

## **Geneva Convention Interlude**

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Each soldier carries an identity book, consisting of a few pages of information, but in essence recording number, rank and name of the individual. The centre of the book is a summary of the Geneva Convention, informing the soldier about his rights in the event of capture while on operations.

A common problem in the Army arises from hygiene. There are many hundred people, maybe even a few thousand, living under rudimentary conditions, sharing communal facilities. For this reason a common malady is diarrhoea, known in the Army as “Gippo guts”, presumably having earned this name when South African forces were fighting Rommel in the Western Desert as part of the Allied 8<sup>th</sup> Army. In any event, as things panned out, one soldier came down with this malady and hastily made his way to the Thunder Boxes – communal toilets – to relieve the pressure. To his absolute horror, half of the camp also had come down with the same malady and the Thunder Boxes were all occupied. Faced with a serious dilemma, the soldier had to rapidly decide what to do next. Opting for the open bush not far from the Thunder Boxes, he did what needed to be done. But then, a new dilemma.... There was no paper and the grass seemed far too hard and unwieldy to be seriously considered for this delicate task.

In a moment of inspiration he remembered the Geneva Convention. Carefully tearing the pages from his identity book, he crinkled them in his hands to soften them and with a blissful far-away look in his eyes he did what needed to be done.

Who says the Geneva Convention has little value?