

ACTIVITY: World War II

CASE: GSAF 1945.07.00

DATE: Late July 1945

LOCATION: The incident took place off Cheribon (now Cirebon) in Northern Java.

NARRATIVE: "In the port of Cheribon, a Japanese submarine took on board 90 civilian prisoners. All were European and included women and children. As dusk fell, the submarine set sail. It traveled on the surface, the 90 prisoners standing outside on deck. From the top of the conning tower two machine guns, aimed fore and aft, could be plainly seen. Fearing the worst, many of the women started crying but were helpless to do anything. Clinging to each other for stability in the gently rolling sea, the 90 captives waited and prayed. After about an hour the submarine suddenly slowed and dived without warning. The machine guns were never used. Swept off the deck as the ship slid beneath the sea the prisoners faced their worst nightmare. Schools of sharks attacked the screaming mass of humanity as men women and children were torn to pieces in a feeding frenzy.

"There was only one survivor who, minus an arm and right foot to the sharks, stayed alive long enough to be picked up by three Javanese fishermen. After relating his story he lost consciousness through loss of blood and died from his injuries a short time later. His body was then committed back to the sea, the three fishermen fully aware of their fate should they return to port with the body of an European who was supposed to disappear.

"After the war this atrocity was reported to the authorities but as all naval files and records of ship movements had been destroyed by the Japanese, the identity of the submarine and its crew was never established."

SOURCE: <http://www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/ms/info/massacresinthepacific.htm>

