

WAR DEPARTMENT

Exhibit #42

File # 135

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Transcript of original notes taken
by Lt. Col. B. C. Sackett in the
interrogation of Capt Shigem Nagata

INTERROGATION OF

Captain Shigeru Nagata, I. J. N.

Date and Time: 27 November 1945, 1417-1603 hours.

Place : Dai Iti Hotel, Room 459, Tokyo, Japan.

Present : Captain Shigeru Nagata, I. J. N.
Lt. Colonel B. E. Sackett, Infantry
2nd Lt. Fred H. Uyehara, Infantry, Interpreter
Tec 4 Lester E. Dalcher, Stenographer

Questions : By Lt. Colonel B. E. Sackett.

Q. - Will you please state your full name and residence address, present status, and how long you have been in the Imperial Japanese Navy.

A. - Shigeru Nagata, residence address, Aomori ken, shimokita gori, Uda Kansha, Otsu (B) 23. 22 years since graduating from Naval College and I have been in the navy since that time. I am now a staff member of Naval District at Ominato, tour of duty to end November 30th this year.

Q. - State your age and marital status.

A. - Married, and have three children. 43 years old.

Q. - Since leaving the Naval College what type of duty have you had.

A. - My specialty is navigation. After getting out of Naval College I was Chief Navigator of cruiser Jintsu for about one year.

Q. - Generally your career in the navy has been that of navigation officer and later staff officer on the Combined Fleet Staff. Is this true.

A. - I was Chief Navigator, then become Submarine Chief Navigation of Torpedo Squadron. Staff officer therein for four months. For six months after that I was Staff Navigation Officer of the Fourth Fleet. Instructor of School of Navigation for two years after that at Yokosuki. Was then Staff Navigation Officer of Combined Fleet for about 22 months after that, from Fall of 1940 to July of 1942. Staff member of the Japanese General Staff from 1942 to 1944. Since then I have been on the staff of Naval District at Ominato.

Q. - Do you remember that in September 1941 there were naval exercises held at the Naval War College at which the commanders of the Fleets and General Staff Officers participated.

A. - Yes I do remember that.

Q. - You participated in those exercises.

A. - Yes, I participated in that.

Q. - As a member of the Nippon Team.

A. - As an umpire.

Q. - Just what problems did you umpire.

A. - I do not remember the specific problems that I umpired in. I umpired more or less the general plans.

(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.2)

Q. - Among those general plans was the problem of attacking Pearl Harbor, was it not.

A. - If I remember right, they held that problem in a different room.

Q. - You were participating in that problem.

A. - I don't remember.

Q. - After the exercises were completed about the middle of September, did you work on navigation problems in connection with the final plan for the strike at Pearl Harbor.

A. - As each unit plans their own navigation chart I had no hand in that. I was more or less in charge of navigation of supplies, in charting the fuel supply. Overseeing the whole supply route of fuels.

Q. - When did you first see the written Operation Order #1 of the Combined Fleet Headquarters regarding the plans to attack Pearl Harbor, Malaya, Philippines, and the Dutch East Indies.

A. - I do not remember the numbers of the orders, but I do remember seeing the order concerning the attacks on those parts during the latter part of November.

Q. - Do you know who wrote those orders.

A. - I am not sure but I think the Chief of Staff did.

Q. - What do you remember of the substance of such orders.

A. - I don't remember.

Q. - Did you attend any staff conferences at which the orders were discussed or plans made to carry out the orders.

A. - No. Just received orders from Admiral Yamamoto and I did not participate in the conference.

Q. - When was the orders for the start of operations to become effective.

A. - I don't think the date was set so explicitly in those orders.

Q. - When the orders were issued it was known when they would become effective. Is that not so.

A. - I think that the date for the various units to commence action was on the order. I believe that the units started movements in the latter part of November in order to take their positions.

Q. - About what date in November and where did they move from.

A. - Commenced moves from Saeki in the latter part of November.

Q. - What was the general plan of operations.

A. - The attack on Pearl Harbor, the occupation of the Philippines, and the landing on Malaya, were the principles in that order. I believe it was a preparatory order for that. It doesn't actually state the attack of it, just the preparatory phase of it.

Q. - When was the order issued for the actual attack.

A. - I don't remember when they actually came out.

(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.3)

- Q. - Didn't it come out just before the fleets sailed from the assembly point.
- A. - No.
- Q. - Well then it must have come out after the fleet sailed.
- A. - That I think is the only natural thing.
- Q. - We know, of course, that the orders were to be carried out the 8th of December, Japan time. When was that first decided that it would be carried out on the 8th December.
- A. - I think that the order came out from the Grand Imperial Headquarters around December 2nd or 3rd, and was given out by the Combined Fleet Headquarters to various units.
- Q. - Who decided that it should be done on the 8th of December.
- A. - I think that the Chief of Navy General Staff and quite possibly, Admiral Yamamoto got together and decided it.
- Q. - What was the substance of the order that came out from December 2nd and 3rd, as you say, from Grand Imperial Headquarters.
- A. - I have absolutely no recollection of that order. I wasn't in operations, I was in navigation, so those things did not come under my jurisdiction.
- Q. - Do you know where any copies of any of these orders can be located.
- A. - I don't think so. They were probably burned up.
- Q. - What about your diary. Do you have your diary for that period of time.
- A. - Those things were all burned up. I did not believe in keeping much of it, but what I did was burned up.
- Q. - Where and when did you burn those things.
- A. - When the American fleet attacked at Ominato in the middle of July. I was afraid the Americans might land so I burned those documents up.
- Q. - The plan to attack had to be a surprise to achieve the best results. How were you going to insure that the attack would be a surprise. That is, the Pearl Harbor attack.
- A. - I don't have any idea about that.
- Q. - Didn't you discuss that with any of the other staff members.
- A. - I did not discuss to a great extent about those things. Just regarding communications of the unit and its possible route.
- Q. - Don't you remember that there was a meeting on Admiral Yamamoto's flagship the Nagato when it was off of Hiroshima in October, when all of the fleet admirals were present and your staff was present, and they talked about these plans.
- A. - I heard about it at that conference, and too I heard quite intensive studies had been made in regards to that attack. I was just a spectator at that conference.

(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.4)

Q. - But you also heard the discussion about how they were to achieve surprise. What do you remember about that.

A. - I don't remember.

Q. - Don't you remember they talked about how the attack was going to be timed, meeting with the Declaration of War so that there would be the element of surprise.

A. - As far as the element of time between Declaration of War and the attack on Pearl Harbor goes, I heard nothing about it. I have absolutely no remembrance of anything being discussed along that line.

Q. - Perhaps that happened at another conference. I am not too sure. Would it have been at a conference in the Staff Headquarters during the middle of November.

(Interpreter: He wants to know when that staff officer meeting was in November.)

(Colonel Sackett: About the 18th - 20th.)

(Interpreter: Where was that at.)

(Colonel Sackett: The meeting was at the Combined Fleet Headquarters when the admirals of the fleets and chiefs of staffs again met for a conference before the order.)

A. - On that day the date of attack came out as "X" Day, which was clarified in a later order.

Q. - On that day at the conference, when they said the attack would be on "X" Day, what was said about the hour of the attack and how it was going to be coordinated with the Declaration of War notice.

A. - I don't recall the time that was stipulated on that order for attacking. As time was an unknown element there was no discussion of the time of attack and time of Declaration of War. As far as my knowledge goes the Declaration of War was declared through the Foreign Office.

Q. - When did the order finally come out designating "X" Day as 8th of December.

A. - It came out on December 2nd or the 3rd.

Q. - That was the first time that an order to that effect came out.

A. - I think that was the day.

Q. - Isn't it true that at the meeting on the 18th November, it was discussed that the attack should take place on the 8th of December because the American fleet would be in the harbor for the weekend and the moon was in the correct position for an attack of that kind.

A. - I have absolutely no recollection of anything like that. I think that there was talk that the early part of December might be a suitable date for attack.

Q. - Who discussed that the early part of December, and December the 8th, would be a good time for attack as the fleet would be in.

A. - The date December 8th came from the Imperial Headquarters and I do not remember any individuals.

(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.5)

Q. - I don't mean the final order. I mean the discussion at this conference about the date, if it was decided to go to war, that the attack should be held. There was a discussion on that point and to refresh your recollection it was said that the attack would have to be held in the early part of December and because the American fleet was out on patrol during the week and came back into the harbor on Friday or Saturday and stayed until Monday, and then left. The most opportune time would be early Sunday morning because the officers slept late and the fleet would be in. Now who participated in that discussion.

A. - I don't know who discussed it.

Q. - But you surely remember who was there. You were there.

A. - I do not know who talked about the date of December 8th. I think that the final date was fixed by Admiral Yamamoto.

Q. - It was fixed at that meeting on the 18th of November. Is that so.

A. - It was still "X" Day then. "X" Day as the day must be prepared for it. But that date was moveable, could be one day before or one day after, so I do not believe it was fixed at that time.

Q. - As a staff officer you are used to estimating calculated risks involved in any operations. What was the calculated risk in the Pearl Harbor operation.

A. - I thought it was a very hazardous attack and I never thought of it in percentages.

Q. - How much time did you calculate that the American defenses would have detected the approach of the task force or its airplanes, before they could actually strike the target.

A. - The mission was on order of Admiral Yamamoto and I thought it was a very dangerous mission, but that was as far as I thought of that attack.

Q. - What was thought to be the estimated probable loss to the Japanese in this attack during the planning stage.

A. - I did not know of any part of that plan as it was all under the command of Admiral Yamamoto. I do not have a vague idea of just how much loss they figured on that attack.

Q. - Did you send any communications from the Combined Fleet Headquarters to the task force at sea from 2nd December until after the attack started.

A. - If I remember right, I did not send any message.

Q. - Do you know whether any other staff sections of the headquarters sent messages.

A. - No, I don't remember.

Q. - The task force didn't send any messages to you during the period.

A. - No.

Q. - And everything, as far as you know, went according to plan as far as the task force was concerned. There was no trouble or difficulty with the task force carrying out the plan.

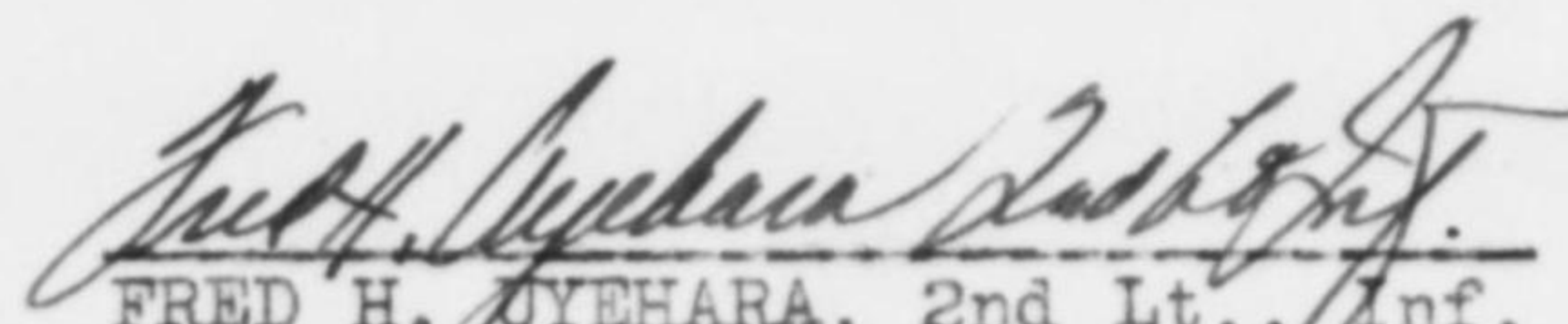
(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.6)

- A. - "X" Day was later revealed as 8th December. I thought all operations went as per schedule.
- Q. - And the operations of the 2nd and 3rd Fleets in the South against the Philippines and Malaya, also went off on schedule.
- A. - Yes.
- Q. - Did you participate in a critique at any staff meetings on the Pearl Harbor attack, or the Malaya or the Philippines attack afterwards.
- A. - No, I did not participate in any critiques.
- Q. - What critiques were held.
- A. - I did participate in that critique after the attacks on the various parts. We held no critiques but during the report on progress of battle we received reports on those landings and attacks.
- Q. - During that time did anyone on the staff discuss the mistakes, the good points, and other things relative to those attacks with the staff.
- A. - They just gave the results and the later progress, and they did not discuss any other points beyond that.
- Q. - In giving the results of the Pearl Harbor attack who gave the results and in substance what was the reports.
- A. - Intelligence Officer Wada who is dead, gave a report on that Pearl Harbor attack. I am not positive of the date but it was in the afternoon. Just the results of our attack as we received on the communi-ques were given to us.
- Q. - Was Wada or other officers surprised at the lack of resistance shown by the American forces, or did they expect that there wouldn't be much resistance.
- A. - They knew beforehand that the defenses would be lax on Sunday, so not many people expressed surprise at the lack of resistance.
- Q. - How did they know that the defenses would be lax on Sunday.
- A. - Report came from Naval General Staff, but it was more or less understood by all of us that Sunday was the day of rest among the Americans and everything would be very lax.
- Q. - How were the results of the attack on the Philippines, Clark Field, and those places, received. Were they surprised at the lack of resistance or did the attack come below the expectations.
- A. - We thought that resistance was a little below par, but did not give much thought to it.
- Q. - There is nothing else that you know or can remember regarding the matters we have discussed this afternoon is there.

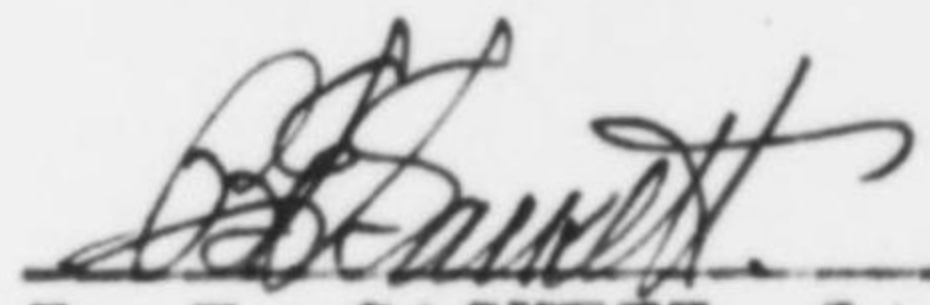
(Interrogation of Captain Shigeru Nagata, IJN, P.7)

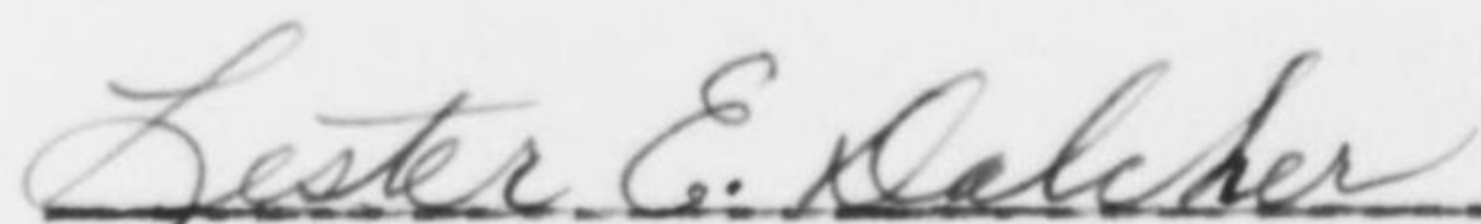
A. - As far as my memory goes, this is about all that I do know, in fact, I might have stretched my memory a little too far on some points. As the discussion of the 8th, of that meeting 18th November, is very hazy and I am not too sure.

I, Fred H. Uyehara, 2nd Lt., Infantry, 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 (7 pages) are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.


FRED H. UYEHARA, 2nd Lt., Inf.

WITNESSES:


B. E. SACKETT, Lt. Col., Infantry


Lester E. Dalcher, Tec 4, Stenographer
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