

Translated by
Defense Language Branch

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

Sworn Deposition (Translation)

Deponent :- YAMAMOTO Yoshio

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

YAMAMOTO, Yoshio 443, 2-chome Koenji, Suginami-ku,
Tokyo.

1. Q. What posts did you occupy since December 8, 1941?
 - A. I was staff officer of the Fleet in the China Waters on December 8, 1941. On February 5, 1942 I was in the Naval General Staff and concurrently the Navy Ministry. From February 12, 1942, I was ordered for duty in the Naval Affairs Bureau and was engaged in studying the reorganization of the naval system. On July 14, 1942, I succeeded my predecessor TAKATA, Toshitane, and assumed the post of Chief of Section One, Naval Affairs Bureau, and held the said post until July 9, 1945. At the time of the war's end I was Rear Admiral of the Navy.

2. Q. During the wartime did the Navy Ministry issue any instructions concerning the handling of the prisoners of war?
 - A. Instructions were issued by telegrams and correspondence with respect to the handling of the prisoners of war.

3. Q. Where were these directed to by the Navy Ministry?

A. Headquarters of the Naval Base. Headquarters of Minor Naval Station and Headquarters of the Fleet.

4. Q. Do you know where these original telegram were filed and if they are now available?

A. The originals were in the custody of Section One, Naval Affairs Bureau, Navy Ministry, but they were all lost in the fire in the air raid on May 25, 1945.

5. Q. Can you recall the substance, their contents?

A. I can recall the following facts from memory:
Orders were

a) issued on December 1941. The supervision of the prisoners of war was to be in the hands of the Army, and the Navy was to administer them until they were turned over to the Army.

This was set forth in Regulations Pertaining to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, but the order been made to call attention to the existence thereof.

b) As prisoners were captured in the southern combat zone from January 1942 to February, instructions were issued to transport them to Japan.

c) As there were quite a number of deaths among the prisoners of war due to influenza at the Saseho temporary prison camp from December 1942 to the spring of 1943, orders were issued to the Saseho Naval Station two or three times to make an investigation of the state of affairs. Moreover attention was called respecting the food situation, which was reported as law.

d) October 1943. Directions were issued to transfer to the Army a considerable number of prisoners from Saseho.

e) December 1944. Instructions were issued to make a survey and report on the condition of the prisoners of war held outside of Japan. The condition of the prisoners outside of Japan was to have been reported in accordance with the Regulations Pertaining to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, but due to the difficulties encountered in traffic and communications many of the reports did not reach Tokyo

and caused the office routine in handling them to bog down. Therefore in order to straighten out the materials anew instructions were sent out to make a survey. Despite the foregoing instructions reports did not arrive.
still

f) March 1945. If prisoners were interned by the troops stationed abroad they were instructed to turn them over to the nearest army units as quickly as possible.

6. Q. Do you know where the prisoners captured by the Navy were placed during the war?

A. I understand that the prisoners captured by the Navy were stationed at Wake island, Rabaul, Ambon, Macassar and Haiphong. However, most of the prisoners on Wake island were first sent to Woosung, Shanghai, in early 1942, and later one portion was transported to Japan and delivered to the Army, and a small portion remained to engage in engineering works. I also understand that the prisoners in Rabaul were sent to Japan and turned over to the army.

7. Q. Do you know whether there were prisoners held in other area?

A. I do not know as there were no reports received from any other place.

8. Q. Had you received any reports that the prisoners in the area had been mistreated? those maintained

A. No.

9. Q. Do you know that under date of August 21, 1943, the American Government dispatched a list of 40 names of prisoners on Wake island whose whereabouts were unknown.

A. No. It do not.

10. Q. Do you know that the American Government has made inquiries about the tidings of the prisoners of war on Wake island as follows:

Letter dated October 8, 1943
Memorandum dated December 10, 1943
" " February 14, 1944
" " September 25, 1944
" " November 1, 1944
" " March 15, 1945
" " May 15, 1945
" " July 27, 1945.

- A. I receive no information concerning such inquiries.
11. Q. Did you ever see
W. J. ... any other inquiries with regard to the tidings of
the prisoners on Wake island?
- A. I do not recall any inquiries from any place other than the
reply to the inquiry from the Japanese Office that there were
a few prisoners remaining on Wake island, which was made by
my predecessor in office in 1942.
12. Q. Was there a report from Rear Admiral Sakaibara, Commander
of the Wake Garrison, about October 1943, with regard to the
prisoners who remained on that island?
- A. Report came directly to the Fourth Fleet, but at the same time
telegraphic report came to the Navy Ministry, Naval General
Staff and the Combined Fleet.
13. Q. What was their nature of the request?
- A. At that time there was a ^{bombardment} of Wake island by the
American task force. The situation was such that with the
continuance of the bombardment the landing of American
troops was expected, in consequence the American pris-
soners of war thereupon started a mass
riot, therefore they were shot. That was the substance of the
telegram.
14. Q. With respect to this ^{report} what sort of action was taken by the
Navy Ministry?

- A. As for the Navy Ministry it was not in a position to take any direct measure so no action was taken. However, it was watching what action would be taken by the superior officer, the commander-in-chief of the 4th Fleet.
15. Q. Where was the headquarters of the 4th Fleet at that time?
- A. Truc.
16. Q. What was the condition of traffic and communications between Wake, Truc and Tokyo at that time?
- A. There were contacts by wireless, but sea-borne traffic could not be conducted unless at considerable risk of danger.
17. Q. Was there any report from the 4th Fleet with respect to the conduct of the commanding officer on Wake island later?
- A. There were no report, whatever. From the end of 1943 the South seas islands were being attacked by the American air force and navy, therefore the 4th Fleet was exposed to severe desperate battles. In view of this state of affairs it was impossible to press for reports and cause investigations to be made.
18. Q. Was a court-martial set up in the 4th Fleet at that time?
- A. Yes.
19. Q. Did the 4th Fleet take any step in putting this case before the court-martial?
- A. As for the Navy Ministry its position remained indefinite because there was no report. With the capture of the various south sea islands one after another, the occupation of Wake island became imminent and despite the fact that the entire garrison was prepared for a mass self-destruction, there was no way in which the combined fleet or the 4th fleet could rescue this garrison unit. In view of these circumstances the We could not summon the commanding officer to the headquarters of the 4th fleet for the purpose of investigation, or to shift the commander and place him before a court-martial for trial.

20. Q. Do you know Commander OKADA
the Naval General Staff? staff officer of

A. Yes, I do.

21. Q. In the early part of October 1942, did you or any one orally in the naval affair Bureau instruct or send word to Vice Admiral Abe, commander on Kwajalein island, through staff officer Okada or some other member of the Naval General Staff to execute the prisoners in Kwajalein on the spot?

A. Absolutely not. The Naval Affairs Bureau, Navy Ministry was not concerned with staff officer Okada's trip to the south seas. Also the Naval Affairs Bureau was not aware that there were prisoners of war on Kwajalein island at that time.

As for the Navy it always issues orders or instructions by telegrams or in writing, and has absolutely never entrusted anybody with verbal orders. Also according to the setup in the navy the Navy Ministry could not give orders or instructions direct to Rear Admiral Abe as the commanding officer on the spot.

22. Q. Were protests received in connection with the sinking of allied powers' merchant ships by Japanese submarines in the India; Ocean during the war and the perpetration of atrocities on the survivors?

A. I do not remember the date and the number of times the protests were received, but we did receive some.

23. Q. What steps were taken at the time of the receipt those protests?

A. The parties in charge of the submarines were asked to make an investigation of those connected with it. Inasmuch as the matter involved operations the investigation was required to the Naval General Staff and the fact was thoroughly investigated. But as they reached the conclusion that since the Japanese submarines were not involved in the protests we replied to such effect to the Foreign Office.

24. Q. Was any investigation made after the war with respect to the foregoing facts.

A. There was an inquiry from GHQ so the principal parties of the surviving submarine crew and those connected with the matter at the time were investigated but such fact could not be established and we replied to that effect. The text of the documents and appended table dated Dec 5, 1945, signed on behalf of Bureau Chief Nakamura, en-

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titled "Reply to the Matter of the Merchant Ship: sunk in the Indian Ocean by the Imperial Japanese Submarines" addressed to Col. Allen of GHQ, was our reply.

25. Q. Who administered the temporary prison camp in Ofuna?
A. Yokosuka Naval Station.
26. Q. Who appointed the superintendant of the prison camp?
A. I do not know the details, but I think commanding officer of the Minor Naval Station in Yokosuka under the jurisdiction of the Yokosuka Naval Station appointed some suitable subordinate.
27. Q. Was the appointment of the prison camp superintendant reported to the Navy Ministry?
A. Such a matter was within the province of the Yokosuka Naval Station and no report was made to the Navy Ministry.
28. Q. What sort of a report was made by the Yokosuka Naval Station?
A. There was a report on the personnel in the prison camp, their names, ranks, and other matters designated in the Regulations Pertaining to the Handling of the Prisoners of War.
29. Q. Did you ever receive any report that the prisoners in the Ofuna temporary prison camp were mistreated, or that the prisoner patients did not receive adequate medical attention?
A. No. such report ever came in during my tenure in office.

On this 15 day of August 1947

At Tokyo.

Deponent /S/ YAMAMOTO, Yoshio (seal)

I, SOMIYA, Shinji, 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: /S/ SOMIYA, Shinji (seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.
/S/ YAMAMOTO, Yoshio (seal)