

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

THE ASIAN HOLOCAUST: UNIT 731

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WARNING: SENSITIVE CONTENT

THE FOLLOWING PRESENTATION CONTAINS MATERIAL THAT MAY BE TROUBLING FOR SOME INDIVIDUALS.

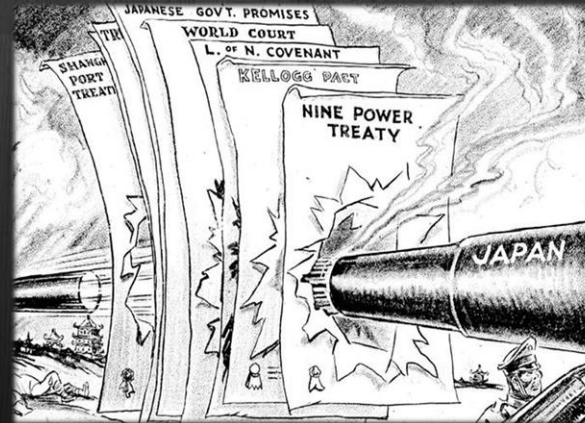
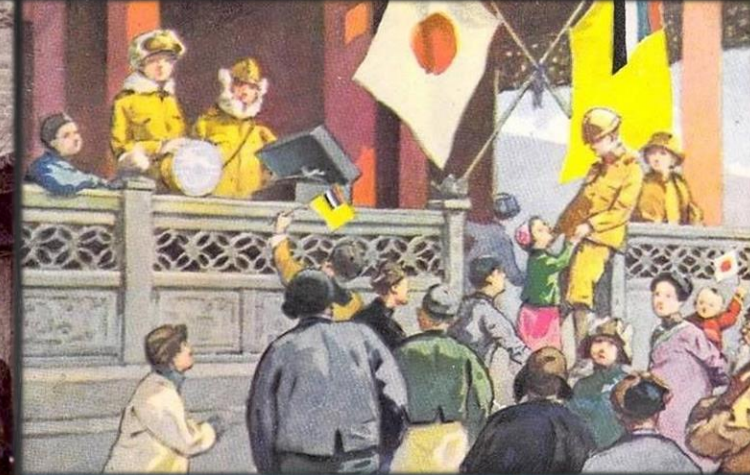
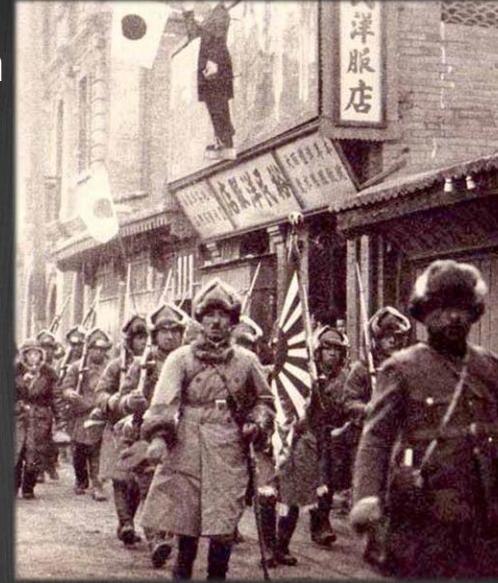
- BIOLOGICAL HORROR
- GORE
- EXTREME VIOLENCE

THE PRESENTER AND HOST WOULD LIKE TO REMIND EVERYONE THAT HISTORY IS NOT ALWAYS KIND NOR PRETTY. SOMETIMES THE MOST HORRIFIC STORIES COME FROM HISTORY. IF AT ANY POINT YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EXCUSE YOURSELF FROM THIS EPISODE.

THE PRESENTATION WILL BEGIN IN A FEW MOMENTS...

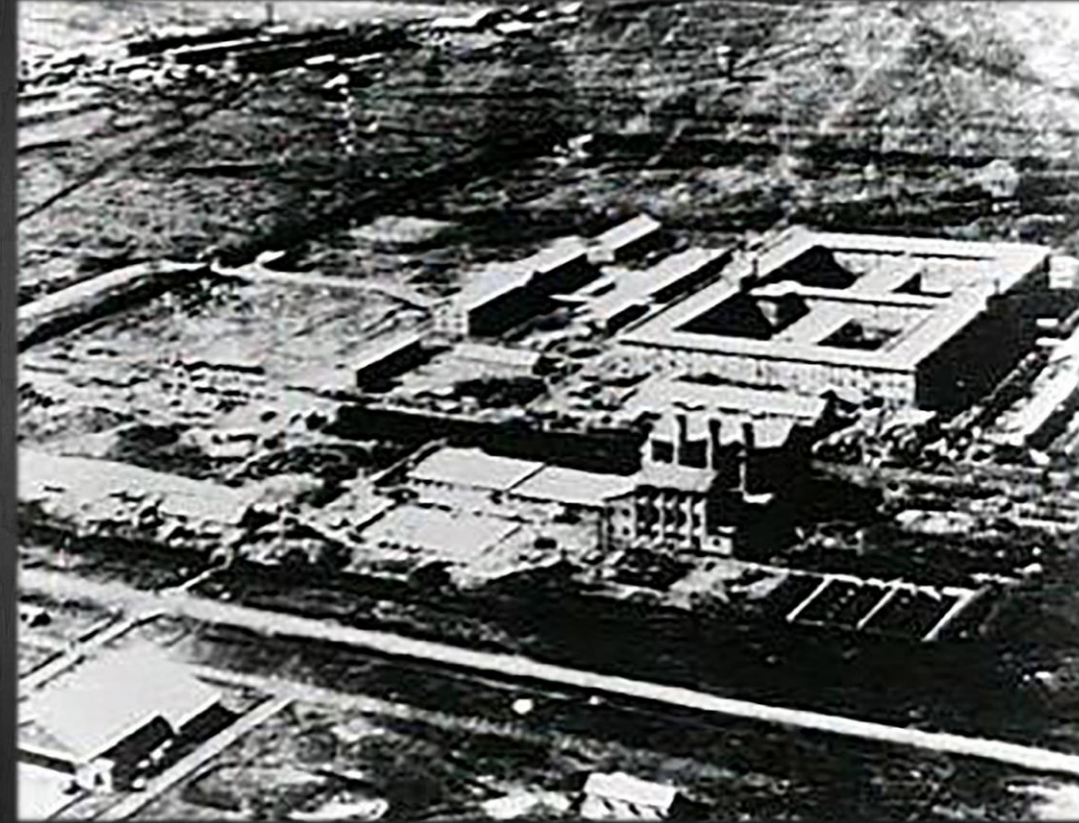
THE OCCUPATION OF MANCHURIA

- Sino-Japanese tensions and Japanese expansionism
- Kwantung Army
- Mukden Incident, 18 September 1931
- Occupation and establishment of Manchukuo, 1932
- China recognizes Japanese control, 1933
- Kishi Nobusuke and “National Defense State”
- Enslavement of millions of Chinese and Koreans
- Sexual slavery: “comfort women”



FOUNDING OF UNIT 731

- Ishii Shiro
- Headquartered south of Harbin, modern Pingfang District
- Founded by Kempeitai in 1935, transferred to Ishii's control in 1936
 - Unit 100 (Changchun) - animal and human experimentation
 - Unit 541 (Qiqihar) - chemical weapons research
- Epidemic Prevention and Water Purification Department
 - Sub-units throughout Manchuria
 - Unit 1855 (Beijing)
 - Unit Ei 1644 (Nanjing)
 - Unit 8604 (Guangzhou)
 - Unit 9420 (Singapore)



ISHII SHIRO

- Born 1892
- Studied medicine at Kyoto University
- Commissioned into the Imperial Japanese Army as army surgeon, 1921
- Had a fondness for raising bacteria as companions or pets
- Advocated military development of biological weapons in the 1920s and 30s
- Earned support of key IJA figures despite factional rivalries
- Received command of Unit 731, 1936
- Water filter design
- Childish and psychopathic
- Promoted to Surgeon General of the IJA (equivalent Lieutenant General) by 1945



BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS & EXPERIMENTATION

- Breeding of diseases and bacteria
 - Cholera
 - Typhoid
 - Botulism
 - Trench foot
 - Anthrax
 - Bubonic plague
- Rat breeding program in order to raise plague and fleas
- Tests conducted against prisoners
- Specialized germ bombs and spread methods



HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION

- Test subjects dubbed *maruta* - Japanese for logs
- Test subjects generally drawn from all walks of life - petty criminals, Soviet and Allied POWs, suspected Communists, or civilians randomly abducted by the Kempeitai
- Live vivisection and other biological study
- Germ tests
- Frostbite tests
- Gas chamber tests



HOW FAR UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND?

- Unit 731's formation sanctioned by Emperor Hirohito
- Ishii earned the favor of radical generals and officers, e.g. General Araki Sadao (Minister of War), Lt. Gen. Nagata Tetsuzan (mentor of Tojo Hideki)
- Coercion of civilian politicians to gain financial support
- Patronage by Prince Takeda Tsuneyoshi, chief treasurer of the Kwantung Army, and Yasuhito, Prince Chichibu, brother of the Emperor
- Criticism by Takahito, Prince Mikasa, youngest brother of Hirohito



BATTLES OF KHALKHIN GOL/NOMONHAN INCIDENT (1939)

- Soviet-Japanese border clashes
- Expectation of full-scale war between Japan and the USSR by Ishii
- First combat deployment of Unit 731 in June 1939
- “Suicide squad” led by Major Ikari Tsuneshige appointed to deploy disease agents in July amidst lack of air superiority
- Approx. 22.5 kg of cholera, typhus, and dysentery dumped into Khalkha River to infect Soviet troops
- Few if any Red Army troops infected; over 1,300 Japanese and Manchu soldiers infected despite decontamination procedures
- Khalkhin Gol clashes conclude with non-aggression pact in 1939; Ishii and Ikari decorated for the biological attack
- Some Soviet POWs put in Unit 731’s captivity, adding to test subjects



SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR (1937-45)

- Unit 1644 and logistics for attacks in central and southern China
- Japanese air superiority in China permitting aerial deployments
- Tactical releases of disease agents in September and October
- Germ bomb attacks on major population centers
 - Quzhou - 7 Oct 1940
 - Ningbo - 27 Oct 1940
 - Changde - 4 Nov 1941
- Heavy biological weapons deployment in Zhejiang-Jiangxi campaign, 1942
- First use of “newer” diseases like anthrax and rotten foot
- Infection of Japanese forces in addition to Chinese troops and civilians
- Subsequent attacks against other cities and partisans, but little record of their outcome



ATTACKS IN THE PACIFIC (1941-45)

- Proposal to deploy plague against U.S. and Filipino troops in Battle of Bataan, 1942
- Plans to reinforce defense of Saipan and Iwo Jima with plague, 1944-45
- Proposals to attack U.S. West Coast with biological weapons
- Failed balloon bomb experiments
- Launch of I-400 class aircraft-carrying submarines opens new potential
- Operation Cherry Blossoms At Night, 1944-45
- Proposed by Vice-Admiral Ozawa Jisaburo, Commander-in-Chief of IJN Combined Fleet
- Planned air raids on Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego with plague bombs
- Vetoed and shelved by General Umezu Yoshijiro, Chief of Army General Staff
- Proposal by Ishii to launch biological terrorist attacks after surrender and occupation of Japan



THE END OF UNIT 731

- Soviet invasion of Manchuria, 9 August 1945
- Unit 731 facilities and documents destroyed amidst occupation of Manchuria and surrender of Japan
- Initial denial followed by confessions of Unit 731 activities
- American cover-up of Unit 731 activities on MacArthur's orders
 - Immunity from trial granted to Ishii and other Unit 731 personnel
 - Details about Unit 731 withheld by the U.S. at the Tokyo Trials
 - Exoneration of members of the Imperial Household
 - Convicted war criminals acquitted or paroled and released by the mid-1950s
 - Unit 731 personnel, including Ishii, reintegrated into civilian life; many continued medical practices as civilians
- Khabarovsk Trial of Kwantung Army officers and Unit 731 personnel
 - Leniency of sentences suggests Soviets offered clemency in exchange for information



THE LEGACY OF UNIT 731

- American and Soviet biological weapons programs
 - Surviving Unit 731 research contributed to research at Fort Detrick, MD
 - Lavrentiy Beria, director of Soviet secret police, chosen to lead post-war research
 - Allegations of American biological weapons use in the Korean War
 - Sverdlovsk anthrax outbreak, 1979
- Official Japanese downplaying of Unit 731's existence, as part of nationalist historical revisionism
- Chinese demands for recognition and compensation as part of campaigns to seek redress for Japanese atrocities in East and Southeast Asia
- Individual Unit 731 participants have testified and apologized for their involvement
- Academic study opposing revisionism launched by Japanese legal experts, medical scholars, and political historians



SPECIAL THANKS

Prof. Jin Chengmin, Director of the Unit 731 Museum in Harbin, China

Prof. Yang Yanjun, Director of the International Center for Unit 731 Research, Harbin Academy of Social Sciences

Unit 731 Museum

ALPHA Education

Prof. Takashi Fujitani, University of Toronto

Dr. Antony Best, London School of Economics

Dr. Anton Harder, London School of Economics

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