

The Campaigns of the
Pacific War No. Dec. 41

(4)

(10)

THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE PACIFIC WAR

United States
Strategic Bombing Survey
(Pacific)

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(The information contained in this narrative was supplied from memory by the Japanese officers listed below and, although considered accurate in general, may be subject to minor corrections in detail after examination of translated documents.

Admiral Nagano, Osami,
Chief of the Naval General Staff.

Rear Admiral Mito, Hishashi,
Chief of Staff, Sixth Fleet (Submarines).

Captain Tomioka, Sadatoshi,
Chief Operations Section, Naval General Staff.

Commander Miyo, Tatsukichi,
Member Operations Section, Naval General Staff.

Captain Kuroshima, Kameto,

Captain Watanabe, Yasuji,
Members Staff Combined Fleet.

Captain Fuchida, Mitsuo,
Leader of First Attack on Pearl Harbor.) (p. 12)

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Japanese Naval Despatches Ordering
Commencement of Hostilities

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff 5 November 1941.
To: CinC Combined Fleet

1. In view of the fact that it is feared war has become unavoidable with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, and for the self preservation and future existence of the Empire, the various preparations for war operations will be completed by the first part of December.

2. The CinC of the Combined Fleet will effect the required preparations for war operations.

3. Execution of details will be as directed by Chief of the Naval General Staff.

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC China Area Fleet

5 November 1941.

1. In view of the fact that it is feared war has become unavoidable with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, and for the self preservation and future existence of the Empire, the various preparations for war operations will be completed by the first part of December.
2. The CinC Combined Fleet will effect the required preparations for war operations in accordance with Imperial Headquarters Order, No. 1.
3. The CinC of the China Area Fleet will continue operations against China and at the same time effect required preparations for war operations.
4. Execution of details will be directed by Chief of the Naval General Staff.

From: The Chief of the Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet

7 November 1941.

1. CinC Combined Fleet, as a measure of self defense, is authorized to carry out operations against Portugese Timor in cooperation with Commander, Southern Army.
2. Execution of details will be as directed by Chief of Naval General Staff.

From: CinC Combined Fleet
To: First Air Fleet

7 November 1941.

The Task Force, keeping its movement strictly secret, shall assemble in Hitokappu Bay by 22 November for refueling.

NOTE: (Upon arrival at Hitokappu Bay all ships with a limited cruising range were deck loaded with drums of fuel oil and oil was stowed in all available spaces inside the ships.)

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet

21 November 1941.

1. CinC Combined Fleet will order forces necessary for war operations to proceed to suitable standby areas.
2. During the period CinC Combined Fleet is preparing for war operations should any challenge be received from United States, British or Dutch forces he is authorized to utilize any strength he may deem necessary for self defense.
3. Execution of details will be as directed by Chief of Naval General Staff.

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC China Area Fleet

21 November 1941

1. During the period CinC China Area Fleet is preparing for war operations should any challenge be received from United States, British or Dutch forces he is authorized to utilize any strength he may deem necessary for self defense.

2. Execution of details will be as directed by Chief of the Naval General Staff.

From: CinC Combined Fleet
To: First Air Fleet
(Pearl Harbor Attack Force)

25 November 1941.

The task force, keeping its movement strictly secret and maintaining close guard against submarines and aircraft, shall advance into Hawaiian waters, and upon the very opening of hostilities shall attack the main force of the United States Fleet in Hawaii and deal it a mortal blow. The first air raid is planned for the dawn of X-day (exact date to be given by later order).

Upon completion of the air raid, the task force, keeping close coordination and guarding against the enemy's counterattack, shall speedily leave the enemy waters and then return to Japan.

Should the negotiations with the United States prove successful, the task force shall hold itself in readiness forthwith to return and reassemble.

From: CinC Combined Fleet
To: First Air Fleet
(Pearl Harbor Attack Force)

25 November 1941.

The task force, keeping its movement strictly secret, shall leave Hitokappu Bay on the morning of 26th November and advance to 42° N. 170° E. on the afternoon of 3 December and speedily complete refueling.

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet
CinC China Area Fleet

1 December 1941

1. It has been decided to enter into a state of war between the Imperial Government on one side and the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands on the other during the first part of December.

2. The CinC Combined Fleet will destroy the enemy forces and air strength in the eastern seas at the same time will meet any attack by the enemy fleet and destroy it.

3. The CinC Combined Fleet will, in cooperation with the Commander of the Southern Army, speedily capture and hold important American and British Bases in Eastern Asia and then Dutch bases. Important strategic points will then be occupied and held.

4. CinC Combined Fleet will in case of necessity cooperate with the operations of China Area Fleet.

5. The time for activating the movements of force in accordance with preceding articles will be given in a later order.

6. Execution of details will be as directed by Chief of the Naval General Staff.

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet

1 December 1941.

Japan under the necessity of her self-preservation, has reached a decision to declare war on the United States of America, British Empire, and the Netherlands. Time to start action will be announced later. The CinC Combined Fleet shall, at the start of war direct an attack on the enemy fleet in the Hawaiian area and reduce it to impotency using the First Air Fleet as the nucleus of the attack force.

NOTE: (The above despatch was issued by Admiral Nagano under authority delegated by Imperial Order. The commencement of hostilities was decided upon by Cabinet Council on 1 December.)

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet

2 December 1941.

1. CinC Combined Fleet will activate the force under his command in accordance with Imperial Headquarters Order No. 9 on and after 8 December.

2. Operations against the Netherlands will be initiated when opportunity offers after operations against the United States and Great Britain have started.

3. Executing of details will be directed by Chief of the Naval General Staff.

From: The Chief of Naval General Staff
To: CinC Combined Fleet

2 December 1941

The hostile action against the United States of America, the British Empire, and the Netherlands shall be commenced on 8 December. Bear in mind that, should it appear certain that Japanese-American negotiations will reach an amicable settlement prior to the commencement of hostile action, all forces of the Combined Fleet are to be ordered to reassemble and return to their bases.

From: CinC Combined Fleet
To: Pearl Harbor Task Force (First Air Fleet)

2 December 1941

Execute attack X 8 December designated as "X" day.

NOTE--(1) The decision to commence hostilities was made by Cabinet Council on 1 December.

(2) On 2 December Imperial General Headquarters issued the order establishing 8 December 1941 as the date on which hostile action was to begin.

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