 there were POW locked in that school and to me it seemed that the were staying in a cellar. To me something seemed wrong over there in that school.

The Japanese let us children, I was 4 years old then, bring some food to the POWs through a small window.

When we (the family) were removed from our house to the Darmo area, we heard that POWs were been thrown alive while in those infamous baskets into the sea. According to me, they were talking about the people in the above

mentioned school.  
I hope that you can use this information.

### **No. 3:**

As a result of the article in the SJE Newsletter I hereby like to react while I have to dig deep into my memories.

We came from the direction of Grisse and had to wait before we could cross the Perakweg before we could continue our way on our bikes. We were standing nearby the Palm butter factory. This was round and about April ( 1942?) I think at about twelve o'clock in the afternoon.

And then at least two Japanese trucks passed us, driving very fast, but in an instant I had seen coarsely woven light coloured baskets piled up in four batches of baskets. In every basket was lying a naked man. At that moment I didn't realise yet from what drama I had been an eyewitness.

It has taken me a very long time before it has been made clear to me what drama I had seen that day. And even till today I can't forget these images. After all these years, I was 15 years old then and today I am 78 , but it was a sight that has forever been stamped on my memory.

And today it has all come back to me.

### **No. 4:**

The Pig basket murder

In 1983 I had to stay at home, stop working, because of overtime work/stress. After talking with a therapist came slowly the conclusion, that the capitulation in 1942 in Dutch East Indies and thereafter the Japanese camps were also cause of my mental and physical collapse.

Some time later I saw pictures from a friend, who had visited Bali. One of the pictures showed a Balinese with a bike, with on his luggage carrier a basket with therein a pig.

This picture came as a shock to me and I said: "That is how I saw people in Surabaya, they were in piled up baskets on a truck being transported. My mother didn't believe my story. I couldn't have seen it. I began to hesitate too.

The transport I had seen was short after the capitulation in 1942. We as children, I was then 7 years old, could then still walk freely in the streets of Surabaya.

To check my story I went to the former RIOD (in Amsterdam) today NIOD, the Indies department. They confirmed my story, indeed there had been such transports in Surabaya.

A little later appears an article in the Telegraaf about Mr. Colson who has seen the same images.

I did not see that the people in those baskets were been thrown into the sea.

But I remember that I saw in the harbour on the ships, big crates where people were standing in the burning sun on the deck, but I can't exactly verify it.

According to me it was in Udjung, the Marine harbour in Surabaya.

We lived just after the capitulation still in the Tandjung Perakweg, that is on the road to Udjung. My father worked for the Hollandsche Beton Maatschappij, but now had to work for the Japanese on the harbour ground.

The one who could verify all this is my father, but he died.

He died in 1966 and in those days there was no talking about traumatic war/camp. experiences . Besides, he never wanted to talk about the wartime period.

#### **No. 5:**

As a result of your appeal in the ( JES) News Magazine from April 2003 would I like to tell you about the following facts:

My father, M. N. was witness from the following drama.

He stood on the quay of the harbour from Tandjoen Priok, waiting to be transported to Japan.

( For that matter are two other ships from this transport, under which the Juno Maru, later on torpedoed. The third ship, where my father was on, was saved and headed for Sumatra. That is where he ( my father) survived the Pakan Baru ( Railway) camp during the war.

After continues insisting (from my side) and questions about his war experiences came this horrible scene as the information and answer to your question.

He told me that he saw pig baskets on board and in each basket were two POWs caught,

they were all been thrown into the sea.

The baskets (with the men) fired up on, in front of our eyes, until they were all drowned.

While my father saw this scene he lost all hope of surviving. He and the others thought that this terrible fate would overcome each of them while they stood there waiting.

My father died in 1980, but I think that I act in his spirit when I consign his story to you.

#### **No. 6:**

I read your call in the News Magazine from April 2003 No 1 about the pig baskets murder and so I hope to give my small contribution.

MY father F. J. E. born December 1892, inspector by the Netherlands Indies Railways (the NIS), was quartered in the beginning of the war in the Indies in Surabaya, he has told my mother and me the following story:

When our ( Aussies and Dutch) military in those pigs bags were transported in Surabaya, my father's colleague, inspector by NIS Pieter Gallas, has given these poor soldiers some water as much as he possibly could.

The Japanese didn't say a word but afterwards they have kicked him to death. Father who was a friend and colleague from the victim, had the chance to see his body.

As a child of then 15 years old I had known Pieter Gallas, the man who gave some water and was then killed by the Japanese military.

I have no e-mail address from mrs. Elizabeth van Kampen. Will you be so kind and forward my letter to her.

Thank you and lots of success with your work

**No. 7:**

As a result of your appeal in "News Magazine" from the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts from April 2003 the following story:

From 20 January till 31 January I stayed at the Idjenboulevard nr.64 ( 60) in Malang with my mother and sister, we were on a journey from Makassar ( Sulawesi) to Wonosobo in Central Java. During this stay ( in Malang) I saw 3 days long colonnes of Americans and Australian militaries passing. We were told that they were on their way to Banyuwangi, the cross over place to the island Bali.

About 8 months later we stayed again at this same address (in Malang) with the family Rijks.

Just before we were interned in "The Wijk" camp in Malang I stood again in front of the Idjenboulevard talking with a boy next door when a truck loaded with arang (charcoal) baskets passed us. Those baskets were about 95 cm high and 45 cm wide and are used to transport pigs. Because of the sound coming from those baskets ( pigs ?) or some other reason my next door boy told me that the Japanese chased the Australian military who had stayed behind in the mountains since they were not gone to Banyuwangi in January 1942. Further, so it seems they have been pushed into the charcoal baskets and been thrown into the sea. There are many sharks.

I belong to the category " heard off" or maybe have I subconsciously seen it.

Lots of luck with your investigation about the Japanese beasts!

No. 8:

As a result of your writing ( in the News Magazine) about the pig baskets atrocity can I tell you what I have seen. That was during the Japanese occupation in 1942, in Batavia (Jakarta) where we lived.

It was during an afternoon when I walked with my late mother to a small market.

Just before a level crossing a truck stopped. Probably taken the wrong road, I thought.

The street name was Laan Solitude in Meester Cornelis.

I saw a Japanese soldier get off the truck. He carried a gun with him and had a cap on his head with those pieces. Out of curiosity, I walked in the direction of the truck and so I heard noises from the open stowage space. This noise came from the white people who were locked up in pig baskets. These baskets laid crosswise piled up.

They begged the other onlookers for water. Someone who tried to hand over some water was brutally chased away by the Japanese guard.

It was a horrible sight and now knowing that they would be killed makes it even more horrible.

This image has marked me forever and sometime when sometime while in a debate with others or when someone makes a wrong move then I am no longer to be approached, then I isolate myself and think about that terrible time behind me.

**No. 9:**

As a result of your call for eyewitnesses from the pig baskets atrocity in the SJE News Magazine, so here I am.

It was during the period of May/ June 1942. I saw trucks passing by with baskets and in those baskets were, to my amazement, people piled up!! I shall never forget this image, it has been burned on my retina.

For your information; I am Dutch and I have been in concentration camps during the Japanese occupation.

I hope that you can do something with my contribution for your research work.

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Dear Madam,

My excuses that I forgot to mention the place where I have seen the atrocity. That was in Surabaya near the bridge over the Kali Brantas (river). No I can't remember that I heard them calling or screaming.

We have seen so much while we were so young

**No. 10:**

Dear Mrs. van Kampen

When I phoned JES to give them my address, I thought that I wouldn't get an answer.

It is always about people from Java and never from Sumatra.

Just like it is in Holland, always talking about the "Honger Winter" and the Jewish people. Indonesia doesn't count over here.

Not only we who were in the camps but also the Indonesians and the Chinese suffered a lot under that terrible Japanese occupation

We lived in Medan, on the Boolweg 2. That is on the road from Belawan to the harbour.

March 11 1942 was my birthday, the Japanese had just occupied Medan.

Our servants went into town by bicycles and came back without them. The Japanese soldiers had taken their bikes.

One morning our boy came home totally bewildered about what he had seen in town.

His story: he had seen "white" men who interrogated and tortured.

There were pig baskets and so those men had to crawl into them. If they weren't fast enough they were kicked into those baskets or stung with a bayonet. Their hands were tied up. The shorter men had to go together in one basket.

That very same afternoon we saw many trucks passing our home, they were loaded with pig baskets. They stopped each time waiting for the other trucks to follow.

How many of those trucks, I can't remember. They stood there in the burning sun and you could hear them groaning and begging for water.

Our boy who wanted to bring some water was sent back. The Japanese soldiers stood there with their bayonets.

My parents kept very quiet and looked through a small hole. I was sent to the back of the house but I was too curious so I found myself a place from where I could see it all.

But that groaning was the worst of all. It is most likely that the men who layed on the bottom of those trucks were already dead.

At such moments you don't really realize what you are seeing. Later on when I had been in 7 different camps where I have seen people being tortured. I became an adult at 6 years old.

Much later we learned that those poor men in the pig baskets were transported by boats and dumped into the sea. I don't know if anyone of them has ever been saved.

I was born in 1935, so I was 6 years old when all this happened. Under me was the twin of 5 months. My family name is Roestenburg.

I remember two other family names living in the same street; De Haan and Sadeits.

I hope that you can use my story.

**No. 11:**

Concerns Pig Baskets Atrocity

I am married with a man from Banjermasin; the whole family-in-law is from Bandjermasin in Borneo. I am 82 years old, I am as from my 22nd year war widow from Max Patiwaal, born in Banjermasin on the 22nd of January in 1918. I haven't witnessed this pig basket affair but I can tell what has happened in Bandjermassin.

In Bandjesmasin was a Japanese dentist who directly when the war in the Netherlands Indies broke out, became a Japanese general, he had his uniform with him.

So when the Japanese entered Bandjermasin, he became the head of this town. Before the was he was a good acquaintance and dentist from the family Patiwaal and Pereira. As soon as he was in power he had all the men and boys been interned. As also my father-in-law and his brother. And also the brother (José Pereira) of my mother-in-law was interned.

When my mother-in-law wanted to visit her husband, she went to her old acquaintance and dentist and if she could visit her husband and the other family members.

The Japanese dentist told her: "Soedah boeang laoet" Already dumped into the sea.

Later on my mother-in-law (the only one who survived from the family Patiwaal's and the Pereira's) that all the prisoners were pushed into pig baskets and been thrown into the sea. This story comes from my mother-in-law, she told me this before she died.

The whole family has been exterminated.

My husband died when he was 25 years old in the camp Maoemere on Flores; according the Japanese from dysentery. His friends who have brought me his belongings, told me that the ill prisoners of war were locked up in pig baskets laid on the beach.

By ebb tide they were laying in their defecation and by high tide everything was all clean again, all by itself.

The name of the Japanese dentist is probably know, he was the only dentist in Bandjermasin

**No. 12:**

Soerabaja, 03-02-1993

I don't know any other witness who saw what I saw, but it has truly happened, I swear telling the truth.

It happened during a afternoon in Surabaya in the Darmoeweg when I left my hairdresser shop to go home and get something to eat. At that hour of the day when I got on my bike, it is always terribly hot in Surabaya.

On my way home I saw 2 army trucks covered with canvas hanging loose, and standing still on the side of the road. When I came closer, I got off my bike and I saw to my horror men rolled up in pig baskets all piled up. They were begging for water in English it was so horrible. I can't remember where that Jap got a bucket with water from, but he threw half of the water over the men and then washed his head and threw the rest on the street. In the meantime more people had come, so when the Jap saw us he chased us away.

Later on I heard that there were Aussies dropped in the sea. Some Dutch Eurasians were still working in the Surabaya harbour and my father was one of them.

So far the letter from the mother, now follows the letter from her daughter.

Dear Mrs. Van Kampen

My mother asked me to answer your letter concerning the pig basket drama. In 1993 she wrote something about this on paper. I did enclose a copy of those notes.

After we read it over again, more things came up.

My mother was 19 years old in those days and there were two army trucks full of pig baskets. The men were Australian boys. This concerning your questions.

Note: The water incident.

On the road sides were water pipes with fresh water, and on several different places were taps where one could fetch some water. This could not have been drink-water.

The Jap threw half of the water over himself and the rest over the men, each receiving just a drop of water.

Note: My brother was on one of those ships as a POW going to Japan and saw that those pig baskets with men were loaded on the ship. Later did he learn that those baskets were chained together and have been thrown into the sea.

If you need more information then we like to hear this from you. I wish you lots of success with the investigation.



**No. 13:**

I hereby send you something that you might need for your research work. As you see, it is an article from de Telegraaf 1990.

Because I saw those baskets with the swollen bodies with my own eyes, I kept this press cutting in my own documentation.

I was 17 - 18 years old when I saw these baskets near the Wonokromo bridge floating in the Wonokromo river. It was all so horrible, I could never forget what I saw that day.

I haven't been in a Japanese woman's camp but in the Soemobito camp. That frightening walk from Soerabaja to Soemobito, I will never forget either. One can never forget all this.

Mrs. van Kampen I hope that you can use this copy from the newspaper. I wish you lots of luck with the research work.

**No. 14:**

As a result of your appeal in the News Magazine from JES can I tell you about the following memory.

My Father was during the period you mentioned inspector by the Netherlands East Indies Railways in Surabaya. I was 13 years old during that time.

My Father was at that time compelled to repair the damaged railways in NO-Java and keep them going, this was ordered by the former Netherlands Indies government and also by the Japanese occupiers.

I remember that one evening my Father came home quite upset. Much later my Mother has told me the reason of his dejection.

"On the emplacement from NIS (Netherlands Indies Railways) Pasar Toeri a transport had arrived with the (mentioned in your appeal) POW in the pig baskets.

My Father succeeded to spout these men with water from hose pipes and gave them some water to drink. " So far my Mother's story

In January 1944 my Father has been killed by the Kempeitai, his mortal remains have been found back after the war and been buried at the cemetery Kembang Koenig (Surabaya). My mother died not long after the war.

As for myself, I have been in several camps, the last one was in Bangkong, a camp for boys, in Semarang.

For your information, in the Telegraaf of Saturday 11th of August was a large page about the pig basket affair. Wherein als mentioned the name of Mrs. Gwen Veen-Seth and some other witnesses. She and her husband were neighbours and friends from my parents.

**No. 15:**

Dear mrs. van Kampen

I would like to tell you about what I have seen with my own eyes. It was somewhere in a street when a truck stopped, it was still quite early in the morning, around 10 o'clock. I was then 14 or 15 years old at that time, and I was on my way to the market, doing some shopping for my mother. And then I saw all those men in baskets on the truck. I couldn't help crying, I was deeply shocked. I have never been able to forget those poor men. Later on we heard that they have been thrown in the sea, so I must have seen that truck on its way to the harbour. We lived quite close to the harbour. All this happened in Semarang.

This is all I know, I am now 76 and not very healthy.  
Thank you for taking care of this tragedy

**No. 16:**

I was 12 years old when the Japanese occupied the Dutch East Indies and we, my mother, brother and I stayed with an aunt in Lawang, East-Java. My mother thought it a safer place for us than Surabaya where we lived. It was quite dangerous for us in Surabaya, because before the Japanese occupation, the Australian soldiers were with all their weapons and munition billeted just behind our house in the Opakstraat. My mother found it too dangerous to stay there during the Japanese invasion. Lawang was a much quieter place many Australians fought a guerrilla war against the Japanese. Especially around the Tenger-mountains, there were big fights. We heard days long shooting on the mountains, people said that the Japanese tried to get hold of the still fighting KNIL and Australians. It was of course a impossible fight, especially since the Indonesians didn't reach out the helping hand towards the resistance groups.

On a day in March 1942 we heard a colonne trucks driving through Lawang direction Surabaya. Together with my brother and cousin we walked in the direction of the station, situated on the highway from Malang to Surabaya. Opposite the station along the road, stood a Japanese army truck loaded with pig baskets in which we saw alive and some dead men, a most deterrent sight and sound.

I still remember it very well, it was a most horrible sight. Everybody in Lawang spoke about it. Why the army truck stood there I don't know, possible car trouble.

We were kept at distance by the Japanese soldiers. Later on we heard that the baskets were thrown in the river Kali Mas by the bridge near Lawang and Surabaya.

As you know, that the Kali Mas during the monsoon is always a fast streaming river nearby Surabaya and then entering the Java Sea.

It must have happened in March 1942 because by the end of March we went back to our house in Surabaya.

It happened in the late morning, before noon, when we saw this army truck with a cargo/capacity ca 1.5 meter. We saw a lot of blood and we could hear the men cry.

There were a lot of people, Dutch and also Indonesian inhabitants of Lawang. I guess that there were some 50 to 100 people watching.

We were surprised that there were so many Japanese soldiers. It was the first time that I saw the occupying forces. I cannot tell you how many baskets there were on the truck, I could only see the back.

**No. 17:**

In the JES magazine from December 2003, No 3, was a appeal concerning the pig basket atrocity in the former Dutch East Indies.

It is with mixed feelings, not because I doubt of what I saw, but because I have no proof of what I saw. But nevertheless here is my story:

I was 16 years old in those days (born 28-01-1926) and lived with my parents in the Rochussen street nearby the Friar-school on the Coen boulevard. So one day when I was walking with my class mate Tom Führung when we had to wait a Japanese convoy that was passing us. That place was exactly on the crossway of the Coenboulevard and Darmoboulevard. The convoy came from the Wonokromo direction and drove over the Darmo boulevard. to the centre of the town (Surabaya) and it consisted of some open trucks loaded with pig baskets in with were captures Australian military. That they were Aussies we could by their typical hats. In those days we didn't know what was going to happen to those men, only after the war this became known, I think by L. de Jong.

In March 1943 my mother and I went to the "Darmo" women camp on the Reiniers boulevard and in December 1943 I was brought by the Kempeitai to the men camp "Boeboetan". A few months later the camp was transported to the 15e Bat. in Bandoeng and that is where I stayed until the "liberation".

I hope that the above brief information can bring some contribution to make this awful drama public.

With friendly greetings,

**No. 18:**

To the board of the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts

Will you please be so kind to tell Mrs. E. van Kampen, that my father-in-law Kapt. C.H. Westdijk, administrator from the Opium- and Salt production at Kalianget, Madura, was a witness of the pig basket atrocities and that I saw alike in Semarang, then in emergency formation in Tjilatjap.

**No. 19:**

In connection with your advertisement in the News Magazine from December the following:

As boy living in Surabaya, Ketabang, I still lived in the Legoendistraat , shortly after the capitulation. One day when I was in the Canadalaan, when some military trucks passed, at least three of them, but it could have been more. That was not really striking since such happened quite often in those days. But this time it became more notable because of the human groaning coming from the cars. It appeared that there were bamboo pig baskets wherein men in uniform double folded up, were "stowed away" in 2 to 3 piles high. The cars were going direction north, that means to the harbour. Later on there was the rumour that they were Aussies, and that they were drowned in the Java Sea.

It was a horrible experience, stamped on my memory. I must have been 14 years old (born 01-04-1927).  
You may use this information where necessary.

**No. 20:**

Dear Mrs. van Kampen

In the News Magazine from JES did I read an appeal to report you in case we knew something about the Japanese pig baskets transports of POWs during the war with Japan.

I personally didn't see this, but my baboe (housemaid) in Surabaya, came one morning crying to her work. She had seen several truck on the Darmoboulevard , loaded with pig baskets and inside of them sat crossed legs POWs. She was completely upset.

It happened between March and April in 1943. I can't remember exactly. They came from the Wonokromo station and were (I only learned this after the war) on their way to the harbour Tandjon Perak. We also learned much later that many of them (POWs) were Australians. It is too horrible of what they (Japanese) have done to us.

As for myself, I was interned together with my little son of 1½ year old, in different camps and my husband died in May 1943 at the Burma Railway. So we too had our share and I really hope that JES will succeed in getting us compensated.

I hope that you can use my reporting. Friendly greetings and success.

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**No. 21:**

In the News Magazine of December 2003, I have read your appeal about the pig baskets atrocity, to which I would like to react.

I was a Sergeant by the Artillery by the KNIL and was temporary quartered near Semarang. I came from Bandung where I served at the Verbruiks Magazijn Materieel.

I had heard about the mass murder with pig baskets. I was looking for people who could tell me about the facts of this atrocity. So I found an Eurasian lady who told me that she had seen it all from nearby how Dutch military from the Semarang Battalion were brutally pushed into pig baskets by the Japanese and sometimes two in one basket. They were also all tied up with their hands on their backs. Also the legs were tied up, They had no room to move in those pig baskets. It was terrible to see these men suffer so badly. The procession stopped now and then on the road, apparently to show the Indonesians what the Japanese could do with the Dutch soldiers.

Our Eurasian lady heard the men in those crates crying for water. Since they were laying on top of each other, couldn't move, they also suffered from tightness of the chest and they must have been very thirsty. There have been bystanders who have tried to give the men some water, but they were brutally pushed away from the trucks.

The procession drove towards the harbour. When they arrived, the pig baskets were dropped on the ground and then loaded onto Japanese landing-sloops. Once all loaded they sailed away and then threw the men in the baskets and all into the sea. Those poor men had no chance to get themselves out the baskets, and so they died a very inhuman way

Our Eurasian lady had followed the procession by bike and she waited for the sloops to come back again. They did but empty this time. So her conclusion was that they had thrown all those men overboard.

This was the story as the Eurasian lady has told me.

## **No. 22:**

Dear Madam,

I was born in 1935 at Cheribon, from Dutch parents. My father was an inspector/commissioner by the Police. Because of his profession he was regular transferred to different places. By the commencement of the Japanese occupation, we lived in Buitenzorg (Bogor). I think that my father was then already been taken to a camp. I can't remember exactly, I was only 6 or 7 years old.

The pig baskets atrocity: Memories are vague and maybe not always correct in some details.

Coming back from a walk with my mother, a truck passed us with screaming people who were indeed packed in those pig baskets and piled up on the truck. Then we passed an open space where the Japanese were busy with turning people around (in baskets?) above a fire. I vaguely remember that those

baskets were thrown over an edge... But what I remember very clearly as a child, is those people screaming in agony. What learned much later that those people were captived Australians.

You can understand that my mother took me as fast as possible away from that place.

My mother and I were placed in a concentration camp for women.

My parents don't live anymore, so I can't give you the complete facts. So the above comes from a little boy of 7 years old, who lived at that moment in a very confused surroundings (war situation and a scared mother) and so on. So that is why I remember it all in a chaotic manner, so I guess that more questions about this matter are not necessary.

I hope that you can use a little of my story. With friendly greetings and I wish you a prosperous 2004

### **No. 23:**

Dear Madam, I read your advertisement regarding eyewitnesses to the Japanese cruel Pig Basket Atrocities during the occupation of the Dutch East Indies, and I am an eyewitness.

My name is R.P I was born in Indonesia from Dutch parents in 1931, so I was 11 years of age at that time and lived in Surabaya, Java, during the Japanese invasion. I remember the Japanese were particularly mad at the Australian troops, because they had fought the hardest, and were partly responsible for destroying the oil refineries before the Japanese could reach those. Also because the Japanese were frustrated since they could not overrun Australia as quickly as they had overrun Java. Hence they focused their hatred on the few brave Australian troops that tried to help us to stop the Japanese invasion. It took a while before all Dutch people could be interned, so we could stay in our own houses for a time and as a small boy (schools being closed) we played in the streets. Our house was near the old Army barracks in the "Darmo" quarter of Surabaya, near the then called Darmo Boulevard. Every morning Dutch soldiers were transported from their temporary concentration camp (their own Army barracks, before they were transported all over Asia to forced labour camps) to the place where they had to work for the Japanese, mostly destroyed airfields and harbours. In the evening they came back, sitting on Army trucks and as soon as they reached the Dutch neighbourhood they started singing, which was allowed by the Japanese guards, sitting between them, bayonets on their rifles. This singing was meant for their wives, who came to catch a glimpse of their husbands, to let them know that they were not downhearted.

One day, however, around noon,, the hottest time of the day, a convoy of about four or five Army trucks passed the street where we were playing, loaded with so-called "pig baskets", which were normally used to stack pigs during transport to the slaughterhouse or the market. Indonesia being a Moslem country, pigs were only for European and Chinese customers in the market. Moslems

(Javanese) were not allowed to eat them and considered pigs (same as dogs) as "dirty animals", from which contact should be avoided. In other words: any connection with pigs and dogs was shameful. To our astonishment the pig baskets were crammed with Australian soldiers, some of them still wearing parts of their uniform, a few even their special hat. They were tied in pairs, two to each other, facing each other, and stacked, like pigs, in the baskets, lying down. Some were in a terrible state, crying for water, I saw one of the Japanese guards opening his fly and urinate on them. I remember being terrified and I can never forget this picture in my mind. Later my father told me the trucks were driven through the town as a show to the Indonesians for utter humiliation of the white race, finally being dumped into the harbour to drown.

Right after the occupation, after the Japanese started their propaganda against anything European. In the cinemas pictures were shown of Dutch, English, Americans, Australians in a shameful position. Japanese Army officers were shown wiping their feet on the Dutch flag. Kneeling Dutch officers for Japanese officers, grovelling in the dirt for Japanese, Indonesians burning the Dutch flag, Indonesians being served at table by the Dutch, and so forth and so on. They made quite a nasty impression on a Dutch boy aged 11 years, so they must have had quite an impact on the Javanese population.

This "Pig Basket Atrocity" was part of that policy. I think maybe they chose Australian Prisoners of War for this inhuman cruelty because Australians were not part of the Dutch society and probably at that early time in the occupation they were not too sure of the public hate against the Dutch. Hence they did not strip the soldiers, as was their custom before execution, so they would be recognisable as Australians. Also, as they still focussed their propaganda on conquering Australia as well, as a token of their superiority and power, and being unconquerable.

Soon after this event my father was taken away to a concentration camp and we followed soon after. So this must have happened early in 1942.

#### **No. 24:**

Elizabeth van Kampen

Seen and heard in the mountains above Malang.

It was in the beginning of October 1942 when my father and I walked over the main road near the coffee and rubber plantation Sumber Sewu, laying on the ridge of the mount Semeru, when we heard trucks from a distance, coming our way. We quickly hid behind the coffee bushes laying higher up than the road, so (alas) we could see everything quite well.

We saw 5 open trucks, they were loaded with bamboo baskets with therein laying white men. We heard the men screaming and crying for water and for help in English and Dutch. The baskets were piled up on the open trucks, they were driving direction Banyuwangi.

I was 15 years old and so I could fully understand what was happening there in front of my eyes, but what touched me so much deeper were the voices of the desperate men begging for help and water.

I was hiding behind my father and I heard him softly saying; "Oh my God".

We slowly walked home but over an other road, neither of us said a word. Their were no words for what we both had seen and heard

After the war I often wanted to talk with my father about that drama we had seen together. Had the Indonesians from Sumber Sewu seen those trucks? I shall never know.

On the 25th of March 1945 the Kempeitai killed my father.

The 11th of August 1990 there was an long article in the Telegraaf about a "pig baskets transports". They have been seen in different places and at different times.

The dossier 5284, showing sixty stories from eyewitnesses about those criminal transports by the occupying Japanese military in the former Dutch East Indies, are kept strictly under lock and key in our Dutch National Archive in The Hague.

**No. 25:**

Dear Mrs. van Kampen,

When I read the summons in the JES Nieuws Magazine from December, about the pig baskets, I received something like an electric shock through me. My memory went back to what I experienced as a 15 year old, when I was walking in the street. And then I saw a truck passing me, loaded with quite big baskets. From the other eyewitnesses I heard that there were Australian prisoners in those baskets. It all happened so fast, but it will stay forever in my memory. At that moment I didn't know yet what kind of future these men would have.

I think that I have seen it all in Tegal, but it is also possible that it happened in Semarang, when I stayed with my mothers friends in order to go to the high-school, until the Japanese occupation. But once they arrived I left Semarang and went back to Tegal where my mother lived. Alas, my mother died in 1945 in the Tjideng camp in Batavia (Jakarta).

Friendly greetings,

**No. 26:**

I was an eyewitness of the pig baskets atrocity in Malang, East-Java.

**No. 27:**

To Mrs. E.H.J. van Kampen,



Concerns: POWs transported in plaited bamboo baskets, March 1942

Undersigned was 23 years old, when cycling towards Pasar Tunjungan, a shopping centre. Then all of a sudden I saw a column of Japanese military transport, loaded with many completely naked white men in plaited bamboo pig baskets.

I followed them towards Tanjung Perak (The harbour from Surabaya) and then I saw with my own eyes, together with many Javanese dockworkers how the inhuman and barbaric Japanese military loaded all the baskets with men, into cargo boats from the firm Surabaya Veem. Then they were transported to the middle of the Street Madura (the sea between Java and the island Madura) thereupon the baskets with the men were thrown into the sea.

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Interview: By Elizabeth van Kampen

Mr. L. was my only Indonesian eyewitness, he came from the Molucca islands. I phoned him and asked if it would be possible to visit him. Oh yes, I was more than welcome. His Dutch was fluent and he lived together with his Dutch wife in Den Bosch, not far from Tilburg where I live.

I was wonderfully received by the charming Indonesian way, so I felt happy from the first moment I walked in. Mr. L. told me that he had worked at the office from the Dutch East Indies Marine before the war. He could stay there also during the war, because he was/is an Indonesian. He was not really happy with the situation, but he couldn't leave either.

Mr. L. told me that also many Javanese and Madurese had seen how the Japanese military had thrown the poor men, locked up in those pig baskets, into the sea. Mr. L. told me that most of the spectators were deeply shocked, they had never seen such an act before. He said that as from the harbour of Surabaya, Tanjung Perak, one can see the island Madura quite clearly.

The place where he had first seen this transport, was in front of the former American Consulate, in the Sumatra street from Surabaya.

Mr. L. told me that he was born on the island of Ambon where his whole family comes from. He said that many Amboinese (a south Molucca island) men and women were killed and burned by the Japanese military. Many of the Amboinese were put into camps, also women and children. This was because they were very faithful towards the Dutch.

#### **No. 28:**

The Netherlands Institute for war documentation, has a dossier, the dossier number is 5284.

It mentions that Mrs. Gwen Veen- Seth tells that inspector Piet Gallas has seen in June 1942 on the station Goebeng (Surabaya) a goods carriage loaded with

pigs baskets wherein locked up dead tired European POWs .  
Piet Gallas dared to ask the Japanese if he could give those men something to drink.

Yes, he is allowed to give them to drink but may not speak with the POWs. Through the gaps of those baskets he pours out some water from a coffeepot into their mouths.

Gallas will later on be killed by the Kempeitai. The pig baskets are thrown into the sea, while those men are still alive. Later on the bamboo baskets are washed ashore

(From the Newsletter Nr. 1 January 1991 from the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts JES.)

**No. 29:**

Hereby the following tips,

W.Rinzema - Admiraal mentions in her book "JAVA, THE LAST FRONTLINE" on page 49 a paragraph of this affair.

L.F. Janssen in "This half Prison" writes in his diary on 19 December 1942 ( p. 95) that an acquaintance told him that soldiers in baskets were transported through Surabaya.

**No. 30:**

Madam,

In the News Magazine from JES dd. December 2003, is an appeal concerning the Pig Baskets Atrocities.

This concerned not only the POWs, but also persons who among others were nursed in a mental hospital or home.

I don't know if this is also suitable for your appeal.

From the family book, my grandmother tells; her stepmother was in her last stage of live mentally ill and so she was nursed in a Home in Buitenzorg (Bogor).

Her life ended in a horrible in 1944. The Japanese occupiers held a merciless clearance under the old patients, especially when they were Europeans. The Japanese called them useless elderly people.

The Japanese locked my grandmother's stepmother together with other fellow sufferers up in a big bamboo cage and plunged this cage many times under water in the river, until all the patients were dead.

**No. 31:**

I was 9 years old when I walked together with my sister, 10 years old in Mataram on the road to Bogor (Buitenzorg) , when we saw trucks loaded with pig baskets.

My sister and I saw how the Japanese, pushed Australian military, saw those typical Australian hats, into those baskets. When the men were not quick enough then the Japanese stung them with a bayonet.

All this made a very deep impression on me, that is why he made these two designs.

When all the men in baskets were ready and layed on the trucks they drove away direction Bogor. They then went to Tanjung Priok, where the men were loaded over in a boat and were thrown into the sea where they drowned.

**No. 32:**

A lady who advises us to contact the 'Netherlands Institute for war documentation'.

The sources are: IC 067-406-407: notes Vromans (in 407 judgement Imamura)

IC 057-494: notes Van Velden Japanese Interneringskampen

(posing 10)

IC 030-748-762: diverse statements

IC 061-993: statement ( A Dutchman was in one of those baskets, but he was saved by a Japanese photographer who knew him from before the war)

**No. 33:**

My mother has told me that she saw how the Japanese transported people as pigs in bamboo baskets. She said that most of them were Australians.

**No. 34:**

We ( my family) lived in Surabaya. I was around 6 or 7 years old when I saw several trucks loaded with baskets. I thought about a chicken transport until I saw fingers moving through the wholes of the baskets. It gave me such a shock that I started crying and I quickly run home to tell what I had seen. It often comes back in my dreams.

**No. 35:**

During the Japanese occupation, it so happened that I became the "eldest son" since my older brother became POW. I was 10 years old in 1943 but I still remember everything.

I had to do some shopping for my mother, so I went on the main road there was the shop. The main road was called the Magelangseweg. We lived in one of the smaller roads near the bridge over the river Pawon. When I arrived on the main road I saw people quickly running away from something that stood on the side line with the nose direction Semarang. Most of the people were women and they looked quite shocked as if they had seen something that frightened them, but nobody said something. I felt that something wrong was going on, so I walked towards the truck that stood there. It was not unusual that cars and trucks stopped over there, since there was a forge next to the shop from Sastro Kemblik, that was the name of the owner. He repaired many cars, trucks and so on.

But to my alarm, I saw something I could hardly believe, I will remember until my death.

On the pick-up of the truck were piles of bamboo baskets with openings of about a man's fist. At the back of the boot the hood was slightly open, maybe by the wind.

I saw people in those baskets, white men, half naked and some had khaki trousers on.

It was a horrible site. I think that I had eye contact with one of the men, but I am not certain. It all happened in 4 to 5 seconds.

### **No. 36:**

An eyewitness from Indonesia

A friend living in Malang, East Java has sent the following story told by the Indonesian Mr. S. also living in Malang. Interview was taken in May 2007.

Together with his 8 year elder brother Mr.S saw how the Japanese have packed the POWs in baskets, that happened south of Malang , environment Turen. He was then almost ten years old.

The prisoners were Australian and Dutch military were guerrilla fighters, who were trying by sabotage actions to go to Australia.

They had already been caught before Mr. S and his brother saw them, and were ill treated. During the night the Indonesians living nearby could hear this.

And then one day a Japanese convoy of trucks ( S. doesn't remember how many) came to fetch the POWs. He and his brother could see from quite nearby that the tall white men were naked. None of them could really stand up, there legs were possibly broken. Among them were also men who had been hanged in trees.

The POWs had to sit in flowerpots. It looked as if the Japanese were packing in some plants. Under the pots was a sort of bamboo basketwork, that was pulled up when the POWs were squeezed into in those flowerpots."

One of the POWs was hit so badly with a shovel by the Japanese, that the other POWs had to bury him before they were packed in those pots.

When all the men were in the flowerpots and packed in the bamboo baskets they were thrown in the trucks and then piled up.

Mr. S. did not think of pig baskets, to him it looked more like plant packing.

A year or so later, the brother from Mr. S. became a Heiho (volunteer). In the revolution time his brother became a military by the TRI where he after all ended as colonel by the TNI. (his family still lives in Rampal) Alas, Mr. S. brother died some time ago.

Mr. S. hopes to find some more eyewitnesses, he knows that many Indonesians have seen the above described drama.

**De Telegraaf Amsterdam, August 11 1990:  
"TORTURED, TRANSPORTED AS PIGS AND THROWN INTO THE SEA."  
INTRODUCTION.**

In revenge to the fact that a few hundred Australian, Dutch, British and American troops did not capitulate after the Japanese invasion of East Java in March 1942, those subsequently captured were horrendously tortured and punished by the infamous Japanese Military Police, the Kempetai. Incarcerated in small bamboo pig baskets (approx. 100 cm long, 50 cm across), these prisoners were, after a long suffering transport, thrown into the sea as helpless food for hungry sharks. This story is one of the greatest and most horrendous dramas of the war with Japan.

STORY.

On Wednesday, 15 August 1990, at the Indies Monument in The Hague the 26.233 Dutch nationals, who were killed by the Japanese during their occupation of South East Asia in the Second World War, will be remembered. Between 1942 and 1945 many compatriots were killed by the Japanese military in the most cruel manner.

In the Netherlands still very little is known about the Japanese war crimes. So was too, until now, one of the most horrendous dramas of the war with Japan, the "pig basket affair", a sad secret.

It is the astonishing history of Dutch and Ambonese KNIL soldiers, who together with a few hundred Australian, British and American military, refused to surrender in East Java after the capitulation in March 1942.

The Allied soldiers go, with the assistance of KNIL soldiers, in small groups into the mountains to commence a guerrilla warfare against the Japanese.

Ultimately they are tracked down by the Japanese and the Kempetai then takes revenge in a terrible manner.

The Prisoners of War are each incarcerated in one metre long bamboo pig baskets. Thus imprisoned, they are transported, over long distances under a burning tropical sun, by truck or railways to the coast. There the baskets are loaded on board ships and then thrown into the sea. The victims either drown or are eaten by hungry sharks.

## "THE DISCOVERY OF THE PIG BASKET AFFAIR."

Shortly before his death, the 87 year old former resistance fighter from the former Netherlands East Indies, David Kriek, bearer of the Resistance Cross East Asia, asks that the truth behind this horrendous tragedy be uncovered. The day before he dies, on 27 July 1990, the Inventory of the General Secretary to the Netherlands East Indies Government is accidentally discovered in the General State Archives in The Hague. This inventory leads the way through a kilometres long track to Dossier 5284.

This dossier contains some 60 bewildering declarations, made under oath, by witnesses and copies of records of evidence lodged with the Bureau of Tracing War Criminals in Batavia.

Then it was also discovered that in the province of Groningen there was still a witness alive. The, now 64 year old, Pim Colson, a son of a planter, sees with his small brother at the end of April 1942, a long goods train stop at the station of Klaten in Central Java.

To our great surprise we discover that on a few open goods wagons a number of bamboo baskets are piled up, containing grievous battered prisoners of war with their knees drawn up.

They are Australians who were completely exhausted after the long trip and a tropical temperature of about 38 degrees. They ask us for water. When the Japs see this, they throw stones and rocks at us, so we had to run away quick smart. What made a deep impression on us was that the prisoners were not afraid at all. I still hear them calling out: <<Greasy, dirty, yellow mongrel monkeys!>>, hoping to be shot and relieved of their misery. This spectacle of these poor chaps is inscribed in my memory for life.

Therefore I am sick of all that talk about the <<rich civilisation>> of Japan. I know better. It is of course a scandal that Japan, just after the war, put us off with a pittance of three hundred guilders. That's a fraction of all our properties they stole from us during the war.

Japan has become, because of our stolen money, the richest country in the world. I hope that the Foundation is successful in their work to get worthwhile compensations from Japan through the United nations. If Japan wants to show that it is again a civilised country, it should not wait for a conviction, but should pay up now.>>

The most concise witness declaration in Dossier 5284 comes from the Policeman Peter George van der Star:

As a political prisoner in 1943, he sees for himself, in the Kempetai building in Kediri (East Java) how the 48 year old Laurens Otto Thomson and the retired Clerk of the Court Rein Kouthoofd, together with some Ambonese soldiers are put in pig baskets.

From a Japanese soldier he hears that these men in the baskets will be thrown into the sea near Soerabaya.

Other witness reports are from people who saw transports of prisoners of war in pig baskets going past them or saw baskets with bodies being washed ashore.

When the Temporary Court Martial in Batavia conducts an investigation in 1948, too few concrete clues are found to commence prosecution.

But nevertheless the sergeant of the Kempetai in Malang, Masuzo Niida, confesses on 24 February 1948 in Batavia's prison to the Chief Police Commissioner P. Rotteveel.

He explains how he escorted a number of transports of prisoners of war, put into pig baskets, from the mountain regions to a ship in Soerabaya. According to him, some 400 prisoners of war were taken in the mountains around Malang. He blames his superiors who gave him the commands. He mentions the names of sergeant major Ichiro Usama, captain Hachiro Harada of the Kempetai of Malang and colonel (later general) Abe.

The following day he retracts his confession after a visit from the Japanese interpreter to the Temporary Court Martial, Hiroshi Nakamura. He claims that he did not feel too well when making the confession.

The highest chief, the Japanese Commander of Java, general Imamura, claims to know nothing of the <<pig basket affair>>. Ultimately he is acquitted by the Temporary Court Martial in Batavia.

An Australian Court Martial however sentences him to ten years in prison.

WITNESSES IN DOSSIER 5284.

P.J. AMILOA

In May 1942 the chief clerk P.J. Amiloa of the Royal Packet Company (KPM), watches in the harbour of Soerabaya at the Hollandse Pier how some 50 pig baskets with prisoners of war are hoisted on the deck of a ship. A Japanese soldier throws hot porridge into one of the baskets. He then heard such a lamenting that he, frightened, runs back to his colleagues.

GWENDOLINE VEEN-SETH

Mrs Gwendoline Veen-Seth tells how inspector Piet Callas saw, around mid June 1942 at the railway station of Goebeng (Soerabaya), a goods wagon with pig baskets in which exhausted European prisoners of war were confined. He ventures to ask the Japs if he can give them some water. He is allowed to do so provided he does not speak to them. Through the openings in the baskets he pours water in their mouths. Shortly afterwards Callas is murdered by the Kempetai.

JAN WESSELMAN

Royal Netherlands Navy lieutenant Jan Wesselinan:

<<In August 1942 I discover, that in the Palmenlaan in Soerabaya, in the rear of two Japanese trucks, pig baskets with living people in it, are loaded. Later I hear that they were thrown into the sea. The baskets were washed ashore on the beach near Kendjeran.>>

JAN RUPS

Jan Rups, a journalist in Soerabaya, joins the resistance in April 1942. This group is captured in October 1942 in the mountains near Nongkodjadar and transported in pig baskets.

APPY BEETS

Mrs Appy Beets sees at the end of 1942 in the Coen Boulevard in Soerabaya a

Japanese truck loaded with pig baskets in which prisoners of war are confined. Bystanders tell her that the baskets will be thrown into the sea near Soekollo and Grisse. The coastal people can't sleep at night because of the victim's cries.

E. de GROOT

An official with the Department of Economic Affairs E. de Groot, sees early 1943 in Pekalongan a Japanese truck stop which is loaded with soldiers confined in pig baskets. They beg for water. The Japs throw buckets with water over the prisoners. They lick the water off the baskets.

LOUISE CHARLES

Louise Charles watches end of April or beginning of May 1943, while en route to the Dampit estate, a convoy of four Japanese Army trucks loaded with baskets in which there are European and Ambonese soldiers. Later she hears that the prisoners were thrown into the sea from the high rocks in Pasirian, exactly on the spot where in antiquity Indonesians used to sacrifice offerings.

LEONORE ANRIES

Leonore Anries sees at the end of September or beginning of October 1942 in the afternoon between five and six pm three trucks driving through the centre of Soerabaya, loaded with pig crates.

<<I just said to my children, look and now the Japs steal our pigs as well>>. Then I suddenly heard a cry from the trucks. Someone cried out:<<PRAY FOR US>>.

SOURCE <<PIG BASKET AFFAIR>>:General State Archive, Second Section, General Secretary 1942-1950, Archive of the Office of Japanese Affairs 1945-1948, Inventory number: 5284