

## OSS, Korean Organization

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This document, dated September 7, 1945, is the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)'s report on the interrogation of Harry Moon Sil Jim, a Korean POW who lived in Hawaii. The report contains information on Koreans and an organization named "Korean National Association" in Siam (today's Thailand). The OSS was an American intelligence agency established during WWII in June 1942 and its main tasks were to conduct espionage activities, to collect information, to prevent espionage, to assess and censor information, and to conduct psychological warfare and black propaganda during the war. Later, the OSS became the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The Office of War Information (OWI) which was established around the similar period as the OSS took charge of gathering information in China-Burma-India theaters (CBI).

American intelligence agencies including the OSS regarded the issue of "comfort women" a useful tool in psychological warfare to degrade the Japanese military's morale as well as to provoke an anti-Japanese sentiment among local populations under the Japanese occupation. The agencies assumed that while the Japanese military mobilized "comfort women" and sent them to the frontlines to boost their soldiers' morale, there would have been internal complaints and conflicts regarding the use of "comfort stations" or distribution of such service. Also, the agencies regarded that they could inflame anger among the local people by informing that the Japanese military had been forcibly mobilizing local women in the territories occupied by Japan. By emphasizing the cruelty of the Japanese military, the American agencies planned to provoke resentment in the local people and to undermine Japan's colonial rule in those regions. For this purpose, the OSS collected information through interrogations of Japanese POWs regarding the presence of "comfort stations" in the military bases, informants' visits to "comfort stations," number of "comfort women" and their nationalities, the relationship between soldiers' morale and "comfort stations." They also gathered information through interrogation of civilians on the frontlines about the process of mobilizing "comfort women" and cases of Japanese military's violence and insult against local women.

With a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan started a war against the Allied Forces. Japan proceeded to occupy the Allied powers' colonies in Southeastern Asia, including Burma (today's Myanmar), Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Harry Moon Sil Kim was mobilized to Siam during this period. According to this report, Harry Moon Sil Jim was born in Korea, went to Honolulu in 1925, and returned to Korea in 1933. When Japan declared war on the Allied Forces, Jim was conscripted and dispatched to Siam as a guard of POWs. He and other Korean guards of POWs were not in the Army but enlisted as civilian employees. In late August 1945, Korean guards were dismissed by the Japanese military. The Koreans in Siam created an organization called Korean National Association and were willing to cooperate with the Allied Forces. Jim was the president of the organization. According to Jim, more than a thousand Korean POW guards were sent to Siam and assigned in the POW camps scattered along the line of the Burma-Siam Railway. At the end of the report is found information about Korean "comfort women" in Siam. According to Jim, there were about 7,400 Koreans in total in Siam as of September 1945. This number includes 900 former POW guards (150 of whom were in Bangkok), 5,000 soldiers in the regular Japanese Army, and 1,500 "comfort women" who belonged to the Japanese troops in Siam.

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