

The Japanese coup of March 9, 1945

Fleutot report

The Commissioner of Police Indochinese Fleutot led from 1942 to March 9, 45 Special Information Section of the Sire du Tonkin in Hanoi, in charge of espionage against. In a report submitted to the French Government in Paris in July 1947, Mr Fleutot notes that it was the only Tonkin expected in the month of February 1945, and announced 24 h. to advance the Japanese coup of March 9, 1945.

From February he provided day after day about reports of preparations for the Japanese army:

- Eg the Commissioner Fleutot reported that Japanese troops performed drill attack of streets and houses
- They were shod soled shoes pancakes
- The Japs raflaient city (Hanoi) all electric lamps and rice
- Ammunition were distributed to the troops
- That Japanese civilians had ordered their domestic Annamite (prepare reserves of food and water)
- Even they were expecting an attack against the French and said that independence is proclaimed March 10, 1945.

The security was held in Saigon daily informed (Controller Henry Boubal).

Mr Fleutot was ordered to issue its report in person to the military authorities - that is to say, the Military Bureau of Statistics (BSM) in charge of espionage against and to the Staff of the Division Annam- Tonkin.

March 8, 1945 to 18 pm., He sees Lt. Col. Cavalin Head of BSM

After reading this officer found that the information was fantastic - it was the "novel", that anyway the BSM was informed of anything and therefore the information provided by the Police could only be true.

Mr Fleutot nevertheless asked that this information be reported to the Chief of Staff of the Senior Commanding General (General Ayme).

Commissioner Fleutot should bear its report to the General Mordant to the Citadel. The latter told by one of his officers that perhaps the information given were within defense preparations from the Japs, who were expecting an American landing but anyway these measures were not directed against the French .

Finally Fleutot Commissioner submitted his report to General Sabattier, who was the only one to consider.

With his chief of staff, he immediately took all necessary measures to transfer Tong PC, logged area, etc ...

On March 9 the morning General Sabattier sent his intelligence officer to the Commissioner Fleutot to confirm the information from the previous day.

Fleutot confirms that the attack was needed more and was still scheduled for March 8 to 10, 1945.

More information about the impending attack

In addition, on March 6, 2 Japanese officers prisoners in Australia, practicing listening radio for allies intercepted message:

The Imperial General Staff ordered the implementation of the disarmament of French troops in Indochina for March 9, 1945.

Warned by the Australian Defence Staff, Colonel Renucci, our military attache immediately forwarded the information to National Defense in Paris by the relay Calcutta.

General June - Chief of General Staff, brought it to the attention of General de Gaulle -

This information has not yet primordial been exploited.

Night of March 9 to 10, 1945

Around 20 hours thuds of gunfire are seen in the direction of Hanoi is said that the Citadel is attacked and resisted.

This time it is the "signal for battle." The matter became serious. We need to equip ourselves with speed, and we get 48 cartridges for the carabiner.

The neighborhood is in turmoil. In a dark night, lit by burning piles of papers in front of the offices, including their military records they harness animals and load 75 mountain with ammunition. JB is assigned to the 8th Mountain Battery with a few friends.

A word about the shoemaker boots entrusted by JB Impossible in this bustle to join the man in question. He tries to force the door of the room, without success. There he is forced to keep his feet "Tonkinese" sandals and it is with this that we need to work!

23 hours.

They leave the area and learn that the Japanese took over Vietri, for a surprise attack.

4th R.A.C. is commanded by Squadron Leader Prugnat.

Lieutenant Bono is their battery commander. The Red River is no longer accessible after the fall of Vietri, they head on Ha Trung.

After walking all night, they take place in the morning on a hill, where a company is already entrenched 5th REI

The parts are hidden behind the nipple and connected by telephone, with observer positions which includes JB They are on a cutting bridgehead from west to east loop Red / Black River River, northern camp Tong and the airfield.

They learn that the Battalion 2 / 4th Regiment Tonkinese, commanded by Battalion Chief Bixella, was surrounded in his cantonment Song Dong and knocked out.

The airfield was busy, there was resistance. It is also said that Phu-To the north is in the hands of the Japanese. We distinctly heard the machine gun fire and mortars to Tong.

Japanese advancing on their positions are motorized (truck mounted) and have tanks.

Around noon they were ordered to withdraw to a second position, the Japanese likely to overflow the third group of the regiment after lack - and for good reason - the Battalion Bixella.

This battery by his shots had tried to fill the hole created in the bridgehead. They are the immediate vicinity of Trung Ha.

Earlier this afternoon, they learn that the Command has decided to cross the Black River, the Japanese no longer just a few kilometers from their positions, and group everyone on Hung Hoa. Units in contact with the enemy - (2nd Co. 5th REI motorized group of aviation) also drop to the grass-Ha Trung.

The order was given them ~~de~~claveter tubes after the last shot, throw the heads into the river and blow up the ammunition. Lieutenant Bono - tears in his eyes - executed the order, and they fell back on the tray.

For now, there is no stampede among the troops.

The pan-Ha Trung

The Black River at this location is 300 meters wide with a fairly swift current. While there, the mess and overcrowding are indescribable. Nearly 4,000 men, hundreds of horses, mules, vehicles of all kinds, all packed in anticipation of a crossing becoming

increasingly problematic as hours. We must destroy all materials and set it on fire.

Maddened animals fight each other.

There are two tanks in service, but soon one of them overloaded flowing, and there one left.

Winds of retirement and desperate flight start blowing everywhere. The right of way is given to men with their personal weapons, food and ammunition that they will carry with them.

JB keeps with him, his musket, ammunition and five grenades. On the back, shirt, shorts and sandals on his feet. In musette few boxes of "corneed beef" and biscuits French Military Commissariat. JB kept his watch and a pocket knife. On the head is always a cap.

The second priority is to increase the river 300 meters maximum of horses and mules saddles. Why they roped and Legionnaires begin to water to help them pass. Many animals will not reach the other side, carried away by the current. It must be said that all these animals are terrified by the explosions, firing ammunition boxes, the screams and cries.

Lieutenant Bono asks for volunteers to continue the destruction of equipment - they are a dozen young to do this work - throw everything they can wear in the river and blow up the rest.

This atmosphere - if one can call it that - is terribly depressing for the morale of sharpshooters Indochina. They are well aware that the French just lose face. They throw their uniforms, began to loot and began to flee. We must recognize that there is more authority, and thus more orders. Europeans in general are holding up, but that is not the case for aboriginal people who need to be controlled, and which are no longer.

JB and his friends act with one thought in mind: please do not get caught by the Japanese. That was their biggest fear.

Quote here a paragraph from the book of Captain R. Charbonneau, who has the title "The outcasts of victory" on the case tray Trung Ha:

"Among those who lived through this dramatic improvisation," many do still evoke the dramatic character of a "huge mess worthy of that of the famous crossing of the Berezina."

By late afternoon, the ferry and the two or three "sampans" they had recovered were taken under fire from Japanese mortars; two hours later in the automatic weapons.

Lieutenant with Bono and some friends they pass on the other side, on a sampan. It's almost dark.

March 10 evening.

The main forces of the garrison of Tong, got out of the trap where they were locked up, the Japanese do not cross the Black River.

They close! ..

They walk on Hung Hoa, which is about 10 km.

In this village they found a part of the 4th RAC With a group of young people, they rush into the first and perhaps the only existing Chinese shop. The Legion has gone ... but they find something to eat. It's been 24 hours since their stomach growl! The brave Chinese still waiting to be fixed! their pockets were empty of course any money.

They were ordered to continue until Than-Son - next village - where they arrived around 7:00 in the morning after walking all night. They gathered at the "farm Rouet" (concession belonging to a French operator of coffee).

This is where their fate will be decided.  
Than-Son

They are awaiting a decision Command.

It becomes indeed obvious to everyone on the slopes of the North, to Yunnan, crossing the High Tonkinoise Region, will arise primarily the problem of supply. The more they dig into the mountain, the less likely they are to find food.

They learn that General Alessandri just made a choice but to demobilize locally maximum Indochinese soldiers who will go home.

This is undoubtedly a painful decision, because these men have followed us here. The order was given to disarm. But curiously supply demobilization is also made to the Europeans, professional soldiers already tired from a long stay in France without returning.

The Squadron Leader Prugnat asks young 4th RAC, to think - what will follow will not be a cakewalk - it will take it to the end.

The sound travels a semblance of agreement had been reached with the Japanese, we would be interned as a prisoner of war with all the international guarantees.

We got to know these Japanese who had the Japanese name, since the troops we had behind us consisted of Koreans and Manchus, whose ferocity was legendary.

It was also learned that the senior officer Tong stayed with families and unfit was brutally murdered. And then we did not have any intention to stop there. Indochina was our country, our duty was to fight. Thus about 90% of young people Schools Chasseloup Loubat and Sarraut, will be voluntary, 50% will not return.

Grouping Alessandri represented by 1,500 troops including about 850 legionnaires, and dozens of Indochina was formed in two sub-groups:

1) The first, under the command of Squadron Leader Prugnat including:

- Motorized group of 150 men Tong
- The C.I.R.E. 50 men
- Group 3 4th R.A.C. 120 men
- The aviation detachment of 100 men
- 2 / 5th Abroad 350 men - Captain Coekborne.

Total = 770 men, all reduced to the status of soldiers.

The axis is to be followed:

- Thu-Cuc / Ngia-Lo / Gia Hoi / Tule / Than-Huyen / Binh Lu / Phong Tho and before the Japanese from Lao-Kay, have cut this route fallback covering also important Lai Chau center, the capital Thai -

2) The second: under the command of Colonel Francis, includes:

1 / 5th R.E.I. Captain Left 350 men

3 / 5th R.E.I. Captain Lenoir 150 men

Elements of the 1st R.T.T. and 2nd / 4th R.T.T. 100 men

Auto group and 50 different men

Military Academy Commandant Carbonnel 50 men

Total = 700 men

With some other young, JB is assigned to the group of Colonel Francis.

JB leaves the artillery group, the heart a little tight - he never see again some comrades, and their disappearance will learn much later in China.

Resuming the march, he thought his family in Saigon. He thinks his father has been arrested by the "Kempeta" - because of its features - but what happened to his mother, his brother and sister? He will have to wait more than six months to receive news!

route

First objective: Ta Khoa on the Black River, and Son La, Tuan Giao and Lai Chau reach - either by RP 41, if the passage was possible, or by the Black River.

A report that General Alessandri, has a radio, parachuted before March 9, and it was possible to get in touch with him Kunming and Calcutta.

He learns that the 14th Air Force based in Yunnan, did not respond to requests for air support and supplies.

The Americans abandoned the French troops in Indochina, who managed to escape the Japanese coup.

By cons, Calcutta does what he can to support our troops.

The first drop is performed on Thu-Cuc by two English Liberators - we get a lot of weapons and ammunition, better suited to fight bush, our carabniers - (eg FM Sten Bren - plastic - grenades).

From March 15 to 18.

The incentive of Calcutta most of the group falls back to Son La still free Japanese presence - while a detachment Prugnat continuous Binh Lu, and the 2nd Battalion / 5th REI Lenoir is worn on the left flank Song Ma.

From March 19 to 30.

Fighting engaged on Highway 41, mainly Col de Meo and Tuan Giao before (Captain Carbonel), where the bulk of the group will head west to Dien Bien Phu, while a detachment (d'Alverny - to be later killed Col Claveau) will cover the road to Lai Chau.

It is March 22.

Three groups of volunteers - Lieutenant-Colonel Vicar - Captain Baudelaire Troops Indochina, and Captain of the SA Dampierre from India - the latter parachuted Sonla with a small team - together representing about sixty men, trained commandos left behind Japanese lines in the direction of the Delta, with a mission to create "underground" resistance.

JB was voluntary, as his comrades High School Chasseloup Laubat Alphonse Denis, Yvon Leguyarder, Bassou, Gabriel and others.

A few days before training commandos, JB was evacuated to hospital Sonla with an acute attack of malaria, treated vigorously by the Surgeon Captain Riu but its release, four days later, the group had already left!

In his fate had other plans.

As of March 31.

That is to say, after 13 days of fighting stalls were gradually oriented towards Lai Chau and Dien Bien Phu.

It must be said that the operation started in the most precarious conditions without information, or stores, or heavy weaponry, with a reduced number in half. High Valley of the Red River was occupied by the enemy, whose motorized Delta Tonkinese forces released had the opportunity to win quickly Son La and Sam Neua.

The group was therefore under threat of a double encirclement.

Recall that the fights were delivered in covered mountainous areas, cut by deep valleys, almost penniless, with a single vehicle road (unpaved), Provincial Route 41, west of Son La, climbed the difficult Col Meo, before returning to Tuan Giao-, where two diverging branches earn Lai Chau by Col Claveau and Dien Bien Phu.

Alessandri had understood that we should not rely on outside help from a few English airdrops which once only shoes and supplies.

Also determining a valid strategy in such adverse conditions was not objectively easy. We had to try to continue, by withdrawing the High Regions (4th and 5th Territories Military) - Upper Laos, being considered in this regard as a "reduced defense" - and remain politically present a symbolic portion of Indochina .

The extended columns, increasingly sparse resistance carried it must be said, by strong leaders, was marked by heavy fighting.

Malnourished, or often not at all, not dressed or poorly dressed, shod or no shoes at all, exhausted by fatigue, illness (malaria), deprivation and suffering; 1200 legionnaires, colonial, aviators have played the field, the Japanese, almost always on mountain trails, pressed to the border with China, a boatswain and cruel enemy, always committing fresh troops, more determined to end this handful of French who kept their heads.

From 31 March to 4 April 45

The sub-group Carbonel (1st and 2nd Battalion of the 5th REI + aviation detachment) supports retardant Tuan Giao to Dien Bien Phu.

March 31 also, the group of Commander Alverny, folds fighting to Luan Chau.

April 1st, this officer was killed in action Col Claveau, which opens the road to Lai Chau.

This lock fell initiative remains the Japanese forces with the road.

May 45

The bulk of the group Alessandri win Dien Bien Phu.

From Muong Khoua, it will split into three columns for each of the main routes crossing from north to south, the 5th Military Region.

To March 15, 1945 GH pursued the topographic survey of the card at 1/100 thousandth of Dien Bien Phu and was on the board of Co-Pia to 1800 m. altitude lorsqu'arriva at his camp the custody of his Brigade Leader, Commander Detchepare, who handed him a sealed envelope that opens and ordered him to stop work immediately and retreat to Dien Bien Phu this without further explanation.

With no means of information he is stunned by this order occurs in full topographic campaign. After folding his camp, he will start the next day with his porters and guards, toward the RP 41 that it reached after a long day of walking. It took him another day to reach Tuan Giao-, a large town located at the crossroads of Son La, Lai Chau and Dien Bien Phu.

The next day he meets along the way the company of Lieutenant Johner who left the post of Dien Bien Phu and trudging towards Tuan Giao-and His-La. He learns from them, "a French expeditionary force landed on the coast of Indochina and the troops of the Upper Region swept into the Delta to take the Japanese sandwich"!

Annoyed at having to turn their backs on the enemy continues its way to Dien Bien Phu, where he arrived after three days of walking (82 km). He finds there his colleague Martinel and some soldiers including a radio that remained to keep the job and ensure safety.

Their Brigade Leader has already left Dien Bien Phu Lai Chau where he served as Head of the 4th Military Region Acting Colonel Fourmachat the party being at the head of his troops in front of the Japanese.

Two days after their arrival Detchepare orders them to join him in Lai Chau. The military put the horses at their disposal, allowing them to accomplish in two days (90 km). They are housed at the military post where a feverish atmosphere reigns.

Learning that a group of Japanese held in wait in the forest, near the Black River, downstream of Lai Chau, they leave a score in an attempt to dislodge them. Before even having identified they are under heavy fire to which they try to fight back with their old muskets dating from the 14/18 war and munitions certainly grossly out of date because it does not leave much more than one shot on two or three . Nevertheless, they manage to put them to flight, but the lack of armament bodes ill for the events.

The first contingents arriving Delta finally teach them the facts that none expeditionary force has landed in Indochina and it is the Japanese who attacked our garrison by surprise as it has been explained above.

GH acquainted JB happens to Lai Chau with this group.

On April 5, we get the order to evacuate Lai Chau by the track that winds along the left bank of the Black River. Motley troupe of a hundred men under the command of

Battalion Chief Detcheperre. Many of them left the Delta, are already very tired.

A Muong Boum we reach after three days of walking, closely followed by the Japanese, the police chief, a sergeant colonial infantry, solicits the honor to blow himself and only the post he assumed the command a long time and holds a large stock of ammunition and explosives.

The night has just fallen.

We moved away a few hundred meters and sheltered behind a bank, we expect the return of anxious police chief and the first blast. Half an hour passed, and when heard a tremendous explosion. The central tower of the station opens in two, shrapnel whistling everywhere. The sergeant was not reappeared, we are increasingly anxious about his fate. After half an hour, the explosions being somewhat abated, we are preparing to leave, convinced that he jumped with his post, when a faint cry for help reached us.

Despite the danger that continued to pose the explosions we rush in chips to rescue the sergeant lying in a ditch, a mess: a burst having severed his femoral artery at the ankle it is bleeding profusely and also suffers severe burns all over his body. Between explosions we are dragging somehow away from chips and confection him a bamboo stretcher, while the nurse Furtoss ask him a bandage and heal his burns with the limited means at his disposal: a haversack containing essential medicines.

The approach of Japanese forces us to a painful night march, we take turns fours to carry the wounded on the narrow path along the left bank of the Black River. It should be noted that the injured person is a fellow of 90 kg, which is about 120 lbs with the weight of the stretcher, or 30 kgs per carrier ...

Their slow progress is such that they have to walk day and night to escape their Japanese rivals. Nearly starved they are exhausted and wounded also.

His Phou Sao (Thai girlfriend) who has not left a single moment will hide in the forest with the people of his village. Although treated by a quack Thai, he will survive his injuries and attempt a few months later to rally Lai Chau down in the dugout during the Black River, convinced that the French were back. Fatal error, it is the Japanese who accept and go through the weapons ...

The Japanese learned about the maneuver by documents found on the body of Commander Alverny, operating an increase in clamp to cut off our access to the Chinese border, while they continue to hound us on our axes walking. As a result we receive the order to leave the Valley of the Black River and head towards Muong Nghẽ.

We produce bamboo rafts and cross the Black River at Bam-Nam Khao pretty dangerous operation because of the strong current, fragile rafts assembled in haste and inexperience on inland navigation in such conditions .

The operation goes well, but hardly have we set foot on the right bank of the Black River a Japanese section appears on the other side, gathered around their leader. The

opportunity is too good: we have among us a master corporal champion Tonkin shooting FM who quickly starts battery and falls like a house of cards that enemy section, recklessly engaged in the open. Then we pick up quickly to escape the mortar fire from the bulk of our pursuers.

Muong Nghẽ, like all villages in the area was abandoned by its inhabitants, who hid in the surrounding forests, with their cattle and their stock of rice. The few chickens or pigs that could still roam the villages were killed and eaten by the troops who preceded us. Our state of physical exhaustion does not allow us to carry heavy loads of rice, we are often reduced to cooking tree leaves in bamboo to cut bamboo shoots and other roots to deceive our hunger and keep walk, always pursued by the Japanese, eaten by leeches bitten by mosquitoes and mosquitoes.

Thus we come to A Pa Chai village near Meo border of China and Laos to 1800 m. above sea level, there are still a few people and we provide some NEP rice (sticky) and bacon.

We continue to Or Neua last big town in the far north of Laos Point on Nam-Ou, largest tributary of the Mekong.

Here we find some of the troops of the Alessandri column that the Surgeon Captain Riu distributes us some pills against malaria and dysentery, as well as some vitamins parachuted by the British. We also have a few pieces of buffalo meat and vegetables: Fiesta, for us who are deprived since leaving Lai Chau. We also find Captain Latour Dorey who was the first Chief of Brigade GH Geographic Service Indochina in 1941 in charge of the destruction of bridges in the wake of our troops, his pockets are always stuffed with bread and plastic detonators. His great joy is to make the morning a small plastic rod with which he lights his lighter to heat her coffee, causing the stampede around him ...

Three days of rest, a few supplies and some drugs we have perked up a bit, fortunately for the "Japs" are beginning to infiltrate the region.

We receive an order to evacuate Or Neua and we cross the border to China April 27, 1945 at the Col de Ta Lou Ping.

However the latest fighting took place in the region of A Pa Chai and the 5th Military Region is finally abandoned May 2, 1945, although some French elements isolated from Laos still cross the Chinese border May 20, 1945.

Apart from a few commandos parachuted in Laos in 1944, coming from India, it is no more French troops fighting in Indochina.

The tragic results of this campaign:

Killed in Action

Died of wounds

116

Massacred by the Japanese

88

Massacred by the Viets

15

Died of disease or exhaustion

327

missing

957

Grand total

2219

Although these figures are for the Europeans, the figures for the Indochinese Since we do not know.

English drops

- March 11 at Thu Cuc

- March 13th to Cho Bo

- March 22 at The Son-largest

- 29/30 March at Dien Bien Phu (1 once we take delivery of shoes and some food).

Interventions of the American hunting: The 14th Air Force came at 2 or 3 times at the request of Calcutta. (Son La - Tuan Giao).

fighters

cho Bo

March 13

Moc Chau

March 18

Small Conoi, Son La and around

March 20 to 27

Col Meo

March 29

Tuan Giao

March 31

Dien Bien Phu

1 to 4 April

Houn-Tay Hui Chang

April 11/12

Muong Khoua

April 15

A Pa Chai

April 29

Malitao

May 1st

China / Yunnan

Col Ta-Lou-Ping Chinese officer commanding the passage wants to disarm us, he gave it up finally after several hours of discussion and facing the very firm attitude of our officers, but we came close to fighting ...

We arrived the next day at Muong Bound, the first large Chinese village where it will take a long palaver and still give some weapons before authorities please allow merchants to sell us the supplies we need (payment in silver) .

We will still have four days of walking to reach Mao Sze, small Yunnanese city include gradually the survivors of the Alessandri column, about 2,000 men will be joined survivors Laos arriving in small groups via Burma .

Sze Mao is located in the heart of a fertile depression, consisting of many villages, each of which serves as a cantonment to various detachments.

With its financial resources: money, opium and dollars coins, Alessandri column can finally refuel properly. An airfield allows the evacuation by American planes of Wounded, Sick and few families who managed to flee Tonkin and Laos.

Formal proposals are made to the French Command on France to evacuate all of our military "in three days you will be in Paris ...".

A medical mission to the International Red Cross who returns from Burma, previously considered the battlefield, the hardest physically says after we have examined our survival conditions were worse. It should be clear that we are in rags, many do not even have shoes, others have patched with string or wire. Malaria, dysentery, malnutrition and fatigue created almost as many casualties as the fighting against the Japanese. Only the strongest or luckiest have survived Mao Sze, yet they are in a deplorable state of health.

In addition to improved supply we get some first aid medicines to calm our bouts of malaria and dysentery, heal our wounds, etc ...

It should be there to draw attention to the fact that President Roosevelt banned the General Wedemeyer (Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek) to provide assistance, the French troops operating in Indochina (Wedemeyer was descended from Krigsakademie the Berlin anti-French).

French who had never seen so many cameras in the American star in the sky of Indochina, will do so little, when they need it and when they were rescued, hidden and repatriated most of their airmen before March 9 ...

The French origin of General Claire Chennault Aviation, Canadian hero of the

"Flying Tigers" written in his memoirs that he received orders from General Headquarters not to send weapons or ammunition to the French units and notes that having applied these orders to the letter, he could not get used to the idea of letting the French get slaughtered in the jungle, while they forced him to officially ignore their plight ...

What remains for the French troops, their taste for the D system, a few dollars, a little opium (good money), and courage in adversity. Courage he had yet we take a lot. We are reconstituted in units of 100 to 150 men, the appropriate number so that they can both feed and defend themselves if attacked. Departures staggered rate of one unit per day, so we leave Sze Mao May 29, 1945.

And continuous operation, unbelievable, mountain trails are often narrow and slippery, between Mao Sze is at an altitude of 700 m. and Shi-Ping Chu is 1500 m. we climb twice at 1800 m. and descend twice to 500 m. : Sometimes a night shivering without coverage and the next night sweating. More tracks are made slippery by rain. The villages are encountered poor, lack of hygiene and vermin-infested.

We mark a day of break-Ching Lo-Chui after the difficult passage of the Black River on a suspension bridge and Kiang Yuan Chou on the banks of the Red River where we enjoy the presence of a nursing station staffed by doctors Canadian and Chinese, as well as the cantonment prepared by Lieutenant Demaison.

Because of piracy that has plagued the entire region, the few crossings cities are surrounded by walls, the doors are closed each night. The sentinels who guard the ramparts were trigger-happy, so sick and tired comrades who did not follow the columns are often greeted with gunfire. Others come in shorts after being robbed of the little they have by bandits.

We'll remember the corpse of a poor coolie shot a load of rock salt. Lost in these areas, the life of a man is worth the price of a well-driven ball ...

After a sixth and final step in a long uninhabited valley we finally reach the plateau and the great city of Chih-Ping Chu. Compared to the 600 kilometers we just travel from Lai Chau is the "promised land", the nightmare because Chih Ping is connected by rail: modest track 60 on which roll their sluggish trains powered coal with sulfur-laden reeking in tunnels, often derailed, but who cares ...

We remain a few days Chih Ping, contrasting with the prosperity desolate regions that we have just gone through: the lake is surrounded by orchards and market gardens, the streets are teeming with people and stalls appetizing.

Beginning in July 1945 comes our turn to board the train and look down the country ...

We reach Mong Tse, an important center on the railway Hanoi / Kunming, where Captain Quindec directs us to the camp Tsao-Pa, final stage of the "long march" for most of us.

Rather disappointed because this camp is actually a disused silk comfort rudimentary:

we sleep in the straw, we wash in water troughs, no toilet but "leafy" pestilential, etc  
...

GH stayed there happily for a few weeks, however, enough to witness the arrival of a survivor of the Lang Son soldier Cron 3rd RTT the garrison had been almost completely massacred by the Japanese after a dignified and heroic resistance Bazeilles Camaron. The soldier who was taken prisoner was taken with other comrades, hands tied behind his back in a courtyard where they found armed with bayonets to kill the Japanese soldiers. Chest crossed through by three bayonets but still alive, he was kneeling with a few survivors on the edge of a trench. A Japanese officer then decapitating sword, one by one those poor wounded that fell into the trench. When his turn came, he feigned discomfort and fell forward, thereby cushioning the blow of sword who nicked him a part of the neck. Stunned and left for dead at the bottom of the trench, amid other corpses he returned to him the same night, when he was trampled by a Vietnamese infantryman who fled. The move saw the rifleman stopped and helped him walk home. Well cared for, he succeeded with the help of residents to regain China where he was supported by the French Military Mission which operated in the area and sent to Tsao-Pa when he was somewhat restored.

Having seen with our own eyes the wounds he bore, we want to give our testimony on the case of atrocities committed by the Japanese military. Unfortunately, there were many others.

### Camp Pa-Tsao

Tsao Pa in the highlands of Yunnan to 1400 m. altitude is connected to the provincial capital Kunming by

- A railway:
- A station
- A village of about thirty huts, most of which are processed into food stalls.

The French camp is located in a former silk (silkworm rearing) on a dry lake where there is in turn a terrible dense dust and thick mud during the rainy season - the nights are very cold and snow winter.

The camp itself: 5 rows of mud huts - unhealthy - amid a sort of courtyard with a mast and tricolor.

We sleep on racks on the floor. The food is poor and bad. Of course no drugs, the Department of Health does what he can without means.

Opposite, on the other side of the road, the American camp. Are we dreaming?

- Air-conditioned dormitories
- Mess - food
- infirmary
- Cinema every night
- Airmail daily
- Our relationship is very difficult - and often more than tense (fighting).

### Life at Camp

Everyone is idle - morale is very low - We get American undertaking offers.

Under these conditions the morale and discipline are weakening gradually.

Europeans drink too much, Indochinese play more, and all lend a sympathetic ear to the most fantastic noise, the most alarming rumors, denied any outside contact, and new families left in the hands of a formidable Set.

Propaganda and Revolutionary Nationalist (VNQDD) favored by the Chinese, will find fertile ground in Tonkin and Annam units, though the men were loyal and faithful during the fighting from 9 March to 25 May 45. A feeling of distrust will develop between white and yellow. On 12 August at Yenshau a grenade thrown into the officers' mess, claiming the lives of 2 officers and many European soldiers of the 9th R.I.C.

In this atmosphere, isolation, disappointment, and dropout, born rivalries, and a sense of frustration with some unequal treatment. We had traveled 1000 km in the jungle and even more for some to rot in a camp after 60 fights against the Japanese to find ourselves powerless.

We ask, we return one day in Indochina? It became an obsession.

No one had an answer.

On May 22, 1945, General Leclerc accepted (with some reservations though) assuming command of CEFEO (French Expeditionary Corps in the Far East).

On October 22, 1945 in Calcutta, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Quilichini receives the order of Leclerc:

"Join French troops from China, with full powers to conduct reorganization pending arrival of General Salan."

Lieutenant-Colonel Quilichini reaches Tsao Pa 1 November 1945 transiting through

Kunming.

Who is Lieutenant Colonel Robert Quilichini!

St. Cyrien 1932 - At the time, the youngest colonel in the French Army - 32 years - A fighter following Leclerc and his 2nd Armored Division since 1940.

Physically a massive frame - all muscle - endowed with great strength of will. It gives confidence.

Companion of the Liberation and covered with decorations. It imposes, and reassuring. We had great need.

His journey is eloquent: Chad, North Africa, the invasion of Normandy, Germany.

Seriously injured at Strasbourg he will always keep the legacy, and will tighten the teeth to go with his men.

Quilichini, knows Indochina, particularly the High Tonkinoise Region. He served on the border after leaving St Cyr. Thai in the country, in Lai Chau, he was "married" to the fashion of the country to a daughter of the family heads. He had a daughter (now living in Paris, married to an architect). To say that man is sentimentally attached to Indochina. This young senior officer raised hopes among those troops on the edge of despair.

His goal is clear and he announces: return to arms Tonkin, shoving the Annamite revolutionaries, and return to Hanoi. Unfortunately he can not keep that promise, at least as regards the Hanoi outlet. There will be other decisions to which he must bow.

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Upon arrival, morale goes up. The instruction is given in honor. Exercises day and night section, companies, battalion successive daily.

Helping food, fitness is improving all the conditions of life too. End December 45, the standards set to go directly to the commitment and fight, after a march of 30 km are reached.

For Quilichini it is complete, a hell, with all the hardships and dangers that entails.

Desertion block, bag and baggage fully Indochina Company, 4th RTT A few days after his arrival. Co. commanded by Captain Vien - who was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor for his distinguished conduct during operations March 9 - strengthens Quilichini in resolution of reorganization. The Squadron Leader Prugnat, appointed Chief of Staff is addressing this.

The procedure is to return to France of officers and s / officers redundant. Men whose physical condition will not support a new test are also returnees.

The selection is severe.

Quilichini demobilize Tonkinese riflemen who are no longer hot to fight under our flag.

The French Troops China become "Groupement Quilichini."

The end of the year 1945 and approach when coming Christmas and New Year, it does not recognize in these units where good humor and high spirits, the ragged and demoralized troops first months of exile

JB personally concerning the latter was appointed 1st Class May 12, 1945 to Mao Sze

On August 22 he spent Brigadier

In December Tsao Pa, he was appointed to the post of Encryptor / patrol car at the General Staff Colonel Quilichini.

Qu'estafette as he was entitled to a horse - but he must not use the animal for missions (Colonel shouting match one day malaria.

Thus, for 9 months, it will work, live, eat and sleep with the boss, and get to know the man and the officer.