

No. 2993

42993

Def. Doc. #1515

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

- vs -

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

Sworn Deposition

Deponent:- OBARA, Junichi

Having first duly sworn on oath as on attached sheet and in accordance with the procedure followed in my country I hereby depose as follows:

1. My name is OBARA, Junichi. I formerly was employed by the Nanyo Kohatsu Kaisha which is the South Seas Promotion and Development Joint Stock Company Prior to June, 1941 I was head of the company's sugar manufactory on Tinian Island. I then was transferred to the Company's branch-office on Saipan as a director of the company having over-all charge of the sugar industry on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. I reached Saipan in August of 1941. Except for short trips I was on Saipan until 1944, at which time I returned to Japan.
2. With the background I have given as to the nature of my work and my stay on Saipan I feel confident there is little I did not know about the Island. The Island was certainly not fortified before December 8, 1941, at the outbreak of war. Even after that time and immediately before the American attack there were no effective defenses constructed.

Here is the actual condition of Saipan on December 8, 1941:

Def. Doc. #1515

There was an airfield at Aslito which consisted of a thin coating of concrete spread over the air-strip. It was begun in 1934 and completed in 1935. In 1939 it was increased in size, the work being done by our company. There was also a small sea plane ramp consisting of two small hangars capable of housing one plane apiece. There was a small warehouse for spare parts and a few crude buildings serving as lodging quarters for the employees of the field.

There were no oil tanks on Saipan capable of holding oil at the time of the outbreak of war. There were some tanks in the process of being constructed and which were not completed until well into 1942. After the outbreak of war some guns were moved into Agikan and Nafutan. Some time later, those guns were removed and wooden guns put in their place. I saw one wooden gun being installed.

Actually, the situation on Saipan was such that an attack at the time of the outbreak of war would have found the Island entirely helpless. Tinian and Rota were in a like condition. It is ridiculous to say these Islands were fortified unless the information I have given warrants that conclusion.

3. I have been shown the affidavit purportedly made by WAKAMATSU, Makoto. (Prosecution Exhibit 884) I know him well since he served under me as a technician in our company's sugar factory on Tinian for about two years. After he was transferred to Saipan hardly a day went by that I did not see him in connection with the company's work. Having been asked if I agree with the information in his alleged affidavit, I most emphatically say I do not.

Def. Doc. #1515

The facts I have already given will indicate my disagreement with the statement. There were no military installations in the vicinity of the Aslito field; there were no concrete trenches and shelters around the field; there were no coastal guns located on Agingan Point and Nafutan Point, or any other place prior to the commencement of hostilities. I cannot believe W.K.MITSU was in a better position than I to make these observations and hence I seriously question the accuracy of the statement.

4. As to the statement contained in Prosecution Exhibit 890, that construction on five barrack buildings to house approximately 3,000 persons was begun in 1938, I can only say it is entirely false. When military personnel came to the Island in March 1944

my own house and half of the company's structures were turned over to them because of lack of barracks. Even then part of the troops had to live in tents.

5. I know nothing about restrictions on foreigners visiting Saipan, Tinian and the nearby Islands. I do know that the Nanyo Trading Company which had an office in Guam pulled out in 1933 because of numerous trade restrictions and that in 1936, I believe, Japanese were prohibited by American authorities from going there.

On this 23 day of May, 1947
at Tokyo

DEPONENT /S/ OBLA. Junichi (seal)

Def. Doc. #1515

I, ONO Seichiro, hereby certify that the above statement was sworn by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date
at Tokyo

Witness : /S/ ONO Seichiro (seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth with holding nothing and adding nothing.

/S/ ONO Seichiro (seal)