

WAR DEPARTMENT

Exhibit # 12

Case # 131

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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Original typewritten notes
of interrogation of
Commander Xanac Ohta, JFC

27 November, 1945.

INTERROGATION OF COMMANDER OHTA, KANAE, I.J.N. (RESERVE)

Time: 27 November, 1945, 1400 to 1645 hours.

Place: Room 334, NYK Bldg., Tokyo, Japan.

Present: Lt. Joe B. Alexander, Inf., Interrogator, O-1332219.
Lt. Douglas L. Waldorf, Inf., Interrogator, O-1337248.

Interpreter: T/4 Rickey S. Yamaguchi, Interpreter, 30107575.

Q. What is your present address?

A. Ibaragi-ken, Kitasomagun, Inatoi-mura, Toyashira.

Q. What is your present status?

A. I have been in a reserve status since Oct. 30, 1945.

Q. What was your last active duty?

A. As a meteorologist.

Q. What are you doing at the present time?

A. Nothing--I am unemployed.

Q. How old are you, Commander?

A. 48

Q. Are you a graduate of the Naval Academy?

A. No. I graduated from the Imperial Japanese College where I majored in meteorology. When I finished, the Navy Department selected me to continue the study of meteorology. I attended the Technical Science course at Tokyo University and finished on the 2nd or 3rd of April, 1929.

Q. What did you do then?

A. I was attached to the Naval Air Unit, Kasumigaura Air Field as an Ensign. There I studied meteorological conditions for airmen. I remained in this assignment about a year.

Q. After your service at Kasumigaura, where did you go?

A. I was attached to the aircraft carrier AKAGI in Feb. or March of 1930 as an expert meteorologist.

Q. In what fleet was the AKAGI and who was the commander-in-chief?

A. The 1st Carrier Fleet under Rear Admiral EDAHARA.

Q. Who commanded the AKAGI?

A. Capt. KAWAMURA.

Q. What was the duration of your duty on the AKAGI?

A. I was a meteorologist on the AKAGI for almost two years.

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Q. What was the duration of your duty on the AKAGI?

A. I was a meteorologist on the AKAGI for almost two years.

- Q. After your service aboard the AKAGI, what duties did you perform and where?
- A. On Nov. 30, 1931, I was transferred to the Hydrographic Department, Tsukigi, Tokyo for further meteorological work. I stayed there until 1940--however, in the latter part of 1937 I was attached to the 1st Fleet in the absence of the Fleet Meteorological officer, from Sept. to Nov; then again returned to the Hydrographic Dept.
- Q. Who was the commander-in-chief of the 1st Fleet at that time?
- A. Admiral NAGANO.
- Q. What was your rank at that time?
- A. Lt. Commander--however, when I returned to the Hydrographic Dept., I was promoted to the rank of commander.
- Q. When did you leave the Hydrographic Dept?
- A. In November, 1940, I was assigned to the Combined Fleet Staff.
- Q. Who was commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet at that time?
- A. Admiral Yamamoto.
- Q. What were your duties?
- A. I was the chief meteorological officer. I served as Assistant Chief of Staff for the Meteorological Section in the Navigation Department.
- Q. Was the Meteorological Section in the Navigation Department?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Who was the commanding officer in the Navigation Dept.?
- A. Commander NAGATA.
- Q. I notice that you and Commander NAGATA both held the same rank. Who was the senior officer?
- A. I was.
- Q. Were you stationed aboard Admiral Yamamoto's flagship, the NAGATO?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How long did you serve in that position?
- A. Until May 1, 1942.
- Q. Did you participate in the war games held at Sukumo, Saeki, Kagoshima, and Kanoya in the summer of 1941?
- A. I did.
- Q. What seemed to be the general purpose of the games?
- A. I do not know exactly. My job was of a technical nature instead of tactical.
- Q. Did you attend any staff meetings or conferences where the purpose of the games was discussed?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you accompany Admiral Yamamoto to the Tokyo Conference held at the completion of the War Games late in August, 1944?
- A. No.

- Q. Of what team or group were you a member in the exercises held at the Naval War College between Sept. 3-13?
- A. I was not a member of any group.
- Q. But you were present for the exercises?
- A. Yes, I was there.
- Q. And in what capacity did you serve?
- A. I furnished meteorological information to all groups participating in the exercises.
- Q. Were there any Army personnel present at the exercises?
- A. If there were, I did not see them.
- Q. Who requested information during the exercises and what type of action did the exercises seem to cover?
- A. Requests were sent to me by the staffs of the different groups participating. I furnished information concerning a large scale action from Hawaii to China.
- Q. Did you have anyone assisting you during the exercises?
- A. Yes--Commander YAMAGA, Moriji, a meteorological officer attached to the Naval War College.
- Q. Was Admiral Yamamoto present at the exercises?
- A. I don't know-- I was a member of a small department and did not attend any of the conferences.
- Q. At the completion of the exercises and on your return to the flagship, did you attend any conferences where the results of the exercises were discussed?
- A. Many conferences were held, but I did not attend any of them. I requested permission to attend meetings concerning results of studies ascertained at the Naval College; however, request was denied. I was told that I would be asked to furnish specific information as it was required.
- Q. Did you attend any conferences or staff meetings for any purpose Dec. 3-8, 1941?
- A. No.
- Q. Were you requested to furnish any meteorological information regarding weather conditions at Midway, Wake Island, Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines?
- A. The staff (Adm. Yamamoto's) requested me to furnish such information.
- Q. Were you consulted regarding the weather conditions to be expected at Pearl Harbor on or about Dec. 8, 1941?
- A. Yes.

- Q. Did you attend the conference at the Iwakuni Air Group about the middle of September?
- A. No, I did not.
- Q. When was the first time you learned the contents of Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 1?
- A. Not until after the attack.
- Q. How did you learn about it then?
- A. I heard some of the other officers talking--one of them said, "I heard the attack was successful." I didn't know there was an Order No. 1 and just assumed that the order you referred to was the attack order.
- Q. What were the contents of the attack order?
- A. I didn't know there was one.
- Q. Where was the NAGATO anchored between 21-27 November, 1941?
- A. At Setonaikai Kofu.
- Q. Do terms "X-day and Y-day" have any special meaning to you?
- A. No special meaning--however they were frequently used during maneuvers.
- Q. What course did the task force follow?
- A. I did not know about the route in advance, but I later learned what course it had followed.
- Q. And what course did it follow?
- A. It sailed from Tankappu in an easterly direction until it was North of Hawaii and then it altered course towards Hawaii.
- Q. Where was the NAGATO at the time of the attack?
- A. In the vicinity of Setonaikai.
- Q. Did you or anyone with whom you talked know in advance that Pearl Harbor was to be attacked?
- A. I did not know about it, nor did any of my friends mention it.
- Q. In your opinion, did you think that a declaration of war would be served on the U. S. before the attack?
- A. I didn't know whether a declaration of war would be made. I didn't even know the attack was to take place.
- Q. In an operation of this magnitude, for the attack to a success do you think that surprise was an essential element?
- A. Yes, I think surprise was essential, but in my opinion a declaration of war should be made in advance.
- Q. How far in advance?
- A. I don't know.

- Q. Were there any other meteorological officers assigned on Admiral Yamamoto's flagship?
- A. No. I had some enlisted men helping me, but no other commissioned officers.
- Q. If Admiral Yamamoto wanted any meteorological information, then you would be the officer called upon to produce such information?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Who would have been called upon to furnish meteorological information for task forces on tactical missions?
- A. The meteorological officers with the task forces.
- Q. Have you ever heard the expression, "Strike first"?
- A. I don't believe so--but we have been taught to attack before being attacked.
- Q. Who are some of your associates in the meteorological field?
- A. Capt. SASABE Risaburo
Commander BANDO
Capt. ISHIHARA, Hideo
Lt. Comm. MUROKAWA
Capt. TERASHIMA
Capt. YAMAGA, Moriji
- Q. Did you agree with Gen'l Tojo's plan to attack Russia?
- A. I didn't know there was such a plan.
- Q. Is there anything you would care to add to your statement?
- A. I don't believe so.

KANGE OHTA, Commander, IJN

I, T/4 Rickey S. Yamaguchi, hereby certify that I acted as interpreter at the interview set out above, that I truly interpreted and translated the English questions into Japanese and the replies thereto from Japanese into English, and that the English translation of the answers set out above are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Rickey S. Yamaguchi
RICKEY S. YAMAGUCHI, ASN
30107575

Douglas L. Waldorf
DOUGLAS L. WALDORF 2nd Lt., Inf.

Joe B. Alexander
JOE B. ALEXANDER, 2nd Lt. Inf.