

Indonesia in WWII: Documents detail how Japan Imperial military forced Dutch females to be “comfort women”

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FUKUOKA — A set of official documents detailing how the wartime Japanese military carted off about 35 Dutch women from a prison camp in what is now Indonesia and made them provide sex as “comfort women” has been disclosed to a civic group at the National Archives of Japan in Tokyo, group members said Sunday.

The documents were part of the evidence behind a 1993 statement issued by then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono in which Japan acknowledged and apologized for its military’s involvement in the recruitment of women into sexual servitude, but only their existence and outline had been known.

Titled “Class-B and -C (re: Dutch tribunals) Batavia trials, case No. 106,” the documents concern a provisional military tribunal set up by the Netherlands in Batavia, as Jakarta was known in the former Dutch East Indies, for Class-B and Class-C war criminals that had convicted five Japanese military officers and four civilians for rape and other crimes by 1949.

The roughly 530 pages of documents include records of the tribunal, including indictments and rulings and also the results of interviews with the officers, and a summary of them made by the Justice Ministry was among materials collected during the drafting of the Kono statement.

The original documents were moved in 1999 from the ministry to the national archives and disclosed in late September at the request of the Kobe-based civic group, the members said.

According to a ruling for a lieutenant general of the Imperial Japanese Army and related documents, the Dutch women detained in a camp in what was Semarang province on Java Island were taken on the orders of a Japanese officer to four “comfort stations” in the province and made to provide sex.

The ruling quoted some of the officers as saying, “We asked the chief of the provincial police to select women at the camp for prostitute houses,” and, “The women were brought out by provincial officials at the request of (one officer’s name).”

“The women were not told of what work they would be doing until they got into the prostitute houses,” another officer was quoted as saying.

Also part of the documents is a record of a 1966 interview with the lieutenant general held at the Ishikawa prefectural office after he returned to Japan.

He was quoted as saying, “Some coercion was seen on a few people in taking written consent (to be comfort women),” while arguing against findings in the tribunal by saying some of the women’s accounts were not true as they tried to put down the Japanese military.

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/07/national/documents-detail-how-imperial-military-force-d-dutch-females-to-be-comfort-women/#.UltMMVNjbRY>