

5 Delinquent Soldiers

The murder of Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Wolfgang Rosterg at Comrie Camp

Five young German prisoners of war were hanged at Pentonville on Saturday, 6 October, 1945. They were Unterscharführer (SS Sgt) Joachim Goltz, Sturmman (SS Pfc) Kurt Zühlsdorff, Rottenführer (SS Cpl) Heinrich-Wernhard Brüning (given elsewhere as Heinz Brüling), Oberfähnrich (Senior Cadet) Erich Palme-König and Matrosengefreiter (Able Seaman) Josef Mertens. They had been convicted of the murder of Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Wolfgang Rosterg on Saturday, 23 December, 1944 at Cultybraggan POW camp at Comrie in Perthshire in Scotland.

A number of fanatical Nazi POWs had been moved to Comrie after an escape attempt had been foiled at Camp 23 (Le Marchant Barracks) at Devizes in Wiltshire. Some of these men suspected that Wolfgang Rosterg had betrayed the escape plan.

Rosterg, aged 35, had also been a prisoner at Devizes where his POW number was A7888778. He arrived at Cultybraggan by bus, along with 30 other POWs, on December, 17th, 1944. He could read and speak English and was allowed to read the Scottish newspapers. He made the mistake of translating and reading out some of the articles that predicted the failure of a planned German invasion of the Ardennes. This cast suspicion on him as an informer or collaborator.

On Saturday, 23 December he was dragged from his bed in Hut 4 Compound B, and severely beaten. A rope was put round his neck and he was dragged to the latrines where he was hanged from a pipe. Possibly it was hoped that the authorities would think he had committed suicide, but an examination of the injuries to his body ruled that out.

Eight men were arrested for the murder, the five mentioned above, plus Rolf Herzig, Herbert Wunderlich and Hans Klein.

All eight were tried at Kensington Palace Gardens before a military tribunal between 2 and 12 July 1945. Hans Klein was acquitted on the third day of the trial, due to insufficient evidence. Wunderlich was found not guilty at the end of the trial and Rolf Herzig was convicted but sentenced to life in prison. On 23 July, 1945 the five death sentences were confirmed by the Judge Advocate General.

While the five admitted that they had killed Rosterg, they viewed the killing as the execution of a traitor (presumably why they hanged him) rather than as a murder.

Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Steve Wade and Harry Allen, carried out the executions. It is unclear from surviving records whether there were two double hangings and a single or whether there were five single executions. They started at 9 a.m., and the notices of execution were posted on the prison gate at 10.30 a.m., so the former scenario seems more likely. These executions were carried out under military jurisdiction, with Lieut-Col. F. Forbes, the Deputy Provost Marshal for London District taking the place of the under-sheriff and signing the notice of execution. Army chaplains took the place of the prison chaplain.

Executed and buried on 6 October 1945 at Pentonville prison.

Name	Rank	Age	Grave
Joachim Goltz	SS Sgt.	20	Pentonville
Kurt Zühlsdorff	SS Pfc.	20	Pentonville
Heinrich-Wernhard Brüning	SS Cpl.	22	Pentonville
Erich Palme-König	Senior Cadet	20	Pentonville
Josef Mertens	Able Seaman	21	Pentonville

The murder of Unteroffizier (Sgt) Gerhart Rettig at Sheffield

Two German prisoners of war (POWs) were hanged at Pentonville on Friday 16 November, 1945 after trial by courts martial. They were Gefreiter (Pfc) Armin Kühne, aged 18 according to his birth certificate, and Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Emil Schmittendorf, age 31. They were executed by Albert Pierrepont and Alex Riley, but again it is unclear whether they were hanged side by side or singly.

The pair suspected that 25 year old Unteroffizier (Sgt) Gerhart Rettig had given away an escape plan to the British authorities when a tunnel that the prisoners had dug at Lodge Moor POW camp near Sheffield was discovered on Saturday 24 March, 1945. Rettig had been spotted passing a note to one of the guards and it was arranged that he and another man should be transferred to a different camp. Before this could happen Rettig was attacked, being beaten and kicked repeatedly. He died in hospital later that Saturday night. His friend who witnessed the attack identified Armin Kühne and Emil Schmittendorf as the ring leaders and also Heinz Ditzler and Jürgen Kersting as participants. All four were charged with murder and subsequently came to trial at Kensington Place Gardens on 7-13 August. Ditzler and Kersting were acquitted and Kühne and Schmittendorf convicted.

Gerhart Rettig was a regular soldier who did not share the Nazi ideals that his killers fervently held to and this may well have been why he was singled out, even though the German commanding officer thought that he was innocent of betraying the escape plan.

After the war, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge in German) requested permission to transfer the remains of the seven men from Pentonville to the German Military Cemetery on Cannock Chase. They were told that the British authorities were unable to find the precise location of the graves. Consequently, they remain buried at Pentonville.

Executed and buried on 16 November 1945 at Pentonville prison.

Name	Rank	Age	Grave
Armin Kühne	Pfc.	18	Pentonville
Emil Schmittendorf	T/Sgt.	31	Pentonville

Executions carried out by the US Military in the European Theater of Operations during World War II

96 men were put to death after trial by US Courts Martial between 12 March 1943 and 19 October 1945. Of these 89 were hanged and 7 shot by firing squad.

Executions were carried out at various locations. In Britain 18 men were executed at Shepton Mallet prison in Somerset. In France a number of locations were used, including 13 at the Loire Disciplinary Training Centre at Le Mans. Three took place at Fort d'Orange, Citadel, Namur, in Belgium. There were two at Oran in Algeria, three at Termini on the island of Sicily, all for the gang rape of a local woman in front of her husband and children. A further 20 took place at the Peninsular Base Section (PBS) at Aversa in Italy.

Of the 89 hanged, 39 suffered for murder, 38 for rape and 12 for both crimes. A further two men were shot for each of these offences and one man, Pvt. Eddie Slovik, was executed for desertion.

It has been claimed that nearly 80% of the U.S. soldiers executed in the E.T.O. were African-Americans, while they comprised no more than 10% of the troops. Most held the rank of Private or Private First Class, plus two Corporals and one Sergeant and four men whose rank was Technician 5th Grade.

The methods of executing of US troops during World War II fell under the guidance of the 1928 Manual for Courts-Martial. In discussing this matter in April, 1945, before the end of hostilities in Europe, Brigadier General Joseph F. Battley, Deputy Chief of Staff for Service Commands wrote: "Although the method of

execution of a United States Army court-martial sentence of death allowed for either hanging or shooting, at the discretion of the court, almost invariably the court prescribed hanging.” The Manual for Courts-Martial stated that “Hanging is considered more ignominious than shooting and is the usual method, for example, in the case of a person sentenced to death for rape, for murder in connection with mutiny, or for a violation of the June 1920 Articles of War No. 92 which states that: Any person subject to military law who commits murder or rape shall suffer death or imprisonment for life, as a court-martial may direct. Shooting is the usual method in the case of a person sentenced to death for a purely military offence.”

A detailed list of these executions is given below.

Legend: Executioners (including officers in charge of executions) and assistants are entered as () = unknown | ASI = Arthur S. Imell | AP = Albert Pierrepont | AR = Alexander Riley | HLP = Henry L. Peck | HM = Herbert Morris | JDD = Joseph V. DePaul Dillon | MHC = Mortimer H. Christian | PJF = Philip J. Flynn | Team* = a team of three soldiers | TP = Thomas W. Pierrepont | TR = Thomas Robinson | W = John C. Woods | WGN = W. G. Neiswender

Name Rank	First Name Age	Date & Place of Birth	Date & Place of Execution	Method of Execution	Exec (Asst)
Agee Pvt	Amos	16 Feb 16 Linden AL-03	May 45 La Saussaye	Hanging	W ()
Crime Rape of a French woman at Le Noyer, France					
Anderson Pvt	Roy 22	Sep 17 Jeffersonville IN	10/25/44 Seine DTC, Paris	Hanging	MHC (W)
Rape of French women at Neuville-au-Plain, France					
Bailey Pvt	Milbert	09/06/14 LA	04/19/45 La Pernelle		
Murder of a Frenchman and rape of his daughter (19) at La Pernelle, Hameau Scipion, Normandy, France					
Name Rank	First Name Age	Date & Place of Birth	Date & Place of Execution	Method of Execution	Exec (Asst)
Baldwin Pvt	Walter J	10/08/22 Shell Mound MS	01/17/45 Beaufay	Hanging	W ()

Name Rank	First Name Age	Date & Place of Birth	Date & Place of Execution	Method of Execution	Exec (Asst)
Absenting himself from his unit, assault, and murder of Adolpha Drouin, at Beaufay, Sarthe, France					
Bennerman Pvt	Sydney	01/31/18 Wilmington NC	10/15/45 Delta DTC, Les Milles	Shooting	
Rape of a Polish D.P. girl; murder of the girl and of a Polish D.P. whom she had asked for protection, at Heilbronn, Germany					
Brinson Pvt	Eliga	21 Feb 19 Tallahassee FL	08/11/44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape of a 16-year-old English girl near Bishops Cleeve, Gloucester, England					
Burns Pvt	Lee A.	11/09/13 Horner LA	03/27/45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Rape of a 14-year-old Italian girl at Pro di Lucca, Italy					
Clark Pvt	Ernest Lee	10 Aug 20 Clifton Forge VA	08 Jan 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape and murder of Betty Dorian Pearl Green (15) at Ashford, Kent, England					
Clay Pfc	Matthew Jr.	07/26/20 Avery Island LA	06/04/45 Fontenay-sur-Mer	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Victor Bellery and assault on his wife, Augustine Bellery, at Fontenay-sur-Mer, Manche, France					
Cobb Pvt	David	11/14/21 Dothan AL	03/12/43 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Murder of 2LT Robert J. Cobner at Desborough Camp, Northamptonshire, England					

Cooper Pvt	John David	11 Jun 22 Dover GA	09 Jan 45 Lérrouville	Hanging	W (TR)
Assault, breaking and entering, and rape of three French girls (14, 14, 18) and one French woman (40) at Lérrouville and at Ferme de Marville, France					
Crews Pvt	Otis B.	17 Mar 17 Carnegie GA	21 Feb 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Murder of Pvt Wilbur Bryant (MP) at Orto D'Atella, Italy					
Davis Pvt	Arthur E.	08 Aug 19 Cleveland OH	22 Nov 44 Montours	Hanging	()
Assault and rape of a French woman at La Rouennerie en Montour, France					
Davis Pfc	William E.	08 Mar 15 Richmond VA	27 Dec 44 Guiclan	Hanging	W ()
Attempted rape and murder of of Mme Germaine Pouliquen at Guiclan, Finisterre (Britanny), France					
Davis Pvt	Lee Andrew	08 Jan 23 Temple TX	14 Dec 43 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AR)
Rape of one young woman and murder of her friend, one Cynthia June Lay, near Savernak Hospital, Marlborough, Wiltshire, England					
Davison Pvt	Tommie	10 Aug 14 Westpoint MS	29 Mar 45 Prise Guinment	Hanging	W ()
Assault, attempted assault against an official, and rape of a French woman at Prise Guinment, Manche, France					
Donnelly Pvt	Robert L.	27 Jul 24 Pittsburgh PA	31 May 44 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()

Desertion, and murder of Technician 5th Grade John P. Brown (MP)					
Downes Pvt	William C	27 Jan 15 Copeland VA	28 Feb 45 Etienville	Hanging	W ()
Breaking and entering, and rape of three women (62, "middle-aged", 15) at Etienville, France					
Ervin Pvt	Charlie Jr.	18 Feb 19 Lexington TN	19 Oct 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Shooting	
Murder of Pietro Testini and two counts of assault on Giorgio Gamberini, at Pietrasanta, Italy					
Farrell Pvt	Arthur J.	20 Nov 06 Jersey City NJ	19 Jan 45 St Sulpice, France	Hanging	W ()
Rape of a French woman (57) at Au Fayel, Brittany, France					
Gordon Pvt	Tom E.	07 Mar 15 Greenville SC	10 Jul 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
AWOL, assault, murder of Laurence Broussard at Marseille, France					
Grant Pfc		05/25/21 Union Point GA	03/27/45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Murder of Carlo Francesci at Viareggio, Italy					
Green Pvt	George Jr.	10 May 24 Steven AR	15 May 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Cpl Tommie Lee Garrett at Champigneulles, France					
Guerra Pvt	Augustine M.	04 May 24 Cibolo TX	08 Jan 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape and murder of Betty Dorian Pearl Green (15) at Ashford, Kent, England					

Harris Pvt	Wiley Jr.	12 Jun 18 Greenville GA	26 May 44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AR)
Murder of one Harry Coogan, a pimp, at Belfast					
Harrison Pvt	William Jr.	27 Jul 22 Ironton OH	07 Apr 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (HM)
Rape and murder of Patricia Wylie (7) at Killykolpy near Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland					
Heard Pfc	Haze	07 Jun 22 Toccoa GA	21 May 45 Mesnil-Clinchamps	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Mme Berthe Robert at Le Bosc Benard, Mesnil-Clinchamps, Calvados, France					
Hendricks Pfc	James E.	29 Apr 23 Drewry NC	24 Nov 44 Château La Vallée, Plumaudan, Côtes- du-Nord, France	Hanging	MHC ()
Breaking and entering, attempted rape and murder of Victor Bignon at Plumaudan, Franc					
Holden Pvt	Mervin	01 Oct 20 Robeline LA	30 Jan 45 Fort d'Orange, Citadel, Namur, Belgium	Hanging	W ()
Assault and rape of a woman (51) at Namur, Belgium					
Hopper Pvt	Benjamin F.	20 Aug 20 Hickory NC	11 Apr 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Pvt Randolph Jackson Jr. at Welkenraedt, Belgium					

Jefferies Pvt	Charles H.	15 Jul 23 Coatesville PA	05 Jul 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Alfredo Bechelli and six counts of assault on 3 US soldiers and 3 Italian females, at Barga, Italy					
Johnson Pvt	Willie	25 Dec 21 Idaville OK	26 Jun 45 La Heye Pesnel, France	Hanging	W (TR)
Murder of Mme Julien Fontaine at Equilly, Normandy, France					
Jones Pvt	Cubia	12 May 19 Thomson GA	17 Mar 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (HM)
Rape of a young woman at Chard, Somerset, England					
Jones Pvt	Edwin P.	16 Feb 20 Henry Co. KY	05 Jan 44 Oran, Algeria	Hanging	ASI ()
Attempted murder of Pvt Norman E. Hippert, and murder of Pvt Alfred E. Raby at Assi Ben Okba, Algeria					
Jones Pvt	James L.	12 Dec 12 Reform AL	19 Apr 45 La Pernelle	Hanging	W ()
Murder of a Frenchman and rape of his daughter (19) at La Pernelle, Hameau Scipion, Normandy, France					
Jones Pvt	John T.	11 Aug 12 Silvercreek MS	05 Jul 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Robbery, assault, and rape of an Italian woman at Massa Macinai, Italy					
Jones Pfc	Kinney B.	15 Mar 14 Greenville SC	20 Mar 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	Team*
Murder of Cpl Milton M. Winstead near Pietrasanta (near Pisa), Italy					

Jordan Pvt	Charles H.	09 Oct 20 Monticello GA	22 Nov 44 Montours	Hanging	()
Assault and rape of a French woman at La Rouennerie en Montour, France					
Kendrick Pvt	James E.	22 Mar 22 Picayune MS	17 Jul 43 Oran, Algeria	Hanging	()
Rape and murder of a nine-year-old handicapped girl (clubfeet)					
Kluxdal Pfc	Paul M.	17 Jul 07 Merrill WI	31 Oct 44 Seine DTC, Paris	Hanging	MHC (W)
Murder of First Sgt Loyce M. Robertson					
Leatherberry Pvt	John C.	19 Jan 22 Hazelhurst MS	16 May 44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Robbery and murder of taxi driver Harry Claude Hailstone near Birch, Essex, England					
Mack Pvt	John H	11 May 10 Menlo GA	20 Mar 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	Team*
Three murders of an old man, a 14-year-old girl, and a woman (Ettore Lombardi, Galleni Palmira Lombardi, Carmela Lombardi) at Pietrasanta near Pisa, Italy					
Mack Pvt	William	21 Sep 10 St George SC	15 Feb 45 Plabennec, Finisterre	Hanging	W ()
Assault on Catherine Tournellec (18) and murder of Eugene Tournellec at Pentreff, Le Drennec, Finisterre, France					

Mariano Pfc	Blake W.	04 Apr 18 Mariana Lake NM	10 Oct 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Rape of two German women and murder of a Swedish woman, Martha Gary, at Lauf (8 mi NE of Nuremberg)					
Martinez Pfc	Aniceto	30 May 22 Vallecitos NM	15 Jun 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape of a woman (75) at Rengeley, Staffordshire, England					
Maxey Pvt	Curtis L.	18 Jun 22 Deatsville AL	18 Nov 44 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Rape of a French woman near St Tropez, France					
McCarter Pfc	William J.	22 Oct 08 Charlotte NC	28 May 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Pvt Charles P. Williams at Thionville, France					
McGann Pvt	Theron W.	25 Jun 21 Portland OR	20 Nov 44 St Lô, Manche, France	Hanging	MHC ()
Rape of a French woman at Quibou, France					
McGhee Cpl	Shelton Sr.	08 May 16 Holly Springs MS	04 May 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	WGN ()
Attempted assault against an officer, and murder of Technician 5th Grade George W. Brown at Livorno, Italy					
McMurray Pvt	Fred A.	25 Feb 20 Ruston LA	02 Jul 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	Team*
Two rapes of Italian women and murder of Anna Zanchi at Civitavecchia, Italy					

Miranda Pvt	Alex F.	28 Jul 23 Santa Ana CA	30 May 44 Shepton Mallet	Shooting	()
Murder of First Sgt Thomas Evison at Broomhill Camp, Devonshire, England					
Nelson Pvt	Henry W.	28 Mar 24 East St Louis IL	05 Jul 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Robbery, assault and rape of an Italian woman at Massa Macinai, Italy					
Newman Technician 5th Grade	Oscar N.	19 Jul 18 Macon OH	29 Nov 44 Beunay, Marne, France	Hanging	HLP (W)
Rape of a 17-year-old French girl at Fromontiers (Champagne), France					
Norris Sgt	Clete O.	01 Mar 18 Palestine TX	31 May 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of CPT William E. McDonald at Boehle, Belgium					
Ortiz-Reyes Pvt	Victor	06 Jan 14 Coamo PR	21 Jun 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of CPT Ignacio Bonit at Marquette, France					
Parker Pvt	Woodrow	1918 AL	15 Oct 45 Delta DTC, Les Milles	Shooting	()
Rape of a Polish D.P. girl; murder of the girl and of a Polish D.P. whom she had asked for protection, at Heilbronn, Germany					
Pearson Cpl	Robert L.	30 May 23 Mayflower AR	17 Mar 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (HM)
Rape of a young woman at Chard, Somerset, England					

Pennyfeather Pvt	William D.	21 Jul 20 New York NY	18 Nov 44 Fort Du Roule, Cherbourg, France	Hanging	MHC ()
Rape of a French woman at Cherbourg, France					
Philpot Pvt	Henry C.	22 Jun 17 Redding CA	10 Sep 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of 2LT John B. Platt, at Bad Neuenahr, Germany					
Pittman Pvt	Willie A.	26 Aug 18 Campbellton FL	30 Aug 43 Termini, Sicily	Hanging	JDD ()
Rape of a Sicilian woman in front of her husband and child					
Pygate Pvt	Benjamin	02 Feb 09 Dillon SC	28 Nov 44 Shepton Mallet	Shooting	PJF
Murder of Pfc James E. Alexander, at Westbury, Wiltshire, England					
Robinson Pvt	Charles M.	04 Apr 23 Houston TX	28 Sep 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Yvonne Le Ny at Messac, France					
Rollins Pfc	Alvin F.	05 Dec 24 Chattanooga TN	31 May 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Pfc John H. Hoogewind (MP) and of Sgt Royce A. Judd (MP) at Troyes, France					
Sanders	James B.	09 Jun 17 Lockhart SC	25 Oct 44 Seine DTC, Paris	Hanging	MHC (W)
Rape of French women at Neuville-au-Plain, France					

Schmiedel Pvt	Werner E.	04 May 19 Allentown PA	11 Jun 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
AWOL, armed robbery, and murder of Eolo Ferretti at Rome, Italy					
Scott Technician 5th Grade	Richard B.	23 Aug 16 Carrolton TX	18 Nov 44 Fort Du Roule, Cherbourg, France	Hanging	MHC ()
Assault and rape of a French woman at Octeville, France					
Skinner Pvt	Robert L.	20 May 24 Paris TN	10 Feb 45 Bricquebec, France	Hanging	W ()
Assault, rape of a French girl (19) at Hameau-Pigeon, France					
Slovik Pvt	Eddie D.	18 Feb 20 Detroit MI	31 Jan 45 Ste Marie-Aux- Mines	Shooting	
Desertion					
Smalls Pvt	Abraham	31 Oct 10 Adams Run SC	27 Mar 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Murder of Pfc George W. Jones at Viareggio, Italy					
Smith Pvt	Charles H.	06 Oct 09 Salem MI	06 Sep 43 Oran, Algeria	Hanging	ASI ()
Murder of Cpl William L. Tacket (MP)					
Smith Pvt	George E. Jr.	14 Apr 17 Pittsburgh PA	08 May 45 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (HM)
Murder of Sir Eric Teichman at Honingham, Norfolk, England					

Smith	Harold A.	04 Jan 23 LaGrange GA	25 Jun 43 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Escape from confinement and murder of Pvt Harry M. Jenkins at Chisledon Camp near Swindon, Wiltshire, England					
Smith Pvt	John C.	20 Sep 17 Bedford Cy. VA	03 Mar 45 La Saussaye, Commune de Bure, Orne, France	Hanging	W ()
Rape of a French woman at Le Noyer, France					
Smith Pvt	Willie	30 Jun 22 Birmingham AL	11 Aug 44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape of an English girl (16) near Bishops Cleeve, Gloucester, England					
Spears Pvt	Charles E.	20 May 10 Zanesville OH	19 Apr 44 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Murder of Pvt David Quick					
Spencer Pvt	Elwood J.	04 Dec 24 Gastonia NC	30 Jan 45 Fort d'Orange, Citadel, Namur, Belgium	Hanging	W ()
Assault, sodomy and rape of a woman (51) at Namur, Belgium					
Spinks Pvt	Mansfield	07 Nov 24 Chicago IL	19 Oct 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Shooting	
Murder of Arnolfo Carresi, and rape of his wife, at Forte Dei Marmi, Italy					
Stroud Pvt	Harvey L.-	26 Mar 21 Merrwell GA	30 Aug 43 Termini, Sicily	Hanging	JDD ()
Rape of a Sicilian woman in front of her husband and child					

Taylor Pvt	John W	N/A (Mississippi)	20 Mar 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	Team*
Murder of Pfc Earl Johnson at Pietrasanta near Pisa, Italy					
Thomas Pvt	Madison	03 Mar 21 Arnaudville LA	12 Oct 44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AP)
Rape of an elderly widow at Gunnislake, Cornwall, England					
Till Pvt	Louis	07 Feb 22 New Madrid MO	02 Jul 45 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	Team*
Two rapes of Italian women and murder of Anna Zanchi at Civitavecchia, Italy					
Twiggs Pvt	James W.	04 Jan 20 Topeka KS	22 Jan 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Pvt William D. Adams, near Bellefontaine, France					
Valentine Technician 5th Grade	Leo Sr.	04 Dec 24 Gastonia NC	29 Nov 44 Beunay, Marne, France	Hanging	HLP (W)
Rape of a French girl (17) at Fromontiers, Champagne, France					
Waters Pvt	John H.	01 Oct 05 Perth Amboy NJ	10 Feb 44 Shepton Mallet	Hanging	TP (AR)
Self-maiming, abandoning a guard post, and murder of his English girlfriend, one Doris May Staples at Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, England					
Watson Pvt	Frank	1923 FL	03 Mar 45 La Saussaye, Commune de Bure, Orne, France	Hanging	W ()
Robbery and rape of a French woman at Le Noyer, France					

Watson Pvt	Joseph	1918 Texarkana TX	08 Nov 44 Seine DTC, Paris	Hanging	MHC ()
Assault, breaking and entering, and rape of a French woman (33) at Le Pas En Ferre, France					
Watson Pvt	Ray	1920 NJ	29 Aug 44 PBS Aversa, Italy	Hanging	()
Assault and murder of Pvt John Brockman (MP)					
White Pvt	Armstead	1914 AL	30 Aug 43 Termini, Sicily	Hanging	JDD ()
Rape of a Sicilian woman in front of her husband and child					
White Pvt	David	12 Jul 19 Shamrock FL	30 Aug 43 Termini, Siciliy	Hanging	JDD ()
Rape of a Sicilian woman in front of her husband and child					
Whitfield Pvt	Clarence	07 Feb 24 Wrightsville NC	14 Aug 44 Canisy, France	Hanging	TP ()
Rape of a Polish woman at Vierville Sur Mer, France					
Williams Pvt	John	08 Mar 17 Orlando FL	19 Apr 45 La Pernelle	Hanging	W ()
Murder of a Frenchman and rape of his daughter (19) at La Pernelle, Hameau Scipion, Normandy, France					
Williams Pvt	Olin W.	16 Sep 21 Elloree SC	29 Mar 45 Le Chêne Daniel	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Albert Lebocey at Le Chêne Daniel, Chérence-le-Héron, Manche, France, and rape pf the murder victim's wife					

Wilson Pvt	J.P.	24 Jan 18 Columbus MS	02 Feb 45 Lérrouville	Hanging	W (TR)
Assault, breaking and entering, and rape of three French girls (14, 14, 18) and one French woman (40) at Lérrouville and at Ferme de Marville, Meuse, France					
Wimberly Technician 5th Grade	Willie Jr.	21 Sep 12 Macon GA	08 Nov 44 Seine DTC, Paris	Hanging	MHC ()
Assault, breaking and entering, and rape of a French woman (33) at Le Pas En Ferre, France					
Wray Pvt	Robert	27 Mar 21 Shelby NC	20 Aug 45 Loire DTC, Le Mans	Hanging	W ()
Murder of Pvt Billy B. Betts at Golbey, France					
Yancy Pvt	Waiter	N/A	10 Feb 45 Bricquebec, Manche, France	Hanging	W ()
Assault, rape of a French girl (19) and murder of Auguste Lebarillier at Hameau-Pigeon, France					

Note: We compiled the data in this table from the excellent book by French MacLean "The Fifth Field" (Schiffer Publishing 2013).

These 96 soldiers murdered 26 fellow American military personnel ("MP" behind a name referring to Military Police), and killed or raped 71 British, French, Irish, Italian, Polish and Algerian civilians, in addition to the one soldier executed exclusively for desertion.

PBS above refers to Peninsular Base Section, Stockade No. 1.

Major Mortimer H. Christian was commandant of the Seine Disciplinary Training Center, Paris, France and oversaw five hangings there.

Brigadier General Joseph V. DePaul Dillon was responsible for overseeing executions at Termini on Sicily.

Please see chapter "3 The Hangmen" for information on John C. Woods, Thomas Pierrepont and their assistants.

Shepton Mallet as an American Military prison during World War II

During World War II part of Shepton Mallet prison in Somerset, England was taken over by the American government for use as a military prison and as the place of execution for American servicemen convicted under the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act (1942) which allowed for American Military justice to be enacted on British soil. To enable these executions to take place a new brick built extension was added to one of the prison's wings. The two story red brick structure looks totally out of place against the weathered stone walls of the original building. A new British style gallows was installed on the first floor of the building and two cells within the main building converted into a condemned cell. Thomas Pierrepont, Britain's chief executioner at the time, was contracted to carry out the hangings here and was paid by the US Military. It is not known whether he or the military authorities chose the assistant.

18 military executions were carried out at Shepton Mallet, representing 17% of the 96 executions of American servicemen serving in the European and North African Theatres of Operations (ETO). (Figures of 19 and even 21 executions in the UK have been given in some accounts but are definitely not correct.) Of these 18 men, nine were convicted of murder, six of rape and three of both crimes. Their racial mix was: ten African American, three Latino and five white - their average age was 21.5 years. 17 were privates and one was a corporal. None ranked higher than this.

Much has been made of the ethnic background of these men but very little of what they were convicted of. Also much is made of the alleged poor quality of the trials that these men received. In at least two cases, men had their death sentences commuted. (Thomas Bell who had been convicted of rape and George Fowler see below).

Bear in mind that a conviction for murder in Britain at this time carried a mandatory death sentence and that it was not unusual for civilian murder trials to only take a day or two. Rape did not carry the death penalty in British law but did in US Military law. Execution by shooting was not permitted for murder in Britain but was under US Military law. Rape was punishable by death in most of the southern states of America and in fact the last execution for rape in the USA took place in May 1964 when Ronald Wolfe was gassed in Missouri. Just over 300 rape executions (where the victim lived) were carried out in the USA between 1941 and 1964.

Here is a brief account of each case:

Pvt. David Cobb, a 22 year old black G.I. was the first to be hanged, on 12 March, 1943. Cobb, from Dothan, Alabama, was stationed at Desborough Camp in Northamptonshire and had been on guard duty for some time during Sunday 27 December, when he was reprimanded by 2nd Lieutenant Robert J. Cobner. He protested and Cobner ordered the sergeant of the guard to arrest Cobb. Cobb threatened the man, who backed off so Cobner unwisely decided to attempt the arrest himself. Cobb fired his rifle at Cobner fatally injuring him. He was tried by US court martial at Cambridge on 6 January 1943. His trial occupying less than one day. His death sentence was confirmed in due course and reviewed by the authorities before he was executed by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont within the new execution facility at Shepton Mallet.

Pvt. Harold Smith, a 20 year old from LaGrange, Georgia had gone AWOL (absent without leave) in London in January 1943 and with another young soldier was staying in a hotel enjoying the town until their financial resources dried up. He then returned to Chisledon Camp near Swindon to find his own unit had been posted elsewhere. He found a loaded pistol and then got into an altercation with Pte. Harry Jenkins whom he shot dead. He also fired at another soldier before escaping back to London, where he was arrested by a British policeman. He was handed over to American authorities and was court-martialled at Bristol on 12 March, 1943. He made a full statement admitting his guilt and was duly hanged on the 25 June, 1943 by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont.

20 year old Lee A. Davis was another young black G.I. who was convicted of murder during the war. The killing took place near Marlborough in Wiltshire, as two young women walked back from the cinema. Davis asked the girls what they were doing and the one, Muriel Fawden, said she was returning to the hospital where she worked as a nurse. They tried to get away from Davis who shouted after them "Stand still, or I'll

shoot". He instructed the terrified girls to go into some bushes beside the footpath. Muriel's companion Cynthia Lay decided to make a run for it and Davis shot her dead. He now forced Muriel into some bushes and raped her but surprisingly did not kill her. She was able to give a full statement to the police and as a result all the rifles of the American soldiers stationed nearby were examined. Davis's was found to have been fired and forensic tests matched the shell cases found near Cynthia to it. Davis admitted he had been at the scene of the crime but said he had only meant to fire over the heads of the girls. He was court-martialled at Marlborough on the 6th of October for the murder and the rape, both crimes carrying the death penalty under US Military law. He was hanged on the 14 December, 1943 by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Alex Riley.

John Waters from Perth Amboy in New Jersey was, at 39, rather older than the rest of these soldiers. He had been seeing a local woman, 35 year old Doris Staples, in Henley on Thames where he was stationed. Their relationship was deteriorating and on 14 July, 1943 he went to the drapers shop where she worked and shot her five times. The police arrived while Waters was still on the premises and a short siege began which was ended when the police threw a teargas canister into the shop and broke down the door. Seeing that he was cornered, Waters shot himself, but did not make a very good job of it. In due course he came to trial at Watford, Herts. (on 29 November, 1943) and was convicted and sentenced to death for Doris' killing. He was hanged on 10 February, 1944 by Tom Pierrepont, assisted by Alex Riley.

J.C. Leatherberry, a 22 year old from Hazelhurst, Mississippi, was executed for the murder of Colchester taxi driver Henry Hailstone on the evening of 5 December, 1943. Hailstone's taxi was found abandoned and parked facing the wrong way which the police thought unusual and made them wonder if it had been parked by a foreigner who drove on the other side of the road. In the car was a blood stained jacket with Hailstone's driving licence in the pocket. When the area round the car was searched a blood stained overcoat was found with a name tag inside of Captain Walker. When he was interviewed he told police that the coat had been stolen, along with his Rolex watch, by a black soldier on the day of the murder. However a gas mask had been left during the robbery and this bore the identifier of J. Hill. Hill was traced and said he had lent the gas mask to fellow soldier George Fowler. Fowler was arrested and when his belongings were searched a pawn ticket was found for the missing Rolex. Fowler also admitted that he and Leatherberry had been involved in the murder. Their motive appeared to be to steal the car. Fowler maintained that it was Leatherberry who had strangled the driver. Both were convicted at their court martial at Ipswich on 19 January, 1944 and both received the death sentence. However Fowler's was commuted as the court accepted that Leatherberry was the principal and because he had given evidence. Fowler was returned to military prison in the USA to serve his life sentence while Leatherberry was sent to Shepton Mallet to be hanged by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont on 16 March, 1944.

25 year old Pvt. Wiley Harris Jr. from Greenville, Georgia, was another black soldier. He was stationed in Belfast in Northern Ireland. He had gone out with his friend Pvt. Robert Fils to a bar for the evening where they met a pimp called Harry Coogan who offered them the services of a young woman. These Harris accepted and he and the girl went to a nearby air raid shelter to have sex with Coogan keeping watch outside as this sort of activity was illegal. As they were getting started Coogan shouted to them that the police were approaching. Harris and the girl got dressed and emerged from the shelter to find that there were no police and Harris then demanded his money back. A struggle ensued between Harris and Coogan in which Coogan punched Harris. This caused the fight to escalate to the point where Harris stabbed Coogan 17 times. The court martial were not prepared to accept self defence in view of the number of stab wounds and so Harris was convicted. He was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Alex Riley, on 26 May, 1944.

20 year old Alex F. Miranda from Santa Ana, California, became the first American serviceman to suffer death by musketry as the US Army called shooting by firing squad, at Shepton Mallet. He had been convicted of Violation of the 92nd Article of War (murder) and was executed by an eight man firing squad in the prison grounds on Tuesday 30 May, 1944 for the murder of his sergeant, Sgt Thomas Evison at Broomhill Camp in Devon. Miranda had gone out drinking and had been behaving badly so was arrested by the civilian police and taken back to the camp. Here he became aggressive and the object of his aggression was Sgt Evison who was reportedly asleep at the time. Getting no response from the sleeping

man he shot him dead. The location of Miranda's court martial is unknown as is the reason why he was sentenced to be shot rather than hanged, bearing in mind that both David Cobb and Harold Smith had also killed other US soldiers.

25 year old Eliga Brinson from Tallahassee, Florida, and 22 year old Willie Smith from Birmingham, Alabama, were hanged by Thomas Pierrepont on 11 August, 1944 for the rape of 16 year old Dorothy Holmes after a dance at Bishop's Cleeve in Gloucestershire. Dorothy left the dance with her boyfriend when they were ambushed by Brinson and Smith who assaulted them and when the boyfriend ran to get help both raped Dorothy. They were caught through the boot prints they left in the field where the rape took place. They came to trial at Cheltenham on 28 April, 1944, their case taking two days to complete.

Madison Thomas, a 23 year old from Arnaudville, Louisiana, was another black soldier convicted of rape. His victim was Beatrice Reynolds, who was returning home after helping out at the British Legion hall at Gunnislake in Cornwall on the evening of 26 July, 1944. Thomas accosted her on her way home and she tried to get rid of him by talking to her friend Jean Blight but without success. He hit her and pulled her into a field where he raped her and robbed her of her watch. Thomas had also spoken to Jean Blight and she was able to positively identify him the next day when the entire camp at Whitchurch Down near Tavistock was put on parade. Blood on Thomas' trousers was shown to be of the same group as Beatrice's. He was court martialled at Plymouth on 21 August and hanged by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont on 12 October, 1944.

35 year old Benjamin Pyegate from Dillon, South Carolina, was the second and last US soldier to face a firing squad at Shepton Mallet. The crime took place at Tidworth Barracks in Wiltshire on 15 July, 1944.

Pygate became involved in an argument with three fellow soldiers in his hut and kicked James Alexander in the groin prior to stabbing him to death. On 28 November, 1944 he was duly executed by firing squad. He was led out and tied to a post. A black hood was placed over his head and a four inch diameter white target placed over his heart. 15 yards away eight soldiers stood with their rifles, one of which contained a blank round. The officer in charge of the execution gave the regulation commands as detailed in the US Army Manual. These being: "At the command READY, the execution party (firing squad) will take that position and unlock rifles. At the command AIM, the execution party will take that position with rifles aimed at target on the prisoner's body. At the command FIRE, the execution party will fire simultaneously."

The medical officer then examined the prisoner and, if necessary could direct that a "coup de grâce" be administered. The sergeant of the execution party was responsible for administering this with "a hand weapon, holding the muzzle just above the ear and one foot from the head." It is not known whether it was required in Pyegate's case.

24 year old Ernest Lee Clark from Clifton Forge, Virginia and Augustine M. Guerra aged 20 from Cibolo, Texas (both white) were jointly convicted of the rape and murder of 15 year old Elizabeth Green at Ashford, Kent on 22 August, 1944. Clark and Guerra had been drinking in a pub in Ashford and left at closing time to walk back to their barracks. On the way they encountered Elizabeth whom they raped and strangled. Hair and fibre samples taken from the scene matched those found on Clarke and Guerra and faced with this evidence they confessed to the rape but claimed that they had not intended to kill Elizabeth. They were tried on 22 September, 1944 at Ashford and hanged side by side on 8 January, 1945, by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont.

Robert L. Pearson, a 21 year old from Mayflower, Arkansas and 24 year old Parson (also given as Cubia) Jones from Thompson, Georgia (both coloured) were convicted by court martial of the rape of Joyce Brown at Chard in Somerset on 3 December, 1944. Joyce was heavily pregnant at the time of her rape and this must have been obvious to her assailants. Joyce was dragged into an orchard where both men raped her. After the rape was reported the clothes of all the men on the base were searched and Pearson's and Jones' were found to be muddy. They both admitted to having sex with Joyce but claimed that she consented. Her pregnancy, bruising and her statement to the police told a different story. They were tried at Chard on 16 December, 1944 and hanged side by side on 17 March, 1945 by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Herbert Morris.

22 year old William Harrison Jr. from Ironton, Ohio sexually assaulted and strangled seven year old Patricia Wylie in Killycolpy Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Patricia was the daughter of a couple who had shown friendship to him. On the pretext of buying them a thank you present he took Patricia shopping with him on the afternoon of 26 September, 1944. His trial took place on 18 November, 1944 and he was hanged on 7 April, 1945 by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Herbert Morris.

George E. Smith Jr. aged 28 from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had gone hunting on private property (Honingham Hall in Norfolk) with fellow soldier Leonard Wojtacha, both armed with service carbines. They were challenged by the owner, Sir Eric Teichman and in the course of this confrontation Smith shot Sir Eric once through the head, killing him. The court martial took place at Attlebridge in Norfolk, commencing on 8 January, 1945, and lasting five days due to the repeated hospitalisation of Smith. He had made a confession when he was arrested but claimed it had been made under duress and withdrew it at his trial. He was convicted and hanged on 8 May, 1945 (V.E. Day) despite requests for clemency, including one from Lady Teichman. Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Herbert Morris, carried out the execution.

Aniceto Martinez, a 23 year old Mexican American soldier from Vallecitos, New Mexico, was working as a guard at a prisoner of war camp at near Rugeley in Staffordshire. On the night of 6 August, 1945 he broke into the house of 75 year old Agnes Cope in Rugeley where he raped her. She survived to tell the police of her ordeal and the prisoner of war camp became the focus of their enquiries. Only Martinez had been out of the camp the previous night and when questioned he confessed to the rape. Fibre samples taken from his clothing and matching those in Agnes' house matched adding forensic evidence to the confession. Martinez was tried at Lichfield in Staffordshire on 21 February, 1945 and became the last person to be hanged for rape in the U.K. when he went to the gallows on the 15th of June of that year. Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by his nephew Albert, carried out the execution.

All of these men were tried by military courts martial and would have been handed over to military authorities after arrest. The 1928 American forces Manual for Courts-Martial laid down the specific procedures to be used.

The court was normally composed of legally trained officers and usually the prisoner was defended and prosecuted by officers at the rank of captain. All but two trials lasted just one day. In the Smith case, the trial lasted about two working days, spread over five days due to his repeated hospitalisations. In only one case (Harrison) did the trial conform to modern standards, it lasted three and a half days. Typically the defence were allowed two to three weeks to prepare their case. In many cases they had less time, and the Court was usually unwilling to grant defence motions to delay the proceedings - only two such motions were granted.

After the guilty verdict, the death sentence could be passed, either by hanging or shooting, at the discretion of the court. (Shooting was the usual sentence in the case of a person convicted of a purely military offence.) It had to be confirmed and reviewed by a Board of Review. If confirmed it was normally carried out in about three months. (Under British law it was three weeks from sentence to execution at this time.)

Execution details

The normal U.S. Army method of hanging was not permitted in England and this was confirmed by Albert Pierrepont, in his autobiography. Most of the normal American execution customs were allowed however. Executions by hanging were normally carried out at 1.00 a.m. in the morning of the specified day. (Shooting executions were carried out around 8.00 a.m.) The British method of hanging was used, there was no standard drop and no hangmen's coiled noose, but an exactly calculated drop using a British style eyelet noose.

US Army regulations laid down that a condemned prisoner at execution "will be dressed in regulation uniform from which all decorations, insignia, or other evidence of membership therein have been removed. Likewise, no such evidences will appear on any clothing used in burial." In all cases the condemned men had the services of the prison chaplain in the days leading up to their execution. They were housed in a condemned cell adjacent to the execution chamber for the last three or four days of their lives.

Records of these hangings indicate that the time between releasing the trap doors and confirmation of

death varied considerably. David Cobb's execution took only 3 ½ minutes until he was officially pronounced dead by three U.S. medical officers. (He was left hanging for one hour, as was the norm in England). It took 22 minutes before George Smith could be certified dead. The average time for 15 of the 16 hangings was 14.8 minutes. (The data is not available for one hanging). It is presumed that the time was taken from the drop until no further heartbeat could be detected by the attending medical officer. This would tally with the time it took for the heartbeat to stop in civilian hangings at the time.

Albert Pierrepoint commented adversely upon the delay caused to the execution process caused by the reading of the death warrant on the gallows and allowing the condemned man to make a final statement. Neither of these things were allowed in British executions but were standard practice in American ones. Typically there were up to 20 witnesses and officials in the execution chamber. After execution the bodies were buried in Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey. Many were later re-buried in France.

Karl Hulten – “The Cleft Chin Murder”

Karl Gustav Hulten was a 22 year old Swedish-American army deserter. He was from Cambridge Massachusetts and had a wife named Rita. While on the run he passed himself off as 2nd Lieutenant Ricky Allen and claimed to being a gangster from Chicago. Hulten was the first and only G.I. to be tried and condemned to death in an English civil court (under a special dispensation signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt). It is assumed that he was not court-martialed by the US Army, under the terms of the Visiting Forces Act, because his girlfriend and co-defendant was a British citizen.

On 3 October 1944, Hulten met and fell for 18 year old Elizabeth Maude (also given as Marina) Jones. He picked her up after work in a stolen US Army truck.

Jones came from Neath in South Wales and had worked as a barmaid, waitress and cinema usherette, before becoming a striptease artist in London, under the stage name of “Georgina Grayson”.

The duo went on a six day crime spree, engaging in several robberies and other more minor crimes. But in the early hours of Saturday 7 October, 1944, Hulten and Jones got into a taxi driven by 34 year old George Edward Heath at Chiswick in London. Heath had a cleft chin, hence why his murder was dubbed “The Cleft Chin Murder” by the press.

Hulten ordered Heath to drive around before shooting him in the back and stealing his money and the car. Heath's body was thrown into a ditch at Knowle Green near Staines, but was easily identified by documents were found on the body. A description of the Ford V8 car was able to be circulated. Two days later police found the car in London's Fulham Palace Road and lay in wait to see whether anyone would come for it. A little later, a man dressed as an American officer approached the car and was arrested. He gave the name of Richard John Allen. He was initially interrogated by the American Army detectives to whom he revealed his correct name. He had gone absent without leave and had stolen a 45 calibre Remington pistol.

Hulten denied the shooting and implicated Jones who had told a friend that, “If you had seen somebody do what I have seen done you wouldn't be able to sleep at night.” This was reported to the police and she too was arrested, making a statement saying Hulten had shot Heath. He in turn stated that she had been an active and willing participant in the crime.

They both stood trial at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Charles, commencing on 16 January, 1945 and lasting for six days. The jury found them equally guilty and the inevitable death sentences followed on 23 January.

Hulten was hanged at Pentonville prison on Thursday, 8 March, 1945 by Albert Pierrepoint and Henry Critchell. Outside the prison, Mrs. Violet Van der Elst and some 200 protestors demonstrated against the death penalty. “You let the girl off, but you let the man hang,” Van der Elst shouted. “It's a damned shame.”

Jones was sent to the Condemned Cell at Holloway and would presumably have been hanged at the same time on that Thursday, had she not have been reprieved two days earlier. Her sentence was commuted to life and she remained in prison until 1954. It is thought that her age was a major factor in the decision to spare her.

The reprieve of Jones caused widespread public indignation and telegrams to the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison. "SHE SHOULD HANG" was chalked on the walls beside pictures of a figure dangling from a gallows in her home town of Neath.

German Prisoners of War in US custody

After the end of World War II, the United States Army executed fourteen German prisoners of war (POWs) by hanging at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. These men had been convicted by general courts-martial of the murders of three fellow German POWs who were believed by their fellow inmates to be traitors for collaborating with the United States military authorities. President Harry Truman declined clemency in all cases, as they were seen as fanatical Nazis. It was decided to delay the hangings till after the War ended, as it was feared that Hitler would order the executions of US prisoners of war as a reprisal.

The execution site and procedure

With thanks to Kelvin D. Crow, Command Historian, CAC and Fort Leavenworth, writing on 26 October, 2006 on the United States Army Combined Arms Centre website, for allowing us to reproduce the following.

"There is some confusion over the execution site. Vincent Green in *Extreme Justice* and Richard Whittingham in *Martial Justice* both say the execution took place in building 466. But their narratives, and that of the other witness, say the execution took place in an elevator shaft and 466 does not now and did not in 1945 have an elevator or shaft. The MPs teach their new soldiers it took place in 465 because that building does have an elevator. They even point to handprints in the cement and scratches in the walls said to be made by the condemned men as they were executed.

The witnesses to the executions do not say where it took place, but their writings give us the following clues. They say the building was:

- One of the oldest buildings on post
- Once a warehouse, tailor shop, electrical shop and salvage warehouse
- It had an elevator shaft 8 feet square
- Three stories high with a basement.
- Had room inside for a large crowd of people (7 reporters, three executioners, Col, Priest, Minister, military observers, at least 15)
- You could get to the basement by going out the front door, around the corner and downhill.
- It was 300 feet or 250 yards from the Castle depending on the source.

I believe it was building 467. This building was built in 1887 (58 years old at the time of the executions) and one of the older buildings on post. It has seen use as a warehouse, shoe shop, and was at the time the salvage warehouse. It had large open bays, it was three stories high with a basement and it has a back door around the corner and downhill from the main entrance. While it does not now have an elevator, the architectural drawings on file in with the post engineers show that it did have an elevator, in an 8-foot square shaft, in 1945.

Building 465 was built in 1929, making it just 16 years old at the time of the execution. It is 4 stories high, and was built for and in use as the medical and dental clinic in 1945. It has an elevator, but it is only 7 feet across and is placed in such a way that no more than a few persons could observe the goings on, not the crowd the observers record. Finally, it is just too close to the main entrance of the Castle.

LTC Raymond Orr, Quarter Master for the prison, had to design a system that was inside because of the weather and the need for privacy, and that could be quickly set up and torn down. He chose to use an

elevator shaft. To operate the gallows the elevator was placed on the 3rd floor, and a platform was set up on the 1st floor with a 7-foot drop into the basement. Rope used was 7/8" hemp looped around a 4 x 10" beam swung over the site from the 2nd floor. The trap door was a 3-foot square opening with a black circle painted on it to show the condemned man where to stand. It was operated by a 4-foot lever. The condemned man was marched out from the main door of the prison (some say with a 13 man guard detail) in as full a German uniform as could be made available. He was placed on the scaffold and the charges (89th and 92nd articles of war – riot and murder) and sentence were again read to him. He was given the chance to make a last statement. Then his headgear was removed, his arms bound behind him and his feet tied together, a black bag placed over his head and the noose fitted to his neck. The Commandant of the DB, Colonel William S. Easley, said, "May God have mercy on your soul." and gave a signal to the executioner who pulled the lever to release the trap door. The post surgeon, Major Roy Cram, and two other doctors were stationed in the basement to certify death. After the priest had cut a portion of the bag away to anoint the dying man with oil, one of the doctors would climb the stepladder every five minutes to check for heart function. This took an average of 19 minutes. The whole execution, from the time the group left the front door, took only about 30 minutes. Each could begin immediately after the removal of the body because a hangman's knot was tied in the opposite end of the rope while waiting for the previous man to expire. After he died the old knot was cut away and the process repeated.

The bodies were subsequently buried in a row along a wall in the Fort Leavenworth Military Prison Cemetery."

The individual cases are detailed below.

The Tonkawa Case: The murder of Gefreiter (Pfc) Johannes Kunze

Johannes Kunze was born on 5 March, 1904. Prior to the War he had been a machinist in Hamburg, Germany. He was drafted into the German Army in 1940 and fought with the Afrika Korps in Tunisia, North Africa, as a Private 1st Class. Kunze was captured on May 13, 1943 at Bone, in Tunisia and sent to the POW camp in Tonkawa Oklahoma.

Here he passed information on prisoner activity and on camouflaging measures to protect vulnerable targets (e.g. the Hamburg railway station) from being bombed, to a US doctor, until on 4 November, 1943, one of the notes was passed to another doctor who couldn't read German and gave it to a German inmate, who realized that Kunze was spying on them. This man took the note to the camp senior leader, Hauptfeldwebel (SGM) Walter Beyer.

Beyer called all prisoners to the mess hall and told the assembly that there was a traitor in their midst, identifiable by his handwriting, Kunze. All hell broke loose and Kunze was beaten to death, to the shouts of "traitor".

Authorities discovered the body and examined some 200 POWs, finding blood on the tunics of five who were arrested and charged with murder. They were Walter Beyer, Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Berthold Seidel, Unteroffizier (Sgt) Hans Demme, Unteroffizier Hans Schomer, and Obergefreiter (Cpl) Willi Scholz.

They were tried at Camp Gruber near Muskogee Oklahoma on 17 January, 1944 under the provisions of Articles of War 89 and 92. All were convicted and sentenced to be "hanged by the neck till dead". The sentences were confirmed by President Truman on 5 October, 1944.

Executed and buried on 10 July 1945 at Fort Leavenworth:

Name	Rank	Age	Grave
Walter Beyer	SGM	33	Plot 10, Grave 31
Berthold Seidel	T/Sgt	31	Plot 10, Grave 30

Hans Demme	Sgt	28	Plot 10, Grave 29
Hans Schomer	Sgt	28	Plot 10, Grave 28
Willi Scholz	Cpl	23	Plot 10, Grave 27

The Independent Record of July 10, 1945 reported that “All went to their deaths clad in their German uniforms, their only request. Their last meal consisted only of the regular issued rations. Beyer, the highest ranking member of the group, was the first to go to the gallows. Col. William S. Eley, commandant of the disciplinary barracks, read the execution order, relayed to the prisoner through an interpreter.”

Johannes Kunze is buried in the Fort Reno Post Cemetery, WWII POW Section, Plot A, Grave 15.

The Camp Aiken Case: The murder of Gefreiter (Pfc) Horst Günther

Horst Günther was born on 23 September, 1920. He had served in the Afrika Korps and was captured on 9 May, 1943 in Tunisia. He was shipped to Camp Aiken prisoner-of-war camp in South Carolina.

On April 6, 1944, the 24-year-old Günther was found hanging by a noose from the cross-arm of a telephone pole. His death was initially ruled a suicide, but further investigation revealed that he had been murdered. He was thought to be a traitor because he liked jazz music and spoke in favour of the US. He was attacked by a group of six fellow POWs, four of whom held him down while Gauss and Staub strangled him with a rope before hanging the body to make it look like a suicide. Unteroffizier (Sgt) Erich Gauss and Grenadier (Pvt) Rudolf Staub were tried at Fort McPherson in Georgia under Articles of War no. 92 and sentenced to hang. The sentences were confirmed by the President on 13 November, 1944.

Günther was buried at Fort Gordon, in Richmond County, Georgia, Grave no. 4.

Executed and buried on 14 July, 1945 at Fort Leavenworth:

Name	Rank	Age	Grave
Erich Gauss	Sgt	31	Plot 10, Grave 26
Rudolf Staub	Pvt	39	Plot 10, Grave 25

Note: correct spelling of Staub, not Straub, as given elsewhere.

The Papago Park Case: The murder of Werner Drechsler

Werner Drechsler was born on January 17, 1922, in Mühlberg on the river Elbe, Germany. He joined the Kriegsmarine (German navy) and was posted to Unterseeboot (submarine) U-118 on which he held the rank of Obergefreiter (leading seaman).

On June 12, 1943, planes from the aircraft carrier USS Bogue attacked and sank U-118 near the Azores in the mid-Atlantic. 16 of 59 man crew survived and were taken prisoner. Drechsler gave US naval authorities valuable information about the U-boats and initially was segregated from other prisoners. Due to an administrative error he was later transferred to a camp at Papago Park, in Arizona on 12 March, 1944 where other U-boat prisoners were held. Here several of the POWs suspected that he was a collaborator as each had spent time in a cell with him at the Fort Hunt, Virginia interrogation center. On 13 March, 1944 he was beaten and then hanged in a shower room.

The seven suspects were tried and convicted of Drechsler's murder on 15 March, 1944, under the

provisions of Articles of War no. 92. Their death sentences were approved by President Truman on 28 July, 1945 and carried out singly from just after midnight until 3 a.m. on 25 August, 1945. These seven hangings constituted the largest number of hangings carried out in America in a single day in the twentieth century.

Drechsler was buried at the Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso, Texas, Grave 6-G.

Executed and buried on 25 August, 1945 at Fort Leavenworth:

Name	Rank/Crew of submarine	Age	Grave
Helmut Fischer	Cpl / U-615	22	Plot 11 Grave 24
Fritz Franke	Pfc / U-615	21	Plot 11 Grave 23
Günter Külsen	Sgt / U-615	22	Plot 11 Grave 22
Heinrich Ludwig	Pfc / U-199	25	Plot 11 Grave 21
Bernhard Reyak	Cpl / U-615	21	Plot 11 Grave 20
Otto Stengel	Cpl / U-352	26	Plot 11 Grave 19
Rolf Wizny	Cpl / U-615	23	Plot 11 Grave 1

German Prisoners of War in Canada

Canada housed over 34,000 German prisoners of war, with the first 10,000 arriving in 1942, after the Allied defeat of German forces in North Africa. All of these men had been transferred from Britain, which feared that they would assist the enemy in the event of a Nazi invasion.

Two large prison camps were built at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat in Alberta, Canada, each with a capacity of 12,500 men. Camp 133 at Lethbridge was completed in November 1942 and Camp 132 at Medicine Hat opened in early 1943.

Prisoners considered to be “hard core” Nazis were held at Medicine Hat and in many ways they controlled the camp. It was here that the murders of two of their fellow POWs were committed.

40 year old Soldat (private) August Plaszyk (also given as Plaszek) was born in Lünen in January 1903 and later became a farmer at Nordlünen in Germany. He was also a former member of the French Foreign Legion, as were several of his fellow POWs. On 2 July, 1943, the German Camp Leader, Eilstermann, and his sub-leaders convened a kangaroo court to try four of the main members of the French Foreign Legion group, including Plaszyk. They suspected that these men were conspiring to overthrow the camp leadership.

Plaszyk was murdered on July 22, 1943. He was dragged out of an interrogation hut where he was being questioned by camp leaders, beaten, battered over the head with a rock and then hanged to death from a beam in the west recreation drill hall.

The 26 month long RCMP investigation eventually led to the arrests on 10 October, 1945 of 31 year Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Werner Schwalb, together with 24 year old Adolf Kratz and 30 year old Johannes Wittinger. Although Plaszyk’s murder had been witnessed by other prisoners, none of the POWs were willing to talk to the police, for fear of reprisal and it was only after the war ended that the situation changed.

Werner Schwalb was tried for murder by a civil court at Medicine Hat between 25 February and 5 March, 1946. His trial was followed by that of Kratz, both resulting in death sentences. Johannes Wittinger was acquitted, principally on the evidence of Schwalb, who maintained that he had not been present at the scene.

Kratz was reprieved two days before his scheduled execution and his sentence commuted to life in prison. He was released in 1955.

Schwalb was hanged at the Provincial Gaol in Lethbridge at 12.07 a.m. on 26 June, 1946. His last words

were reportedly "My Führer I follow thee."

Werner Schwalb had been born on 11 June, 1915 at Sausenheim in the Palatinate, a region 20 miles west of the Rhine. He was a single man and a baker and cook in civilian life. He was captured in Egypt by a South African unit attached to the British Eighth Army.

The second murder victim was Dr. Karl Lehmann. The 38 year old Unteroffizier (Sgt) had been a university professor at Erlangen in Bavaria before joining the army and held a doctorate in languages. He was suspected by his fellow inmates of being a Communist and was in fact an informer, according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and had been for some months. It should be remembered that Communism was an ideology hated by the Nazis. After Lehmann was captured in Tunisia he was held at a POW camp at Oldham in England and then transferred to Canada, ironically for his own safety, because of his anti Nazi views. Once at Medicine Hat he continued to propound his views and was considered to be the Communists' leader.

On the night of 10/11 September, 1944, Lehmann was asked to go to the hut where he gave lectures to meet someone who wanted to talk to him. When he arrived there he was ambushed by four men. They were Bruno Perzonowsky, Willi Müller, Heinrich Busch and Walter Wolf. They beat Lehmann and then hanged him in Barracks D6. The next day all four were transferred to another POW camp at Neys in Ontario.

Obergefreiter (Cpl) Bruno Perzonowsky was a 34 year old former bomber crew member whose plane had crashed in Wales. He was born in Johannsburg in East Prussia which today is Pisz in Poland, on 31 December, 1911.

Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Willi Müller was another bomber man whose plane had been shot down by a Spitfire over Glasgow in May 1941. He had been born at Klein Gorschütz (now Gorzyczki in Poland) on 18 February, 1914.

Feldwebel (T/Sgt) Heinrich Busch was born at Bergen in Germany on 22 June, 1916. He was also a bomber crew member whose plane had come down in Norfolk in England.

Unteroffizier (Sgt) Walter Wolf had been born at Schwannenbach in Germany on 29 October 1917 and had been captured by the Allies in North Africa.

All four were arrested on 6 April, 1946 and faced separate trials in the civilian courthouse at Medicine Hat.

Perzonowsky's case began on 24 June, 1946, before Chief Justice Howson. It was followed by the trial of Wolf, then Busch, and finally Müller. The defense in all cases was that the accused were following orders and that Lehmann was a traitor. All four were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. Their appeals were dismissed on 16 October, 1946, although there would be two stays of execution before the men were finally hanged in the early hours of Wednesday 18 December, 1946 at the Provincial Gaol in Lethbridge. All four had asked to be shot by firing squad but this was, of course, denied, as hanging was the only form of capital punishment allowed in Canada. Perzonowsky, Busch and Müller attempted suicide by cutting their wrists with razor blades, the night before they were due to hang. They were prevented from succeeding by their guards and went to the gallows with their wrists bandaged. Wolf said he "did not wish to die that way".

The Edmonton Journal newspaper recorded that Perzonowsky and Busch were hanged at 12.10 a.m. followed by Müller and Wolf at 12.42 a.m. At 1.05 a.m. Canadian Donald Sherman Staley was hanged for the murder and rape of six year old Donnie Goss in Calgary. This would be the largest number of hangings in Canada on a single day, since 27 November, 1875 when eight men were executed for their part in the Reil Rebellion at Battleford, Saskatchewan.

Initially the bodies of both the victims and the perpetrators were buried in a yard within the prison, but in 1970 they were exhumed and re-interred in the German section of the town cemetery in Kitchener in Ontario, Canada at the request of the German War Graves Commission. Perzonowsky was buried in grave 33A, Busch was buried in grave 32A, Müller in grave 32B and Wolf in grave 34A. The remains were buried with appropriate ceremony, two-to-a-grave with a suitable granite headstone. Plaszick and Lehmann were buried separately in a different part of the cemetery.

No details of the form of gallows or the identity of the hangman were released by the Canadian authorities. It is possible that Franco-Canadian Camille Branchaud was the hangman. He was the official hangman for the Province of Quebec, but worked “freelance” for other provinces.

Branchaud was one of two men to succeed Arthur Ellis after the botched execution of Thomasina Sarao in Montreal in 1935 in which she was decapitated. One of these men adopted the pseudonym Ellis and the other the pseudonym Camille Branchaud. Between them they carried out 180 hangings in Canada up to abolition.

British soldiers hanged for murder in Britain

12 British soldiers and one airman were hanged for murder at several British prisons after trial and conviction in civilian courts.

Name	Age	Date of execution	Prison	Victim
Stanley Ernest Boon	27	October 25, 1939	Wandsworth	Mabel Maud Bundy
Arthur John Smith	26	October 26, 1939	Wandsworth	Mabel Maud Bundy
Samuel Morgan	28	April 9, 1941	Walton	Mary Hagan
David Miller Jennings	21	July 24, 1941	Dorchester	Albert Farley
Harold Hill	26	May 1, 1942	Oxford	Doreen Hearne
Gordon Cummins	28	June 25, 1942	Wandsworth	Four women
Terrence Casey	22	November 19, 1943	Wandsworth	Bridget Mitton
Sidney Delasalle	39	April 13, 1944	Durham	F/Sgt Ronald Murphy
Ernest Kemp	21	June 6, 1944	Wandsworth	Iris Deeley
John Davidson	19	July 12, 1944	Walton	Gladys Appleton
Arthur Heyes	37	March 13, 1944	Norwich	Winifred Evans
James McNicol	30	December 21, 1945	Pentonville	Sgt. Donald Kirkaldie
Reginald Johnson	24	December 29, 1945	Wandsworth	John Ritchie

Brief details of each case are below:

Privates Stanley Ernest Boon and Arthur John Smith

These two soldiers were serving in the North Staffordshire Regiment in the summer of 1939 and were based at Thursley in Surrey, together with Private Joseph William Goodwin.

On the evening of Thursday 4 July, 1939 the three men decided to go drinking together. They caught the bus into Hindhead and went to the Royal Huts hotel. Here they met 44 year old Mabel Maud Bundy who was a maid at the Moorlands Hotel at Hindhead and who had come in for a drink with a female friend. By closing time the friend had already left and the three soldiers offered to walk Mabel back to the Moorlands Hotel where she lived in.

Mabel left with them and appeared to be quite happy. As the group neared the Moorlands things turned nasty. The soldiers decided to rape Mabel and then kill her.

Her body was found the next morning and it was clear that she had been sexually assaulted. The autopsy

carried out by Professor Keith Simpson, found that her nose had been broken and that she had died from a heavy blow to the side of the head.

Witnesses came forward to say that they had seen Mabel leaving the Royal Huts with three soldiers and they were invited to an identity parade at the camp in Thursley. Agnes and William Dopson were able to identify Boon.

Forensic tests showed blood on the clothes of 27 year old Boon and 26 year old Smith and semen on Boon and 29 year old Goodwin. All were arrested and taken to Farnham police station.

Boon and Smith admitted having sex with Mabel but claimed it was consensual and denied intending to murder her, claiming that they only intended to "knock her out" after she changed her mind having first had intercourse with Smith.

All three were tried at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Oliver on 12 to 21 September, 1939. Boon and Smith were convicted and Goodwin acquitted of murder. At appeal, Boon placed the blame on Smith, saying "I am innocent of any violence that night, it was just a matter of being present with Goodwin who got acquitted." The appeal was dismissed.

In view of the obvious animosity between Boon and Smith and to avoid a scene on the gallows it was decided to execute them on consecutive days.

On Wednesday 25 October, 1939 Boon was hanged at Wandsworth by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Stanley Cross. Boon was given a drop of 8 ft 9 in. (3 inches more than the maximum value in the drop table) on account of his slight build, the prison doctor concurring.

The following morning, assisted by Thomas Phillips, Thomas Pierrepont executed Smith.

Samuel Morgan

On the early evening of Saturday 2 November, 1940, 15 year old Mary Hagan popped to the corner shop to fetch her dad's evening paper and a packet of cigarettes. When she hadn't returned half an hour later her father, James, raised the alarm.

Soon after her body was discovered by one Richard Browne, in a concrete blockhouse near Brook Vale Bridge in the Waterloo area of Liverpool. The police pathologist found that she had been raped and strangled. A piece of blood stained bandage was found by the body and this was identified as part of an army field dressing.

A witness told police that he had seen a soldier by the bridge at 5.45 p.m. 15 year old Thomas Todd said he had seen a soldier at the same spot on the previous afternoon, and was able to identify the man as 28 year old Samuel Morgan. Morgan had gone AWOL from his regiment, the Irish Guards, some two months earlier. He was picked up in London for loitering on 13 November, 1940 by PC Harvaker, who wanted to know what he was doing there and whether he had a leave pass from his unit. Morgan tried to make a run for it but was soon recaptured. Once identified he was sent to Liverpool's Seaforth police station for questioning. He offered an alibi but later admitted to having met Mary on the bridge and persuading her to go with him to the blockhouse. However he denied raping and murdering her. The piece of bandage matched a larger one in Morgan's field kit, having been used by Morgan to bind a cut thumb. Samples of soil from the blockhouse matched samples taken from his uniform.

Morgan was tried at Liverpool before Mr. Justice Staple between 10 and 17 February, 1941. He appealed on the basis that the killing was manslaughter and unsurprisingly this was dismissed. He was hanged at Walton prison on Wednesday 9 April, 1941, by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Herbert Morris.

It appears that this was not Morgan's first offence. On Friday 4 October, 1940, he had tried to rape 18 year old Anne McVitie, who was cycling home from work along the footpath of the local canal. She had seen him along the canal before. Fortunately Anne was able to escape before anything happened but could not identify her assailant.

David Miller Jennings

David Jennings was a 21 year old soldier based at Dorchester in 1941. He had served in France and been evacuated from Dunkirk.

On Monday 27 January, 1941 he received a letter from his girlfriend ending their relationship. After this he went on a pub crawl. Returning to barracks he changed out of his army boots and put on gym shoes, telling his fellow soldiers that he was going to commit a robbery. He took his rifle and left. His comrades reported his words to an officer.

He first went to a business where he knew the location of the safe. He attempted to shoot the lock off the safe but only managed to injure himself by being hit with a small piece of shrapnel. After this he went to the NAAFI canteen in Princess Street Dorchester, where he intended to steal the cash box. 65 year old Albert Farley was the night watchman there and depending on which version of events you believe was either shot by Jennings as he made his escape or shot by Jennings when he was trying to shoot the lock off the door behind which Farley was standing. Either way Jennings stole the cash box and was arrested on his return to barracks.

He came to trial at Dorchester on 2 and 3 June, 1941, before Mr. Justice Charles. The jury were presented with the two scenarios outlined above and chose to believe the first. Jennings' appeal was dismissed as were the petitions for mercy and he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Alex Riley on Thursday 24 July, 1941. This would be the last execution at Dorchester prison.

Harold Hill

Doreen Hearne, aged 8 and Kathleen Trundell age 6, left school as usual at 4 p.m. on the afternoon of Wednesday 10 November, 1941. The pair started their journey home on foot but at around 4.15 p.m. were seen by fellow students climbing into an army truck. One of the more observant ones, 13 year old Gordon Page, noted the truck's identification number and also that it had a Remembrance Day poppy in the grille. A huge search was mounted by police and volunteers.

On 22 November the girl's bodies were found in Rough Wood in Penn, Buckinghamshire, some four miles from their home. Both had been strangled and repeatedly stabbed in the throat and chest, but had not been sexually assaulted.

Police investigations showed the truck was based at an army camp at Haselmere Lodge in Suffolk.

One of the child witnesses was able to pick out 26 year old Harold Hill at an identity parade, as the driver of the truck. Hill was overheard to tell another soldier "You saw me at 4.20 p.m." At this point the officers had made no mention had been made of the time of the abduction.

The investigation uncovered more evidence against Hill. There were 20 miles more on the trucks odometer than he could account for. There was a tunic with blood stains and a handkerchief found at the crime scene which bore the same laundry mark as other items of Hill's clothing. His fingerprints matched those found on one of the little girl's gas masks. Tyre tracks found at the crime scene matched those of the truck Hill had been driving.

Hill was arrested and subsequently tried at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Humphreys from 2 to 5 March, 1942. His counsel put forward a defence of schizophrenia but the jury didn't accept this.

Hill was hanged at Oxford prison on Friday 1 May, 1942, by Thomas and Albert Pierrepont.

Gordon Frederick Cummins

A serial killer stalked the streets of London in February 1942 who murdered four women over a six day period. He was dubbed the "Blackout Ripper" by the press.

The first victim was 40 year old Evelyn Hamilton whose body was discovered in an air raid shelter at Montagu Place on Sunday 9 February. Evelyn had been strangled and robbed. The corpse of 35 year old prostitute, Evelyn Oatley, was discovered in her flat in Wardour Street the following day. She too had been strangled and sexually assaulted and had her throat cut. A prostitute named Margaret Florence Lowe was the next, the following day. Her mutilated body was also found in her flat and she too had been strangled and seriously sexually assaulted. Doris Jouannet was the final victim, her body being discovered in her Paddington flat, also strangled and mutilated. The killer struck again on Friday 14 February but the intended victim, Greta Hayward, was saved by a passing delivery boy as she was about to be strangled. Her attacker left behind his gas mask which enabled identification. Another prostitute, who went by the name of Kathleen King, was attacked a few days later but managed to fight off her assailant.

The perpetrator was soon traced through the number on the gas mask (number 525987) and arrested on 16 February. He was a 28 year old Leading Aircraftman named Gordon Frederick Cummins. The police had some good fingerprints from the crime scenes and found various items of the women's property in Cummins' possession which helped to ensure a conviction at his Old Bailey trial on 27 and 28 April, before Mr. Justice Asquith. The prosecution proceeded only with the murder of Evelyn Oatley and it took the jury just 35 minutes to bring in a guilty verdict. His appeal was dismissed and he was hanged at Wandsworth by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Harry Kirk, on Thursday 25 June, 1942, during an air raid. On the morning of execution, he wrote to his wife asking her forgiveness and saying, "Although I don't know, I think I must be guilty – the evidence is overwhelming." Other than a hatred of women in general and prostitutes in particular, his motives for this killing spree seem unclear. It is thought that he may have killed two other women in late 1941 although this cannot be proven.

Terence Casey

22 year old Terence Casey was a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps. On the evening of Tuesday 13 July, 1943 he was on leave and staying with relatives in Fulham. He decided to go to a popular local pub in Quill Lane in Putney, but he wanted more than just a drink. He wanted an older woman too.

Freda Gibbons, a barmaid at the pub, was the first to catch his attention. She told him not to be so silly, as she was old enough to be his mum. This did not deter Casey who said he would wait for her after work.

45 year old Bridget Nora Mitton came into the pub about 9.30 that evening to buy a bottle of stout and Casey turned his attention towards her. Freda saw her leave around 11 p.m. and Casey follow her out.

John Walton was an air raid warden and was on patrol in Gwendolen Street in Putney around 11.25 p.m. He heard noises coming from the garden of No. 8 and went to investigate. Shining his torch he saw Casey on top of a partly clothed woman and shouted for the police who were able to arrest Casey at the scene.

He would later tell them "she cut up rough so I bashed her." In fact he had strangled Bridget. It is not clear whether he had actually managed to rape her.

Casey appeared at the Old Bailey from 22 to 24 September, 1943, before Mr. Justice Singleton. His defence was that he had no memory of committing the offence. Dr. Nelson Hill had examined him whilst on remand and gave evidence showing that Casey had an abnormality of the brain that combined with alcohol and the stress of wartime living could cause a form of epilepsy. The jury didn't buy this but did make a recommendation to mercy, presumably on account of Casey's age.

On Friday 19 November, 1943 Terence Casey was hanged at Wandsworth by Albert Pierrepoint and Henry Critchell.

Sidney James Delasalle

Sidney Delasalle was a 39 year old Leading Aircraftman serving at Brunton Aerodrome in Northumberland. He had served in the army from 1921 to 1933 and had been called up again in 1941.

On 2 February, 1944 there was a camp inspection led by Flight Sergeant Ronald Murphy. Murphy

commented on the unsatisfactory nature of Delasalle's room and was met with a hostile response. Delasalle complained about his rations and was generally aggressive towards Murphy. This resulted in him being reported to the Commanding Officer and on Friday 4 February receiving a 14 day sentence.

However before he was locked up he spotted Murphy queuing at the NAFFI van with several others. He shouted at them to get out of his way and aimed his rifle at Murphy firing two shots, killing him and wounding four others. He was tackled to the ground and arrested at the scene.

Delasalle was tried at Leeds before Mr. Justice Hallett on 22 March, 1944. He claimed to have no recollection of the crime and a Dr. Macadam testified that it was possible for someone to commit murder in an automaton state. Testimony was admitted regarding Delasalle's long service but also about his violent temper. Given this and the several eye witnesses to the crime, the jury rejected the automaton notion and simply saw it as a revenge killing.

Delasalle was hanged at Durham at 8 a.m. on the morning of Thursday 13 April, 1944, by Thomas Pierrepont and Henry Critchell.

Ernest James Harman Kemp

In 1944, Britain was still deep in the War and a lot of people who in better times would not be in the armed services had enlisted to help protect their country. One such was 21 year old Iris Miriam Deeley who was a leading aircraftwoman at Kidbrooke Camp in the borough of Greenwich in London. Iris was engaged to radar mechanic William Quill whom she had met while both were serving at an airbase in Cornwall. On the night of Sunday 13 February, 1944, having spent the weekend together, William had walked her back to Charing Cross station to catch the train back to Kidbrooke. They arrived too late so Iris decided to wait for the next train to Lewisham and walk from there to her unit.

On Monday 14 February her body was discovered on an allotment by Arthur Belcher. She had been strangled with a scarf that was still knotted around her neck. The post-mortem determined that the murder had taken place in the early hours of that morning.

Police investigations showed that Iris had got to Lewisham and had been seen by witnesses in the company of a soldier in the High Street who had an impressive collection of medals on his tunic. They were walking in the direction of Sherard Road in Eltham toward where her body was found.

On 22 February Charles Memory, a railway policeman on duty at St. Pancras, noticed a man in an army sergeant's uniform kissing a W.A.A.F. girl goodbye and that he was wearing medals from World War I which he could not have been awarded. The man was taken in for questioning and when searched was found to have some clothing coupons in the name of William Quill. 21 year old Ernest Kemp was found to be a deserter from the Royal Artillery. Under questioning he agreed that he was the man seen with Iris in Lewisham High Street, but maintained that when they had parted she was still alive and well. However his shoes matched boot prints at the crime scene and he finally admitted that he had strangled Iris, having tried unsuccessfully to rape her.

Kemp was tried at the Old Bailey on 18 April, 1944, before Mr. Justice Cassels. No evidence was presented by the defense and the jury found him guilty of Iris's murder, but added a recommendation to mercy, presumably on account of his age. He was hanged by Albert Pierrepont and Herbert Morris on Tuesday 6 June, 1944.

John Davidson

John Gordon Davidson was a 19 year old soldier in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, based at Rainford camp on Merseyside. On the evening of Sunday 19 March, 1944, he and Private John Sanderson went AWOL from their camp and visited a couple of pubs, ending up in the Rifle Corps Hotel in St. Helens, sometime after 8 p.m. Here they met up with two other soldiers and stayed drinking until around 10 p.m. The pair left with two girls whom they had met in the hotel. Sanderson got lucky but Davidson didn't.

27 year old Gladys May Appleton had been out for the evening with her boyfriend, George Barker and she left his home in Knowsley Road to walk home at about 10.45 p.m. Sadly she didn't make it and her body was discovered the next day in the grounds of The Elms in Cowley Hill Lane, St. Helens by the post woman, Betsy Barnes. The post-mortem revealed that Gladys had been raped and strangled.

Jeannie Galvin told the police that she had been accosted by a young soldier with a Scottish accent the night before but had managed to escape from him. She showed police footprints in her garden at Gamble Avenue and they were able to get good casts of both Jeannie's shoes and someone else's.

The investigation now focussed on the nearest army camp, Rainford. Police were given the names of two young soldiers who had been absent without leave on the Sunday night and interviewed both of them. Prints were taken of Davidson's shoes and they matched those taken from Jeannie's garden. She was later able to positively identify him. John Sanderson had spent the rest of the evening with his girl and told police that he didn't see Davidson again until the Monday morning.

Faced with a significant amount of evidence, Davidson admitted strangling Gladys.

He was tried at Manchester before Mr. Justice Hilberry on 8 May, 1944. His defense was insanity and that he killed Gladys in a state of post epileptic automatism. The jury didn't accept this as no firm evidence could be adduced to prove it. The jury did recommend mercy, presumably on account of Davidson's age. His appeal, on the grounds that he was drunk at the time of the crime was dismissed and he was hanged at Walton prison on Wednesday 12 July, 1944, by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Alex Riley.

Arthur Heys

37 year old Heys was executed for the rape and murder of 27 year old WAAF Winifred Mary Evans at Ellough near Beccles in Suffolk in the early hours of Thursday 9 November, 1945.

Winifred had been to a dance with WAAF Corporal Margaret Johns and they returned to base just before midnight, parting company a few minutes later. Corporal Johns went to use the women's toilets and discovered a man in RAF uniform who was apparently drunk and lost. She pointed him in the direction of Camp No. 1 where he said he wanted to return to.

Winifred's body was found the next morning face down in a ditch. She had been raped and suffocated in the mud at the bottom of the ditch.

The police interviewed the men in Camp No. 1 and it soon came to light that Heys had come in after 1 a.m. on that morning and had stayed up cleaning his uniform. He admitted that he had met Corporal Johns but denied any involvement with Winifred.

Hair samples were recovered at the crime scene and these matched samples found on Heys' uniform. However as they also matched Heys' wife, he might have got away with the crime on the basis of reasonable doubt, had he not done something very stupid. Whilst on remand he wrote an anonymous letter to the Commanding Officer of Camp No. 1 claiming that Heys was innocent and that the writer was the real killer. However he included details of the crime that were only known to the police.

Heys was tried at Bury St. Edmunds before Mr. Justice Mac Naghten on 22 to 24 January, 1945 and on Tuesday 13 March, 1945 was hanged at Norwich prison by Thomas Pierrepont.

James McNicol

James McNicol was born in Motherwell in Scotland in 1918. McNicol joined up at the beginning of the War, in July 1939, and served with some distinction in the Royal Artillery. He was quickly promoted and had reached the rank of sergeant by August 1944.

He fought in Africa and the Middle East and while in Africa he contracted malaria for which he was prescribed quinine - one of the standard medications at the time for this disease, but not one that reacts well with alcohol.

By early 1945, McNicol was serving at an anti-aircraft battery, called NAN1, at Thorpe Bay near Southend in Essex and shared a hut with fellow sergeants Leonard William Cox and Donald Alfred Richard Kirkaldie. He and 26 year old Don Kirkaldie became firm friends and it seems he got along well with Len Cox too.

After the Allies victory over Japan (VJ Day) on 15 August, 1945 it was decided to hold a dance at Thorpe Bay camp on the following evening (16 August). McNicol had been drinking in a pub called the Halfway House during that afternoon and had in fact drank a very large amount of beer, perhaps as much as 14-16 pints altogether during the afternoon and evening.

At the dance some sort of altercation ensued between McNicol and Jerry McKay, presumably over his dancing with McNicol's former girlfriend, Jean Neale. Cox was told about this and came out of the NAFFI to see what was going on. McKay and Cox saw Jean and her friend back to her hut, and Cox went back to the sergeants' sleeping hut where fellow sergeants, Kirkaldie, Dixon and Thompson were all in their beds. A little later the occupants of the hut were woken by the sound of the door being rattled, followed by the sound of a window pane being broken. Cox recalled seeing the light being switched on from outside and saw a hand withdrawing back through the broken window. He then heard a shot and felt "something hit his chest". He heard a second shot a few seconds later. He remained conscious and was given medical treatment for his injuries.

It is thought that the second shot was the one that fatally injured Kirkaldie, striking him in the throat and passing right through his neck from one side to the other. According to the army Medical Officer who examined both sergeants at the scene, Kirkaldie died instantly from this wound due to shock.

The trial opened at the Essex Assizes in Chelmsford before Mr. Justice Lewis on 13 November, 1945 and lasted for only two days. The appeal was heard on Wednesday, 5 December. The defence submission was that James was so under the influence of drink as to be incapable of forming any intention to murder.

McNicol was hanged by Albert Pierrepoint at 9.30 a.m. on Friday 21 December, 1945 within Pentonville.

Reginald Douglas Johnson a.k.a. Robert Blaine

On the night of Friday 14 September, 1945, Police Sergeant John Dimsey and Constable Charles Pearce were on foot patrol in Bouchier Street in London's Soho district. They had just passed two soldiers when they came upon the body of Captain John Alexander Ritchie of the Canadian Army lying on the pavement in a pool of blood. The officers turned to see the two soldiers running away and gave chase. Dimsey managed to catch Johnson who gave the name of Robert Blaine.

Johnson told the police that the other soldier was known to him as Jack Connolly and that it was he who had attacked Ritchie, hitting him over the head with a brick that they had picked up earlier.

Johnson was arrested and taken to the station where blood stains were found on his clothes together with £5 in cash and Ritchie's bank book and cheque book. He admitted going through Ritchie's pockets and was charged with murder. He still maintained that it was Connolly who had assaulted Ritchie.

Johnson was tried at the Old Bailey on 13 to 16 November, 1945, before Mr. Justice Humphreys. He had a long record of theft and the jury believed the prosecution case.

His appeal was dismissed on 13 December and he was hanged at Wandsworth on Saturday 29 December, 1945, by Albert Pierrepoint and Harry Kirk.

Jack Connolly was never traced, so it is impossible to know what part, if any, he took in the attack.

British soldiers hanged for murder at Hameln in Germany

Only two British soldiers would be hanged in Germany for murders committed on German soil after World War II. They were Frank Upson and Charles Patrick.

Driver Frank Upson

Francis John ("Frank") Upson was born on the Channel Island of Guernsey on 18 December 1919. In 1940, with a German invasion of the Channel Islands looming after the defeat of France, the family was evacuated to Huddersfield in Yorkshire. Upson was already in the army by then.

Upson was convicted of murdering a 60 year old German woman in the French Zone of Berlin, whom he had battered to death with a table lamp in 1946.

Upson was tried by court-martial in August 1946 in Berlin and pleaded not guilty.

He was convicted of murder and sentenced to death, his sentence was confirmed, and his appeal rejected.

On 22 January 1947, Frank Upson was hanged in Hameln prison by Albert Pierrepont, assisted by RSM Richard O'Neill and Sergeant James Hunter of the Royal Military Police.

Serjeant Charles Edward Patrick

Charles Patrick was a 28 year old married man with three children who had voluntarily transferred from the Dorsetshire Regiment to the Military Police Special Investigation Unit, based in Goslar in the Harz district of Lower Saxony in Germany.

On 11 January, 1947 he was requested to collect a leave party from Brunswick railway station by 21 year old ATS Pvt Georgina Kelty who was staying in a hotel. Later she and Patrick set off for a party organised by the Provost. They then went back to Patrick's room where she was last seen around 11.30 p.m.

On the Monday morning a waitress bringing breakfast to the room noticed a person lying on the bed covered by a blanket. At around 12.30, she heard what sounded like a shot. She saw Patrick leave his room and noted that he spent the rest of the day in the Sergeants' Mess.

Patrick telephoned his Company Sergeant Major and asked him to send someone to investigate a double homicide. He also phoned a colleague and told him that he had shot his girlfriend and was going to shoot himself.

When other military policemen searched Patrick's room they discovered Georgina's body on the bed, with a pistol beside her. She had been shot in the head. Patrick was questioned and claimed the shooting was an accident. The real motive, if there was one, is not known.

He was tried by courts martial on 28 and 29 March, 1947. Convicted of Georgina's murder he was sentenced to death. In due course the sentence was confirmed and he was hanged at Hameln prison by Albert Pierrepont, assisted by Edwin Roper on 5 September 1947. His was the first of 14 hangings carried out on that day.

Canadian Soldiers

Six Canadian soldiers were hanged in Britain for murder, after civil trials rather than courts-martial. The Visiting Forces Act only applied to US soldiers and not Canadian ones.

They were:

Name	Age	Execution	Prison	Victim
August Sangret	30	April 29, 1943	Wandsworth	Joan Wolfe
Charles Raymond	23	July 10, 1943	Wandsworth	Marguerite Burge
Charles Gauthier	25	September 24, 1943	Wandsworth	Annette Pepper
Mervin McEwen	38	February 3, 1944	Armley (Leeds)	Mark Turner

Horace Gordon	29	January 9, 1945	Wandsworth	Dorothy Hillman
Howard Grossley	37	December 30, 1899	Cardiff	Lily Griffiths

August Sangret – “The wigwam murder”

August Sangret was a 29 year old French Canadian soldier based at Witley camp in Surrey, serving in the Royal Canadian Military Corps. He was in a relationship with 19 year old prostitute Joan Pearl Wolfe who lived close to the military base in a tent encampment (hence wigwam murder). It appears that in the autumn of 1942 she had told Sangret that she was pregnant by him.

On 7 October, 1942, two marines out on an exercise discovered a badly decomposed body on top of a hill on Witley common. The police searched the crime scene and discovered Joan's identity card and a letter to Sangret revealing her pregnancy.

The body was examined by Dr. Keith Simpson, the Home Office pathologist at Guy's Hospital in London. She had been stabbed and battered to death. There was a stab wound to the top of her head which had been inflicted from above, but was not immediately fatal because there were defensive wounds on her right arm and hand. It seemed that Joan had tried to run but tripped and fell, knocking out several of her front teeth. Her killer then beat her to death with a heavy stick and buried her in a shallow grave. Simpson noted that the stab wound had been inflicted with an unusually shaped knife blade.

Sangret was interviewed and admitted knowing Joan and having sex with her but telling police that he had not seen her for several weeks. Without the knife police did not feel that had sufficient evidence to charge him. Other soldiers were also interviewed, including one Pvt. Cowle who recalled finding a knife embedded in a tree near the wigwams. He had taken it back to camp and handed it to Cpl. Harding who noted the distinctive shape of the blade. Harding had apparently given the knife to Sangret, who would claim that it had been stolen.

The knife would reappear on 27 November when a Pvt. Brown found it while trying to clear a blocked drain on the camp.

Sangret was now confronted with the knife which he admitted had belonged to Joan. He was then charged with the murder.

He came to trial at Kingston upon Thames on 24 February, 1943, before Mr. Justice Macnaughten, the trial concluding on 2 March, with the jury finding Sangret guilty but with a recommendation to mercy.

Keith Simpson gave evidence and showed that the knife that had been found exactly matched the stab wound to Joan's head. The jury took both the knife and the skull to the jury room to see this for themselves.

Sangret was hanged on 29 April, 1943 at Wandsworth prison by Albert Pierrepont and Henry Critchell.

Charles Arthur Raymond

23 year old Charles Arthur Raymond was another French Canadian soldier who was stationed near Goodwood in Sussex, during World War II.

On Saturday 30 January, 1943, 22 year old Marguerite Burge was discovered in a field at Halnaker in Sussex, badly wounded but still clinging to life. Marguerite was a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). She was found by two Home Guard volunteers and taken to the Royal West Sussex Hospital in Chichester where she died the following day.

Police interviewed a number of witnesses. Leslie George Boxall stated that he had seen an army lorry in the lane where he lived at 3.40 p.m. on the Saturday afternoon, with a young WAFF lady talking to the driver. His next door neighbour, Frank Goff, had seen the lorry pass with the woman in the cab. Augusta Noorgate had seen the lorry parked by the field in which Marguerite was found and seen a soldier nearby.

At 4.15 p.m. Alfred Horner had also seen the lorry and the soldier but the soldier ran to the back of the lorry to avoid identification.

One of the other soldiers on Raymond's base, Arthur Patry, told the police that after Sunday church service, Raymond had asked him whether finger prints would wash off if it had been raining. A search of the truck Raymond had been driving revealed that a screwdriver, missing from the tool box, was consistent with the murder weapon which had been recovered.

On being shown a picture of Marguerite, Raymond denied ever having seen her, but claimed that Arthur Patry had been in a field with a girl and had told him to go away. However Patry could prove that he had been on base all day on Saturday, whereas Raymond was known to have been out in the lorry.

On the Sunday morning after church Raymond had taken Patry to the field where Marguerite lay and they found her to be still alive. Patry didn't want to report her find in case he got the blame for the murder. Sadly this lost valuable time where Marguerite might have been saved. It also made sure that Charles Arthur Raymond could show that Patry had actually been at the crime scene.

Raymond was tried at the Old Bailey on 10 – 14 May, 1943 before Mr. Justice Lawrence. The motive for the crime is not known.

He was hanged at Wandsworth prison by Tom Pierrepont and Steve Wade on Saturday 10 July, 1943. Raymond weighed 157 lbs and was given a drop of 7' 2 ½" which caused fracture/dislocation of the 6th and 7th cervical vertebrae and tearing of the medulla oblongata.

Charles Eugene Gauthier

25 year old Gauthier was a French Canadian, serving with Le Regiment de Quebec, RCIC during World War II and based in Sussex. He was involved with a married woman whose husband was a prisoner of war in Germany. 30 year old Annette Pepper had been having a second affair with a Canadian Army sergeant, William Rendall, but when he went home to Canada she took up with Gauthier.

Rendall returned to the UK in March 1943 and Annette decided that she preferred his company to Gauthier's. Things came to a head on the evening of Monday 15 March, 1943 when Annette told Gauthier that she didn't want him in her house, "Hillcrest" at 208 Mile Oak Road in Portslade and was going to spend the evening with Rendall. An enraged and jealous Gauthier left but returned later with a Bren gun that he had stolen and fired a shot through the closed front door hitting Rendall in the ankle.

He called to Annette to come out and speak to him and she made him promise that he wouldn't shoot her. As she came down the stairs he broke that promise and fired three or four shots, killing her.

Gauthier was arrested and charged, coming to trial at Lewes before Mr. Justice Humphreys. Inexplicably the jury failed to reach a verdict and so the trial was moved to the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Oliver and took place on 25 July, 1943. Gauthier claimed that he didn't know what he was doing and that he didn't realize that he had the Bren machine gun. (A Bren weighs around 25 lbs. so it would be difficult not to know one had one.) Gauthier testified that Mrs. Pepper was pregnant and had told him he was the child's father. The defence counsel asked for a manslaughter verdict on the grounds of provocation. The second jury were not impressed with any of this and convicted him.

His appeal was dismissed as was the Canadian government's request for leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

Gauthier was finally hanged at Wandsworth on Friday 24 September, 1943 by Albert Pierrepont and Alex Riley, having spent a record 60 days in the condemned cell.

Mervin Clare McEwen

35 year old Mervin Clare McEwen was from Emerson, Manitoba, who was serving in England with the Royal Canadian Corps. In February 1943 he was absent without leave from his unit and was living in a

disused hut in Saville Park in Halifax, Yorkshire.

Over a few weeks he made friends with 82 year old Mark Turner, a retired postman who lived in Moorfield Street, Halifax.

On the night of Friday 2 April, 1943, Mr. Turner had invited McEwen and another friend named Crabtree, round for a drink. Both men left about 9 p.m.

Mr. Turner's next door neighbour, Mr. Hall, heard someone banging on Mr. Turner's door around 1 a.m. on the Saturday morning. Later that morning Mr. Hall noticed that Mr. Turner was not up and looking through his window, saw that the house had been ransacked. He called the police, who discovered Mr. Turner's body. He had been battered to death. Fingerprints were found at the scene, together with a cap badge from the Royal Canadian Corps.

McEwen had moved to Manchester where he was living with Annie Perfect, as man and wife, under the name of James Acton. On 23 June, 1943 police made a routine visit to Annie and seeing McEwen, asked for his identity. He produced an identity card in the name of Mark Turney. The officer noticed that the last letter had been changed. He asked McEwen to sign his name and he did so as Mervin Turney. Realising that he had been caught out he gave police his real name and was arrested.

McEwen was tried at Leeds Assizes on 1 and 2 December, 1943, before Mr. Justice Stable. It appears that McEwen had gone to Mr. Turner's house in the early hours of 3 September and had made himself a meal and drank some whiskey, while Mr. Turner slept. He dropped a plate which woke Mr. Turner and had hit him to silence him. The jury needed just 40 minutes to reach a verdict.

McEwen's appeal was dismissed and he was hanged at Armley prison in Leeds on Thursday 3 February, 1944, by Thomas Pierrepont and Steve Wade.

Horace Beresford Gordon

28 year old Horace Beresford Gordon was of Jamaican origin and in 1944 was serving in the Royal Canadian Ordinance Corps at Prior's Wood near Farncombe. He had come to England in 1941.

On Thursday 7 September, 1944, Gordon was seen by a schoolboy, talking to 18 year old Dorothy May Hillman on the A281, Horsham to Bramley road between her home and the Leathern Bottle pub. He noted that the coloured soldier had a woman's bicycle with him.

Dorothy was in the late stages of pregnancy and was living with her parents. At 6.20 p.m. she left their cottage to go to the pub to buy cigarettes and tobacco. Her parents reported her missing and she was found later that evening on the roadside having been stabbed 11 times. She was taken to hospital in Guildford where she died on 22 September. Her baby was stillborn.

Police found a suspect riding a woman's bike later that evening. He identified himself as Horace Gordon and told them he was cycling back to his camp. He had borrowed the bicycle from a lady friend.

It was noted that his uniform was muddy and blood stained. He also had chewing gum on him, which was the same brand as wrappers found at the crime scene. Analysis of the blood would show that it was Group B, the same as Dorothy's.

Gordon initially told police that he had been stopped by a girl who was bleeding and claimed to have been attacked. He was going to get help for her when the police stopped him.

Dorothy was able to make a statement from her hospital bed in which she was able to identify her attacker. She said that he had tried to molest her and pulled a knife on her.

Confronted with her statement, Gordon changed his story, telling investigators that he had talked to Dorothy and given chewing gum. He had taken off his back pack to get the gum, and putting it back on the straps were twisted so he asked Dorothy to straighten them. She misunderstood what he was saying and thought he wanted sex with her. His knife fell out of his pocket and Dorothy fell onto the blade. Given that she had eleven stab wounds this was obviously ridiculous.

Gordon was tried at Kingston-on-Thames on 30 November and 1 December 1944, before Mr. Justice Humphreys.

He was hanged at Wandsworth on Tuesday 9 January, 1945 by Albert Pierrepoint and Steve Wade. The LPC4 form describes Gordon as "strong and muscular". He weighed 200 lbs and was given a drop of 5' 9". Unusually the form records that his epiglottis was separated from the larynx by the force of the drop.

Howard Joseph Grossley

Grossley was a 37 year old bombardier serving in the Royal Canadian Artillery. He had a wife back home but had been living with 29 year old Lily Griffiths since 1941 and had a son by her in 1943. With the war ending Grossley knew he would have to leave Lily and return to Canada and this he was unwilling to do. On Monday 12 March, 1945 he and Lily went for a walk down a country lane in Porthcawl and he told Lily that he intended to kill himself. He produced his revolver and Lily grappled with him to try and prevent a suicide. Sadly she was the one who got shot. She died in hospital on 16 March, but was able to confirm Grossley's statement to the police and that he had not meant to shoot her.

However Grossley was charged with murder.

He was tried at Cardiff on 11 and 12 July, 1945 before Mr. Justice Singleton. The defence case was that the killing was manslaughter as there was no intent to kill or harm Lily. The prosecution claimed that pulling back the gun's hammer and pulling the trigger had been deliberate acts and also that Grossley had actually aimed the gun at Lily.

An appeal was dismissed and Grossley was hanged at Cardiff on Wednesday 5 September, 1945 by Thomas Pierrepoint, assisted by Steve Wade.