

Murder In Java

It was with horror that I read in "The Mercury" of the murder of three Australian war crime investigation officers 35 miles from Batavia by Indonesians. It is not five weeks since I was talking to Capt MacKenzie and Flt-Lt McDonald in Batavia. At that time these were the only two Australian officers in Java, and with a staff of only two other ranks they were trying to run down and collect evidence of war crimes committed against the Australians by the Japanese, who are still scattered in various camps throughout Java.

Capt MacKenzie told me that already they had uncovered 103 different war crimes perpetrated against the Australians. He had asked the authorities in Australia for additional staff, and had even flown to Australia early this year to emphasise this need. In Australia he was met everywhere with promises, but when last I spoke to him he was still waiting for their fulfilment.

These officers collected their evidence during the daytime under conditions fraught with difficulty and peril. Lack of staff made it necessary for them to pass their evenings typing out the result of a strenuous day's work. The car used by these Australian officers had "Australia" painted on the bonnet, on the hood and back of the car. There was also a map of Australia and a kangaroo on the bonnet. The inscriptions were in white on a green background.

Let us also remember the murder of an English brigadier in Java within the past nine months. Let us add the murder of the three gallant Australians to the long list of war crimes which are crying out for just retribution. Let us not forget that at this very moment there is a large Japanese-trained and equipped army, in some cases believed to be Japanese-officered, belonging to a treacherous Japanese-inspired "government" situated nearer to Australia than Brisbane is to Melbourne.

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