

No. 2526

DEF. DOC. # 1291

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

SWORN DEPOSITION (Translation)

DEPONENT: AOKI, Takeshi
No. 761 Horiuchi, Hayama
Kanagawa-Ken

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:

I was the Liaison Officer between the Second Combined Air Corps and the Expeditionary Forces in China. I arrived in Shanghai in mid-September 1937. I was a staff officer of the Third Fleet and concurrently a staff officer of the Shanghai Expeditionary Forces.

My duties were to supply information to the Naval forces and to send requests from the Army to the Navy. I was also a Naval expert within the Army and in order to maintain liaison I made periodic flights to and from the airfield and the Headquarters of the Third Fleet.

On December 12, 1937 requests were received from the Army to bomb Chinese ships in which Chinese soldiers were fleeing

from Nanking. It was reported that seven or eight large Chinese merchants ships filled with Chinese troops were fleeing up the Yangtze River and they requested assistance from the Naval Air Squadron in preventing this movement. I transmitted this request to the Air Corps by telephone. The Air Corps consented and sent several planes on the requested mission.

At that time, according to the Army reports, there were no foreign ships in the vicinity of Nanking. It was later reported that the mission was carried out with excellent results.

On December 14, 1937, I heard for the first time the bombing of the SS "PANAY". The first report stated that a foreign ship might have been bombed and I became aware of the facts when I reached Shanghai to investigate the facts in connection with this report. At Shanghai I discovered that the "PANAY" had been bombed in error, having been mistaken for one of the Chinese vessels attempting to flee from Nanking. The subsequent report of the pilot stated that the bombing of the "PANAY" was clearly an error on his part and that he had no intention of bombing a foreign vessel. It was his belief that the "PANAY" was one of the Chinese vessels fleeing from Nanking.

Insofar as the reported machine gunning of the crew is concerned, the report of the pilot denied that such machine gunning had taken place. It was not the practice of the pilots in such bombing missions to machine gun their targets.

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Very strict orders had been issued by the Commander of the Third Fleet and the Commander of the Air Corps that care should be taken not to bomb foreign ships and this incident was regarded with extreme regret. For that reason, those who were regarded as being guilty of carelessness or possible negligence were punished.

On this 15th day of April 1947,
at Tokyo

Deponent: /S/ Aoki, Takeshi (seal)

I, TATSUO INAKAWA, 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 Tokyo

Witness: /S/ Tatsuo, Inagawa (seal)

O A T H

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

/S/ Aoki, Takeshi (seal)

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Translation Certificate.

I, Charles D. Sheldon, Chief of the Defense Language Branch hereby certify that the attached translation of the Sworn Deposition of AOKI, Takeshi is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation and is as near as possible to the meaning of the original document.

/S/ Charles D. Sheldon.

Tokyo, Japan

Date 21 April 1947.

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