

Handwritten initials and scribbles at the top of the envelope flap.

WAR DEPARTMENT

Exhibit # 42

File # 141

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300

Transcript of the original notes taken
by Lt. Col. B. C. Sackett in the
interrogation of Admiral Nobutake
Kondo

INTERROGATION OF

Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I. J. N.

Date and Time: 26 November 1945, 0955-1240 hours.

Place : Room 306, NYK Building, Tokyo, Japan.

Present : Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I. J. N.
Lt. Colonel, B. E. Sackett, Infantry.
1st Lt. Richard H. Gilliland, Infantry.
2nd Lt. Fred H. Uyebara, Infantry, Interpreter.
Tec 4 Lester E. Dalcher, Stenographer.

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

Admiral, in order to reduce to written form the substance of the matters we have discussed I would like to ask these questions:

Q. - State your residence address, age, marital status, and how long you have been in the Imperial Japanese Navy.

A. - My address is Tokyo - to, Setagaya - ku, Taishido machi 166 Banchi. 60 years of age, 43 years in Navy. I am married and have five children.

Q. - Are you a graduate of the Japanese Naval College.

A. - Yes.

Q. - What is your present position.

A. - Nothing.

Q. - When were you Vice Chief of Staff of the Navy General Staff.

A. - October 1939 to August 1941.

Q. - What were your next commands.

A. - Commander in Chief of the Second Fleet from September 1941 to July 1943. For 4 months after I was relieved of command of the Second Fleet I was a member of the Supreme War Council until November. After that I became the Commander in Chief of the South China Expeditionary Fleet. I was Commander of that Fleet until May of 1945.

Q. - Did you participate in the September 1941 Staff Exercises at the Naval War College.

A. - Yes, I participated in that maneuver.

Q. - As a member of the "Nippon" Team.

A. - Yes, as one of the members.

Q. - Describe briefly what staff problems you were assigned and worked out.

A. - I was given a problem as to how best to use my fleet in actual combat. We practiced night attacks and etc. It was not on any specific operational maneuvers against any specific nations, but was of general training purpose.

(Interrogation of Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I.J.N. - Continued - P. 2)

Q. - Did you participate in discussions or plans relative to the problem of attacking Pearl Harbor during these exercises.

A. - No I did not.

Q. - Who did participate in such discussions.

A. - I think that Vice Admiral Seiichi Ito, Vice Chief of Staff of the General Staff Fukitoma Shiato. Some personnel of the Naval General Staff, I do not remember the names. Chief Commander of the Combined Fleet Yamamoto, and Ugaki, Kuroshima (Captain), and some of the other staff members of the Combined Fleet. Vice Admiral Nagumo, Chuichi, Commander of the First Air Squadron, Chief of Staff of this Squadron Kusaka, Ryunosuke and some of the staff of that Squadron.

Q. - What details of the plan to attack Pearl Harbor were you told of by any of these officers.

A. - As far as the plans were concerned they were considered very secret and aside from the few facts that Yamamoto told us I heard of no other details.

Q. - What details did Admiral Yamamoto tell you.

A. - I was told by Admiral Yamamoto that the full force of the Japanese Navy Airforce would be utilized, that utmost secrecy would be kept in regards to the attack.

Q. - Did he tell you the date of the attack at that time.

A. - No.

Q. - When was the next conference that you attended at which attack plans were discussed or at which you were given any orders regarding war plans.

A. - The Commanders of the various fleets were ordered to assemble for conference at the Naval College about the middle of October. At that conference we were given a brief talk on the strained relationship between our nation and the United States. At that time we were told that the relationship was very strained and that war was imminent.

Q. - Did you receive any orders at this conference regarding operational plans for your fleet or did you know or discuss operational orders or other plans for the attack on Pearl Harbor.

A. - No. We received no operational orders. Our fleets had been training for combat so that such orders were unnecessary. As far as the orders on attack of Pearl Harbor, we received none.

Q. - Was any date or time for the commencement of hostilities mentioned or discussed at this conference.

A. - No, not at that time, although we knew that war was pretty close, we were not positive that it would be an actuality so we did not discuss anything like that.

Q. - Were the details of the plans to attack Pearl Harbor discussed in any way with you.

A. - No. We had no discussions.

(Interrogation of Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I.J.N. - Continued - P. 3)

- Q. - What was the next conference or meeting you attended at which orders regarding forthcoming operations were issued or discussed.
- A. - We had a conference on board the battleship Nagato at which time we received our movement orders. The date was between the 20-30 November. Present were the Combined Fleet Commander Yamamoto, Chief of Staff Ugaki, who explained movement orders, Nagumo, Commander of the First Fleet. Takahashi, Commander of the Third Fleet. Inoue, Semi. Commander of Fourth Fleet. Hosogaya, Commander of Fifth Fleet and Nakazawa his Chief of Staff. Shimizu, Commander of Sixth Fleet and I think Mito was his Chief of Staff. Eleventh Air Squadron Commander Tsukahara and his Chief of Staff Kusaka, Jinichi.
- Q. - Who issued, or talked about, operational orders.
- A. - Orders were issued by Admiral Yamamoto and explained by Captain Kuroshima.
- Q. - What was the substance of the orders and explanations.
- A. - The orders were Combined Fleet Operations Orders and contained no orders regarding the attack on Pearl Harbor, and as far as my fleet was concerned it was just a movement order.
- Q. - What was the substance of the movement order effecting your fleet.
- A. - In these orders I was given escort duty of Army transports to Malaya and to aid the Malaya Expeditionary Force. The second part of the order contained air attacks on Philippines and to escort the Army transports bound for Philippines and to aid in their landing.
- Q. - When were these orders to be carried out by your fleet.
- A. - My fleet was given orders to proceed to Bako and that the actual operational order was to be issued later.
- Q. - Was it your understanding that the attack on Pearl Harbor would be the first hostile action on the part of Japan, and that your operations would immediately follow.
- A. - My plan was the second phase. The Pearl Harbor attack was the first.
- Q. - I understood you to say that this meeting on the Nagato took place while the ship was at Hiroshima and lasted for two days.
- A. - Yes, it was there for two days.
- Q. - Then you returned to your flagship the Atago and your fleet left its anchorage for Bako, Is this correct.
- A. - My fleet stopped at Saeki and then proceeded on to Bako immediately after the conference.
- Q. - Your fleet consisted of destroyers and cruisers; how many of each.
- A. - Six 10,000 Ton Cruisers, and two Destroyer flotillas consisting of 12-16 Destroyers to each flotilla.
- Q. - On what date and under what circumstances did you next receive orders or instructions regarding the starting of hostilities.
- A. - I received notice of commencement of activities of Pearl Harbor attack on early 8th December. I am not positive of the time I received it. This broadcast came from the Imperial Navy Head-

-quarters to all of the fleets.

- Q. - When did you first learn that the strike on Pearl Harbor would take place on December 8th, and how did you learn this.
- A. - I learned about that on December 3rd. Previous to the formal notice from the Combined Fleet Headquarters I intercepted a message from the Navy Imperial Headquarters to Combined Fleet Headquarters.
- Q. - What was the substance of this message and the identical one you received later that day from the Combined Fleet Staff Headquarters relative to this matter.
- A. - I am not very clear on that. All I can remember is that the Pearl Harbor attack will commence on December 8th.
- Q. - Upon receiving that notice what orders were you going to carry out with your force on the 8th of December.
- A. - The First Fleet was to sail immediately from Bako to participate in the attack on the Philippines and due to the inclement weather the attack did not commence until the afternoon of the 8th of December. The Southern Expeditionary Fleet which was then under my command proceeded to land troops in Malaya. I am not positive of the time troops landed in Malaya but it was about 8 or 9 o'clock, December 8th, Japan time.
- Q. - What orders specifically did you give to your command regarding these operations. Did you specify the time on the 8th December they were to take off and attack the Philippines by air, and land the troops at Malaya.
- A. - Directly after receiving the news of the commencement of attack on Pearl Harbor I ordered my airforce to commence attack on Philippines. My second order was to the South Expeditionary Fleet telling them to aid and support the troops in Malaya.
- Q. - Where at that particular time was your fleet physically located.
- A. - Center of the South China Sea. Two days after that I was off the coast of Malaya and participated in the battle there. I was the highest commanding officer and so I was Commander in Chief of the Combined Second and Third Fleets.
- Q. - You knew the exact time that the attack on Pearl Harbor would take place did you not.
- A. - I did not know of the positive time of attack. All I knew was from what I heard that it would be around day break.
- Q. - Then how did you coordinate your orders to your fleet. In other words how did you know when to issue orders to your fleet to start their attack.
- A. - My orders were, to issue my orders as soon as I received first report on Pearl Harbor.
- Q. - When and how did you receive this notice of the attack on Pearl Harbor, That is, was it an official communication and what time was it recieved.
- A. - I do not remember the exact time but I received my orders to attack early morning of December 8th.

(Interrogation of Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I.J.N., Continued, P.5)

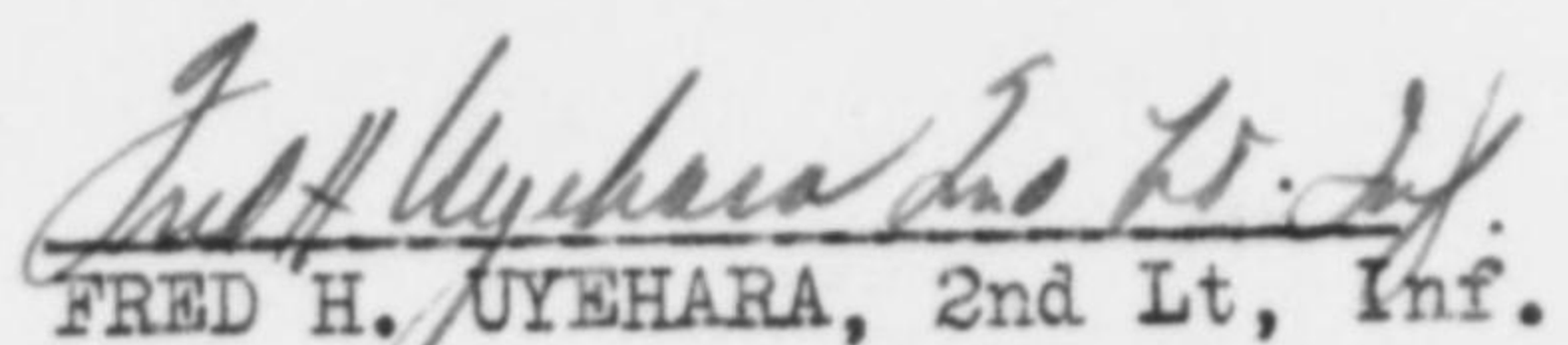
- Q. - Presumably they were by radio. Who sent them.
- A. - Vice Admiral Nagumo radioed Tokyo that the Pearl Harbor attack had started, and that report was radioed out to the fleet. Nagumo was Commander in Chief of the 11th Airfleet.
- Q. - In your opinion how much time, if everything went according to plan, would the American defenses at Pearl Harbor have to become alert and functioning before the first Japanese plane struck.
- A. - I thought that the Americans would be prepared to repulse our attack within 30 minutes.
- Q. - You mean that in your opinion the American defenses would have detected the approach of the Japanese 30 minutes before they could have actually struck.
- A. - What I thought was that after having received a first report of our planes they would be in their defensive positions within 30 minutes.
- Q. - The most vital factor to the success of the attack on Pearl Harbor was complete surprise was it not.
- A. - We did not anticipate complete surprise of American forces on Pearl Harbor. Our plan was just to take the initial step in the battle.
- Q. - How much time did you believe the American forces at Pearl Harbor would have had to anticipate that their Base might be attacked because of a Declaration of War.
- A. - As I was not concerned directly with the attack on Pearl Harbor I have no idea, however, it was my understanding that the attack on Pearl Harbor would commence after Declaration of War by our country.
- Q. - How much time after Declaration of War.
- A. - I do not know. The plans of the Government were totally unknown to us.
- Q. - Had you heard any discussions or do you have any opinions on this point.
- A. - That is a very difficult question to answer.
- Q. - Surely you must have heard what the intentions of the Japanese Government were relative to how much advanced notice would be given before the attack started.
- A. - The attack on Pearl Harbor was conducted so secretly that many of us knew nothing of the time element or its relativity in regards to time of Declaration of War.
- Q. - What orders did you receive from the Combined Fleet Headquarters during the morning of 8th December relative to your operations.
- A. - I had no orders on the morning of December 8th. Upon receipt of notice of commencement of activities we moved according to the previous orders.
- Q. - What was the immediate objective of the attack that day on the Philippines.
- A. - The first objective of my fleet was to facilitate and aid the Army in its landing operations. The main objective was to destroy and to neutralize the American airforce on the Philippine Islands.

(Interrogation of Admiral Nobutake Kondo, I.J.N., P. 6)

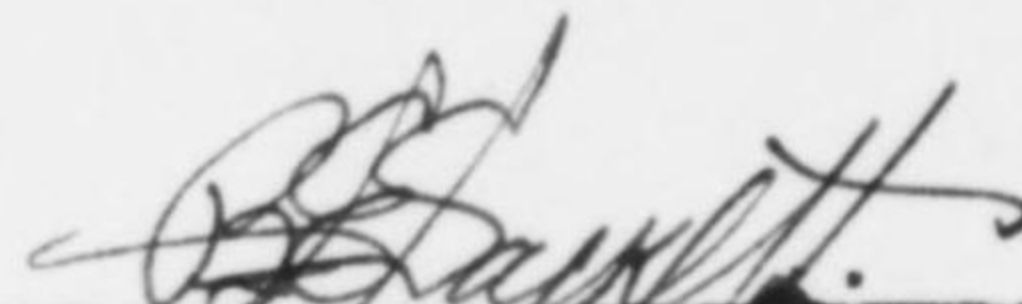
Q. - Is this all you know affecting the matters we have discussed here.

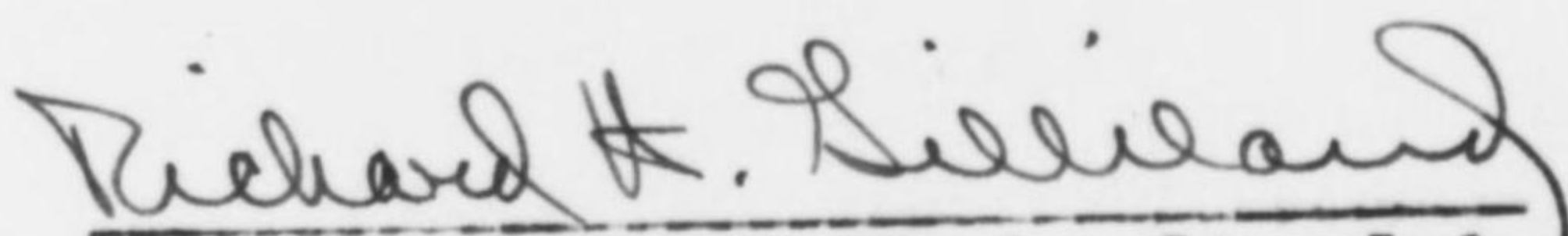
A. - Yes, we have covered it all very thoroughly.

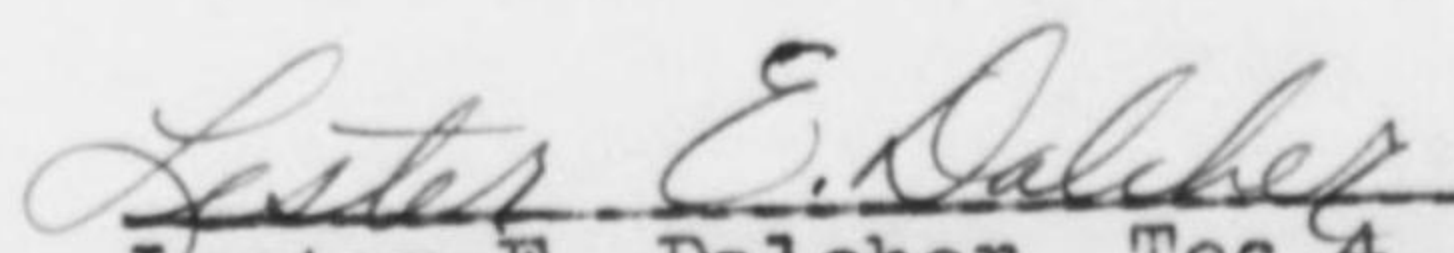
I, Fred H. Uyehara, 2nd Lt., Infantry, hereby certify that I acted as interpreter at the interview set out above, that I truly interpreted and translated the English questions into Japanese and the replies thereto from Japanese into English, and that the English translation of the answers set out above (6 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., Inf.


RICHARD H. GILLILAND, 1st Lt., Inf.


Lester E. Dalcher, Tec 4, 36477987, Steno.