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### THE KEMPEI IN JAPANESE-OCCUPIED TERRITORY

The Japanese Military Police organization, the *Kempei*, is the most powerful, the most hated, and the most feared organization in Japanese-occupied territory. The power of the *Kempei* derives chiefly from its semi-independent position within the Army. Although organized as an Army combat arm, the *Kempei* is commanded by a Provost Marshal General who is directly responsible to the Minister of War. Its overseas activities range from the maintenance of military discipline to counter-espionage and the supervision of "thought control" among conquered populations. In fulfilling these broad functions the *Kempei* acts with an almost complete freedom from legal checks. As long as the Japanese Army retains control of the occupied territories the *Kempei* will be a strong deterrent to the formation of underground groups and native political organizations. Even after the expulsion of Japanese troops the *Kempei* will probably attempt to maintain an intelligence network and to instigate subversive activity among native populations.

#### *Organization*

Authority in the *Kempei* runs from the Minister of War to the commander of the organization, the Provost Marshal General. On problems concerning the Home Islands occasional "supervision" comes from the Ministers of Home Affairs and Justice, and the Minister of Navy issues instructions concerning *Kempei* control of Navy personnel. Orders from the Provost Marshal General are channeled through the Supreme Command, to which the main *Kempei* headquarters in Tokyo is attached, and dispatched to *Kempei* headquarters in Manchuria, China, and the Southern Regions. From these Area Army headquarters, the orders are dispatched to the *Kempei* units attached to various Army divisions.

Within the organization there are two main branches, the Field Military Police and the Regular Military Police. Although there is a considerable overlapping of function between the two divisions, the Field Military Police are largely concerned with counterintelligence, while the duties of the Regular Military Police involve chiefly the enforcement of military discipline and order. Also, most of the Field Military Police, who are recognized as the upper strata of the *Kempei*, are officers and are better paid than the Regular Military Police.

#### *Personnel*

*Kempei* personnel are hand-picked volunteers from the Japanese Army. Before the war, six years of Army service was a prerequisite for membership, but recently the required service has been reduced to three

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years. All *Kempei* personnel must meet high standards of physique, intelligence, language facility, and education. However, the standards for the Field Military Police are even higher; because an intimate knowledge of enemy countries is necessary for counterintelligence work, candidates are frequently selected from Japanese Foreign Office personnel and Japanese embassy and consular police overseas.

Selected *Kempei* candidates are given a year's special training at *Kempei* schools. The curriculum includes such courses as law, languages, espionage, counterespionage, horsemanship, fencing, and unarmed combat. Specific attention is given in the classrooms to methods of invisible writing, shadowing, and entering and leaving buildings. Students are also given extensive field training, and are frequently required to make exhaustive investigations of the production and the methods of some particular Japanese industry without being detected. Also, in order to test their skill, they are made to disguise themselves and frequent places where they are known.

Rough approximations of the number of *Kempei* personnel suggest that there are at present 70,000 *Kempei* of all ranks, 24,000 of whom are officers. Early in 1945 three thousand *Kempei* were estimated to be in Burma alone. These figures, however, are for Japanese personnel only, and *Kempei* members make a general practice of recruiting large numbers of natives to supplement their number, especially for use in intelligence and counterintelligence work.

The *Kempei* Field Military Police Manual gives detailed instructions for recruiting native personnel in the field. The *Kempei* are told to select their agents from among those persons who are either actively pro-Japanese or have a grudge against the enemy, giving preference to coolies, fishermen, Chinese living abroad, village and district chiefs, missionaries, and other prominent people of native villages. The methods recommended for enlisting these people include the granting of special privileges, the offer of money and goods, the use of threats or compulsion, the imbuing of servants and coolies with "spiritual training," and the adoption of a liberal attitude when a native has been caught in a crime.

Both the Regular Military Police and the Field Military Police divisions ordinarily wear regular Army uniforms with distinguishing insignia. Uniform insignia for the *Kempei* are flower-like stars surrounded by leaves. The *Kempei* may also wear a white brassard with red letters signifying *Kempeitai*. The insignia for the *Kempei* in plain clothes consist frequently of small buttons resembling a chrysanthemum, worn on the under side of a coat lapel.

### *Powers and Functions*

The powers and functions of the *Kempei* in occupied territory may be divided into three categories: discipline, special warfare, and security. The *Kempei* expend their greatest effort in the maintenance of security,

both in the preservation of military secrecy and the control of civilian morale.

In maintaining civil discipline the *Kempei* assume an authority superior to the local courts and police. They usually take over the police force of the occupied territory, impressing the members into their service. Next they usually register the native population and establish a census department. They then issue Military Police passes and inform the population that anyone intending to be away from home for more than 24 hours must notify the census department. Later, in order to punish crimes committed by unknown offenders, the *Kempei* usually establish a system of group responsibility. They set up neighborhood control associations whose heads are responsible for the maintenance of order within the neighborhood. The associations themselves are subdivided into family units with the head of family assuming responsibility secondary to that of the head of the neighborhood association. There is no court to which the population may appeal. The effectiveness of *Kempei* methods may perhaps be judged by the reports that Shanghai, notorious for its extensive underworld, has experienced a period of comparative law and order under *Kempei* control.

In the enforcement of military discipline the *Kempei* possess supreme power. A member of the *Kempei* may arrest any member of the armed forces up to three ranks higher than himself. He may determine and execute punishment in the field. He is above the control of the local military establishment and often displays his superiority by disregard of saluting and lack of uniform dress. He can be arrested only by *Kempei* superiors and may receive orders only from them. Such work as traffic control and guarding essential installations is done occasionally by the *Kempei*, but usually by line troops. This freedom from routine duties and the possession of wide powers make the *Kempei* especially hated and feared by Japanese troops.

According to the Field Military Police Manual the special warfare assignments undertaken by the *Kempei* are likely to include burning enemy materials and installations, using bacterial and chemical warfare among enemy troops, disrupting signals and communications, and antagonizing the natives against the enemy in order to prevent their procurement of supplies. They also organize fifth column groups among native populations. The *Kempei* are sometimes assigned to operations comparable to commando raids upon enemy outposts. During these operations *Kempei* personnel usually wear native dress or other disguises.

In fulfilling their paramount task of maintaining security in occupied territories, the *Kempei* exert their greatest effort in the field of counterintelligence. However, the *Kempei* do a considerable amount of intelligence work, and, in addition, devote much of their time to maintaining "thought control" among the armed forces and conquered populations.

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The Japanese Field Military Police Manual designates the listing of spies among the fundamental duties of the *Kempei*. The *Kempei* maintain a vigilance around hotels, post offices, and railway stations. They investigate such personnel as canteen stewards, government contractors, and other civilian employees. They establish strict regulations in occupied areas for the sale of firearms, powder charges, explosives, electrical appliances and drugs. They also supervise photographic supply shops, restaurants, sweet shops, cafes, and amusement places. Because such extensive operations require large numbers of agents, the *Kempei* make a general practice of using natives to supplement their ranks. In this way they have succeeded in establishing a broad counterintelligence network in Japanese-occupied territory.

In counterintelligence work the *Kempei* maintain close coordination with Special Service Organizations (*Tokumu Kikan*), which are assigned to ordinary intelligence operations. Frequently a *Kempei* section is attached to a Special Service unit. The two staffs process all reports jointly and determine their value for either organization. The *Kempei* also engage in combat intelligence work, chiefly through the use of native agents and native reconnaissance patrols. When information of operational value is obtained it is forwarded to the organization for whom it can be most useful. *Kempei* intelligence work is secondary to its counterintelligence work and consists chiefly of collection.

The *Kempei* overseas are assigned the task of maintaining "thought control" over the armed forces and civilian populations. In exercising this control over military personnel the *Kempei* devote themselves especially to methods of combatting propaganda warfare. They are instructed to be constantly vigilant against enemy printed matter, pictures, radio programs, slogans, songs, flying kites, and wall handwriting. *Kempei* are distributed among Army units to attempt to counteract such propaganda by explaining enemy plans to the troops, by devising similar methods for use in retaliation, and by coping with disorder before it is too late. In order to be able to clarify enemy plans the *Kempei* assemble materials over a long period of time, making statistical observations and studying routes and methods. Even more directly, they secretly observe the effect on their troops of the enemy propaganda and of their own counterpropaganda, and even inspect the reports of commanding officers. Finally, they take what their Manual describes as "suitable protective measures within the Army."

The Field Military Police Manual describes four immediate aims to be achieved in occupied territory through the mediums of propaganda and "thought control." They are: (1) The destruction of communism and other such influences in order to facilitate the establishment of the influence of the Emperor. (2) The development of commerce and the restoration of the culture of Greater East Asia, thereby bringing about "social betterment, tranquillity, and the pursuit of one's own occupation." (3) The reformation of the "old, cliquish, egoistic nationalism" and the abolition of the national consciousness of being a conquered people in

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order to bring about "neighborly and friendly relations." (4) The promotion of a unified economy and the establishment of the cooperative defense of Greater East Asia.

In attaining these aims, the *Kempei*, in addition to distributing propaganda among native peoples, investigate the political sympathies and the loyalties of the population. Native agents, Japanese civilian employees, and the intelligence personnel of other agencies assist the *Kempei* in this work. A double check on persons under suspicion is maintained through liaison with the Special Service Organization and the local Army Headquarters. In handling suspects the *Kempei* use torture freely and do not appear to be restrained by any rules of procedure or administrative regulations. On some occasions they establish themselves in a suspect's house for a week at a time and watch, without asking questions or even speaking at all, until the suspect makes a false move, either through embarrassment or fright.

Another medium of thought control utilized by the *Kempei* is the censorship of literature, plays, films, and correspondence in occupied territory. The *Kempei* are instructed to be especially alert to trends of public sentiment, economic conditions within the occupied country, the ideologies of the inhabitants, and the policies of religious, political, and labor organizations. They are also expected to be active in checking rumors. The *Kempei* are instructed that religion can be used as a short cut in winning over native populations and that freedom of belief is therefore to be recognized insofar as it does not interfere with peace and order.

Reports from occupied territories attest to the ruthless efficiency of the *Kempei* in their dealing with native populations. In the Japanese-held portion of North China they were reported to have arrested over 6,000 persons during a ten-week period in 1944. They are said to be more responsible than the regular Army troops for giving the Japanese a reputation for rapine among conquered peoples. They have been relentlessly vigilant in the fields of counterintelligence and the control of underground activity. In the process of establishing these efficient controls over the territories occupied by the Japanese Army the *Kempei* have constructed an extensive intelligence network whose personnel includes large numbers of natives. These natives have been trained in *Kempei* methods over the past four years. Efforts presumably will be made to utilize this network to obtain information concerning Allied operations and to direct sabotage after the Japanese Army has departed from the territories now held.

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