

As a boy soldier belonged to the Special forces in Japanese Army

Anonymous (Shiroi City,94 years old)

I took the physical examination for conscription in August of 1944 and departed to the front in December.

Originally the education for the foot soldiers in the imperial Japanese Army, Japanese Army, has been needed for three months, but it was shortened at that time. We had it for only fifteen days. We, three hundred boy soldiers, from Chiba, Saitama, Tokyo, Kanagawa and Yamanashi, sailed on a ship from Maizuru Port in Kyoto to Pusan, Busan, in South Korea. Then, we moved to Nanking in China by a freight train. It took a week to just get to Nanking. We received the professional training to be Army medic in Nanking. It was hard and painful with physical punishments. For instance, because of the tidying up, we were ordered to form two rows and were forced to give someone faced double slap in the face.

After the tough days, I was assigned to the special forces that had secret missions to culture bacteria such as the cholera bacillus, *Bacillus pestis*, an endemic disease, an infectious disease and so on. One day, we had a terrible experiment to discharge the cultured cholera bacillus from the upstream of the Yangtze River. Although vegetables for our meals were provided by the region far away from the Yangtze River, our vegetables became contaminated with cholera bacteria and we couldn't get usual meal for about a week.

In those days, goods of every description have been short supply and also offensive weapons have lacked. They say that the military upper echelons already acknowledged to lose the war. In July of 1945, our mission was changed to eliminate evidence. We blew up the facility. However, because of dealing with after the cultivation of bacteria, our mission for evidence destruction continued even after the World War II and our homecoming was decided a month later than was planned at first.

We were compelled to kill nineteen prisoners, Chinese, Manchurian and Russian, captured as materials for study, by infecting potassium cyanide into their vein. When a doctor gave the injection to one of them, he acted violently as if insane and tried to get up together with the wooden bed tied both his hands and his legs. The power in the death throes was so strong that several boy soldiers had to get on his body and control him. As it was too hard for us, the doctor directly infected it into

his heart and soon he died calmly.

We, boy soldiers, had another mission to burn the corpse with a large pot until it became the ash. We only could do at most two bodies a day. That duty was the most terrible one. There was a really horrible smelling coming from these rotten corpses. The offensive smell caused us not to be able to have any food for several days.

In addition, we dug corpses buried after the death by studies in the facility and burned them until they became the ash.

There were five burial places. Each one had thirty bodies lined in ten meters square. They were one hundred and fifty bodies in total.

All of the bones in each corpse dug up were lined up and a doctor checked them. If they were not enough as a complete body, we had to find out the missing bones. We were not able to complete this mission on time. In the end, we shattered all the bones left not to be found out to be human bones and threw them away in the Yangtze River.

Time of returning home came at long last. We went down from Nanking to Shanghai by ship. The railway had been destroyed by Mao Zedong's subordinates. At that time, Japan had no ship routes from Shanghai to Japan, and we took American ship to Uraga in Kanagawa prefecture. At Uraga port, the examination for infectious disease was needed and it was a week before we left the ship. After that, we were taken to somewhere in unknown mountain and were isolated there for another week.

Our experience was strictly between us. It has been forbidden to speak out even in after homecoming. To tell the truth, even now, I don't know which range in our experience I may talk about. All of our belongings including photographs had been confiscated, therefore, I don't remember our members well. Thirty years after our returning, our fellow soldier meeting, the war veterans association, was established. We gathered in the meeting once a year but our days in Nanking hardly came up in conversation. Though all of us should have got into the ship, several people did not go down, The fact was only allowed to be a topic. We often talked each other. "Did you see XXX?" The answer was always "no!". Was he killed to destroy evidence? Or did he kill himself in the depths of despair?

◆the conscription system in Japan

Japanese conscription system had a long history. In 1872, the government introduced the system and our country became a nation with universal conscription. And then, according to the Military Service Law became effective in 1927, all of the young men who attained the twentieth year had to take the physical examination for conscription. However, by the surrender of Japan in August of 1945, the system was suspended in September and was abolished in November of that year officially.

◆boy soldiers

In our country in the World War II, as the war situation worsened, an age at which conscription could occur was lowered to nineteen years old in 1943 and to seventeen years old in 1944. As a result, soldiers under eighteen were called boy soldiers, #Shounen-hei# in Japanese. universe to fulfill your potentials.