

No. 3005

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

- VS -

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

Sworn Deposition

Deponent: Mitsuo FUCHIDA

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

1. My name is Mitsuo FUCHIDA. I formerly was a captain in the Imperial Japanese Navy. I commanded the First Air Attack Unit participating in the raid on Pearl Harbor, December 8 1941.

On the 25th of August 1941 an order was received for my transfer from the post of Staff Officer of the Third Air Squadron to that of Chief Flight Officer of the Aircraft Carrier AKAGI. A few days later I reported for duty aboard the AKAGI at Yokosuka.

At that time the AKAGI was the Flagship of the First Air Fleet and the Commander in Chief was Vice Admiral NAGUMO. The First Air Fleet was then composed of the carriers AKAGI and KAGA (First Air Squadron) and the SORYU and HIRYU (Second Air Squadron.)

2. After taking over the post of Chief Flight Officer of the AKAGI, I was named Senior Chief Flight Officer of the First Air Fleet and ordered to take charge of the combined training of all the air corps aboard the above mentioned four aircraft carriers, as well as to assume unified command of the air force when it should be organized.

Up to that time, there had been a tendency to carry out air training of the fleets in respect to individual carriers, with the result that the over-all strength of the group had not been adequately brought out. It was decided at this point to place special emphasis upon the group training and unified command of all the air corps attached to the First Air Fleet; hence, the above order issued to me in my position as Senior Chief Flight

Officer of the Fleet.

Most of the air corps then attached to the First Air Fleet were distributed for training purposes among several bases located in southern Kyushu.

I carried on my training duties at the Kagoshima Base and at that time neither I nor any of the other members of the flying corps even knew that the idea of the attack on Pearl Harbor had been conceived. We carried on the above-mentioned group training throughout September in the belief that it was our so-called "annual training".

3. Toward the end of September - I do not remember the exact date - Lieutenant Commander Genda, then Tactical Staff Officer of the First Air Fleet, came to me under orders from above with the instruction that as the negotiations with America were becoming more and more critical, the idea had been conceived that in the event of war breaking out between Japan and America, an aerial attack should be made at the outset of the war against the main force of the American fleet located in Hawaiian waters. And hence, that studies and training such as would enable our aircraft to meet the tactical needs of such an attack should be secretly carried out.

It was further explained to me that the object of this operation was to make an aerial attack against the main force of the American Fleet presumably located around Pearl Harbor so as to make it difficult for a time for the American Fleet to come across the ocean, and thereby enable us to complete our operations in the South during that time; and hence that the general plan was to make aircraft carriers and capital ships the primary target with the local airfields and the air force based there the secondary targets in order to preclude their being used in counter-attack.

This instruction was given only to myself and Lieutenant MURATA, who was also a Chief Flight Officer on the AKAGI, and none of the others in the air corps knew anything about it.

Lieutenant MURATA, being an expert on torpedo attack, was especially instructed to take part in this study. It was originally intended to use torpedoes as the principal weapon in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Beginning early in October, we therefore incorporated the study of the idea of the Pearl Harbor Attack into our training to determine whether or not such an attack was plausible or could be successfully executed.

Many problems came up in connection with the study and training concerning the execution of the plan of attack on Pearl Harbor. The waters of Pearl Harbor, being very narrow and only about 12 meters deep, it was felt that the ordinary torpedo attack method, hitherto used in training which caused torpedoes to penetrate the water to a depth of approximately 60 meters, would result in the torpedoes striking bottom and hence nullifying their effect. In our study and training therefore, we worked very hard to effect a torpedo firing method which could be adapted for use in shallow waters.

Near the very end of our training period, around the middle of November, we came to the conclusion, as a result of our studies, that the most effective firing method was to have the planes fire from a height of 20 meters and at an air-speed of 160 knots with the plane flying parallel to the water. As we were then supplied with torpedoes equipped with stabilizing gears, we selected a spot in the narrow waters of Kagoshima Bay where the depth was 12 meters and practiced firing until we gained confidence in shallow water torpedo operation.

This final training was carried out two days prior to the departure of the Fleet from Saeki Bay and barely in time. A study of torpedoes with stabilizing gears, together with research in shallow water torpedo firing, were carried out on the basis of our demands, and it was proved that the above torpedo was most effective when fired in shallow waters. However, the total number of required torpedoes had not been prepared and could not be supplied before the departure of the Fleet. Hence the aircraft carrier KAGA

remained behind for approximately three days in Sasebo, and after receiving the remaining torpedoes followed the Fleet.

5. The attack on Pearl Harbor demanded the use of as many high accuracy torpedoes as possible. It was decided, however, to use horizontal bombing also for the following reasons:

1. Although the problem of shallow firing suitable for the waters of Pearl Harbor was thus solved, such firing method required special skill and we felt some uneasiness in the case of flyers who had not been highly trained.

2. Should the American Fleet at anchor be protected by torpedo nets, the torpedoes we intended to use against them would prove ineffective.

3. It was reckoned that American warships would be lying two abreast while at anchor. In such case the only possible means of attack against the one lying on the landward side would be by bombs.

Since the accuracy of our Navy's horizontal bombing at the time was not very high, we decided on the formation "Probable" bombing method. And in order to increase the number of attacking units we reduced the number of planes per formation from nine to five. In order to maintain the hitting percentage, it was decided to reduce the bombing altitude to 3,000 meters which was the minimum height calculated to enable the bombs which we then intended to use (converted 16 inch shells) to pierce the armor of the American capital ships. Under those conditions it was calculated that such skill of the bombing leaders as we could count upon at the time would make it possible for the tactical demands of the operations against the anchored battle ships to be satisfactorily met.

However, the 800 kilogram armor-piercing bombs which were to be used for this operation were 16 inch shells urgently converted for the purpose. Consequently in the event of their being carried by planes, it necessitated the reconstruction of the

bombing apparatus of the plane structure.

The supply of bombs was made in time for the departure of the Fleet from Saeki Bay. However, the reconstruction of the bombing apparatus of the newly received planes fell behind schedule. Hence the aircraft carriers took workmen on board and en route from the port of departure to the rendezvous point at Hitokappu Bay and completed reconstruction.

7. The aircraft carrier ZUIKAKU was completed on 25 September 1941, and the carrier SHOKAKU a short time earlier. Out of these two, the Fifth Air Squadron was organized and incorporated into the First Air Fleet. But as their crews had to be hurriedly trained, with the training of less than a month, their training and proficiency was not adequate. It was therefore decided to use the flyers belonging to the First and Second Air Squadrons in the attacks against warships since that required special skill, and the flyers belonging to the Fifth Air Squadron were to be used in the attack against the airfields.

It was first intended, at the beginning of the training, to have the planes take off from the carriers at night so as to make the attack on Pearl Harbor at dawn. But the training and proficiency of the flyers, especially when those of the newly organized Fifth Air Squadron was considered, was not believed sufficient to enable them to take off at night on group flight. Hence, when the training ended, I reported this opinion in effect to my superiors and the original dawn attack plan was changed so as to have the planes take off from the carriers at dawn and to make the attack by daylight.

On this 25th day of June, 1947
At Tokyo.

DEPONENT: FUCHIDA, Mitsuo (seal)

I, FUCHIDA, Mitsuo 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 the same place.

Witness (signed) OKUYAMA, Hachiro (seal)

OATH

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

FUCHIDA, Mitsuo (seal)