

No. 2655

Ex 2655

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al)	
)	
v.)	No. 1
)	
ARAKI Sadao, et al)	

A F F I D A V I T

HATTORI TAKUSHIRŌ

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

I am a former colonel, and my present residence is 42 Hommurachō Shinjuku-ku Tokyo.

In 1939 at the time of the Nomonhan incident, I was staff officer of the Kwantung Army in charge of operations. The following are the circumstances in which the incident began.

1. The Kwantung Army had in its plan of operations vis-à-vis the U S S R in 1939 no offensive plans toward the western border--i.e. toward Hailar, Haron Aershan, or the western Outer Mongolian area. At that time in the event of a war's breaking out between Japan and the U S S R, we estimated that the main field of battle in Manchuria would be toward the eastern border, so the Kwantung Army was to plan to hold out in the west with the minimum strength. Directly after the commencement of a war, it could naturally be expected that a powerful Soviet force would thrust against the Hailar area. Against this our forces were only the 23d Division, then stationed at Hailar, and the Hailar Border Defense Garrison, so that it was to be expected that warfare in this area would within a short period develop by our being completely surrounded by the powerful Soviet Army. So we, on our part, built circular fortifications on the heights around Hailar, and prepared to fight to the last, completely on the defensive, thus absorbing the opponent's manpower and accomplishing our object of holding out. The Haron Aershan area, that is on the southern side of the Hsingen mountains, is also a point of strategic interest, and it was hoped to station in this area a unit capable of fighting, but we had to refrain from doing so on account of the over-all manpower question. Eventually, in 1939, we permanently stationed the Aershan Garrison, and we planned in wartime to hold out in this area with the strength of only about a single division. In the study of operations at that time, as related above, whether we would be able to hold out on the front near Hailar to Haron Aershan--in other words to hold out against a far more powerful Soviet attack--was a point which most concerned an officer in charge of operations; but to allot sufficient manpower to this district would have meant the sacrificing of manpower in the main field of battle, operations in the interior, so from consideration of the general situation we limited it to the smallest possible numbers. (we were perhaps risking even less than the minimum) which means that instructions for operations were of entirely defensive type, within the boundary of Manchoukuo.

2. It was late in the afternoon on the 13th that the Kwantung Army learned that an incident had broken out near Nomonhan on the morning of 12 May 1939. On that afternoon I, together with a few other staff officers, was at the official residence of the Commander of the Kwantung Army, chatting after a meeting concerning inspection of training of subordinate units of the Army or some other subject, when a telegram was forwarded from the Headquarters of the Army by the one in charge. This telegram was a confidential telegram from the commander of the 23d Division (Hailar Defense Commander) to the Commander of the Kwantung Army. The contents were that on the morning of the 12th a unit belonging to the Outer Mongolian Army, of not less than 700 men, crossed the Haluha River, thus crossing the border, towards the south of the Nomonhan district, attacked the Manchurian guard unit which was on duty for the defense of the border of that area. The division commander dispatched to the spot a search-regiment under the command of the division's search-regiment commander, as well as two infantry companies, he having decided to drive out the invading Outer Mongolian Army.

It can be seen that it took about 36 hours for information to reach headquarters of the Army in Hsinking, from the time that the incident broke out near Nomonhan, which is accounted for by the fact that the Japanese Army had no installation near that district, and communication to Hailar, about 200 kilometers away, was performed by the inefficient communication system of the Manchurian Army. That is why it took such a long time.

Up to that time the Manchoukuoan border, especially the eastern border, had been sustaining unlawful invasions of the Soviet Army quite often and border disputes were continuous, causing us much worry. The Kwantung Army, whose duty it was to maintain the integrity of Manchuria, could not ignore these unlawful actions, but difficulties always followed their settlement as a result of the scheming of the Soviet Army.

On receipt of the aforesaid telegram our reaction was, "Has it happened again?" and we felt it unpleasant. Nomonhan being a very out-of-the-way place, and a place to which we attached no importance, not one of the staff officers knew the location of Nomonhan. So after making a report of the matter to the Commander of the Army, we went to headquarters, and although we ordered the intelligence section of the staff department to bring a map of the Hailar district, as well as ordering investigations to be made by the chief of topography, it was not easy to locate the place. At last after several hours we found a place called "Nomonhan Buru", and deciding that this must be the place, began to study counter-measures.

In such circumstances no action on the part of the Commander of the Army could be taken that day, and it was on the following day, the 14th, that after consultations between the commander and his staff necessary measures were taken. Such measures were to telegraph the commander of the 23d Division to the effect that the Commander of the Kwantung Army agreed with him in his decision, but that in the settlement of the incident we could not permit the crossing of the border from our side, and to take the most extreme caution not to let the matter become enlarged.

Hattori Takushirō (Seal)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, the undersigned authority, on this 21 May 1947, at Tokyo.

Ikeda Sumihisa (Seal)

Q A T H

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

Hattori Takushirō (Seal)

21 May 1947

Translation Certificate

I, Abe Fumio, of the Defense, hereby certify that I am conversant with the English and Japanese languages, and that the foregoing is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation of the original document.

Abe Fumio (Seal)

Tokyo

21 May 1947