



Australian
National
University

Unexpected Defeat: The Unsuccessful War Crimes Prosecutions of Lt Gen Yamawaki Masataka and others at Manus Island, 1950

Friday 2 March 2012 1–2pm (light lunch provided)

Friday Lunchtime Seminar Series

Dr Narrelle Morris Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law, The University of Melbourne

Phillipa Weeks Staff Library, ANU College of Law (Bldg 5), Fellows Road,
The Australian National University



Lt Gen Yamawaki Masataka

After the post-World War II Australian war crimes trials of accused Japanese war criminals stalled in 1948, the final series of 26 trials were held at Manus Island in 1950-51. Under international pressure to cease the trials altogether, the Manus Island trials were carefully selected from a shortlist of possible prosecution cases, designed to produce certain convictions followed by death sentences. The consequent acquittal – twice – of Lt Gen Yamawaki Masataka and some of his subordinates at Manus Island on charges of murdering Australian officers and soldiers in that they failed to try them properly and fairly for alleged crimes before executing them was thus very unexpected. This presentation examines how and why the one of the two prosecution cases against Yamawaki was selected for trial and assesses how this supposedly watertight case was misjudged in the pre-trial phase to the extent that it resulted in easy acquittals.

Dr Narrelle Morris is a research fellow in the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law at The University of Melbourne. She is the principal legal researcher on the project Australia's Post-World War II War Crimes Trials of the Japanese: A Systematic and Comprehensive Law Reports Series. Narrelle completed her PhD in Japanese Studies at Murdoch University in 2007. She was awarded the National Archives of Australia's Ian Maclean Award for 2011-12. Narrelle is the author of *Japan-bashing: Anti-Japanism since the 1980s*, London: Routledge, 2010; and, with Helen Durham, of 'Women's Bodies and International Criminal Law – from Tokyo to Rabaul', in Yuki Tanaka, Tim McCormack and Gerry J Simpson (eds), *Beyond Victors' Justice? The Contemporary Relevance of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 2011.

The views expressed in this seminar are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the views of The Australian National University

Presented by

Centre for International &
Public Law

ANU College of
Law

RSVP by Wednesday 29 February 2012

E rsvp@law.anu.edu.au

Enquiries T 6125 1096

This lecture is free and open to the public

CRICOS# 00120C

PUBLIC SEMINAR