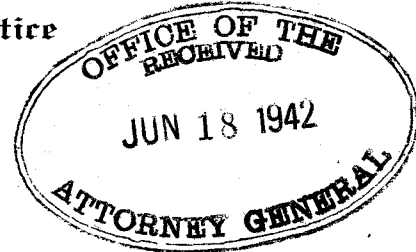




Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.



JUN 18 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

For your information, I am attaching hereto a copy of a memorandum which I have today transmitted to Mr. William D. Mitchell supplying additional information for his use in connection with the Stanley Johnston case.

Respectfully,

J. Edgar Hoover
John Edgar Hoover
Director

Enclosure

RECORDED
W. H.

146-7-23-25
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
AUG 11 1950 A.M.
DIVISION OF RECORDS
CRIM. - INTERNAL SECURITY SEC.

MEMORANDUM

June 17, 1942

Re: STANLEY JOHNSTON
ESPIONAGE (J)

This memorandum supplements the information contained in the memorandum dated June 16, 1942, which related to certain inquiries you desired made.

Section Four of your memorandum requested that inquiries be made to ascertain if any special instructions to or agreements with Johnston about clearing his stories had been effected by the Navy Department. The memorandum of June 16, 1942, dealt with this matter and stated that Commander R. W. Berry was making a complete check of his files to determine if any signed special instructions which would apply to Johnston were contained therein. On June 17, 1942, Commander Berry advised that he had not been able to find any information whatsoever in the files of the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., regarding any verbal or written instructions issued to Stanley Johnston regarding the manner in which he should clear any dispatches which he might send in his capacity as an authorized war correspondent.

Commander Berry also checked with the War Department for such information and received a negative reply. After furnishing the above information Commander Berry stated that he had sent a radiogram to the appropriate Naval officials in Honolulu and requested that appropriate inquiries be made there to determine if any verbal restrictions had been placed upon Johnston. It was noted in the earlier memorandum that Johnston did not sign the usual full Navy commitment regarding restrictions. However, as a matter of interest, there is attached hereto a copy of an official Navy document which contains the usual complete commitment which is generally signed by all war correspondents.

Commander Berry further stated that Rear Admiral Frederick Sherman, who was aboard the Lexington at the time it left Honolulu, might possibly have discussed this matter with Johnston and placed verbal restrictions on him or entered into a verbal agreement with him. It has been determined that Rear Admiral Sherman is due to report in Washington, D. C., from the West Coast on or about July 1, 1942. However, efforts are being made at the present time to locate him in order that he may be properly questioned on this matter.

Section Four of the memorandum also requested that information be obtained regarding the manner in which Johnston cleared his Coral Sea stories through the Navy Department.

Commander Berry stated that he was contacted by Mr. Nat Howard of the Office of Censorship, Washington, D. C., on June 6, 1942, and was informed that a Mr. Fisher of the Washington bureau of the Chicago Tribune was

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in Mr. Howard's office and had with him the first three of a series of stories prepared by Stanley Johnston regarding the battle of the Coral Sea. Mr. Howard had examined the copy and was of the opinion that the information contained therein was of vital interest to the Navy Department. Accordingly, he suggested to Commander Berry that he review this material and instructed Mr. Fisher to proceed to Commander Berry's office, which he did.

When Mr. Fisher arrived in Commander Berry's office, the latter in examining the material written by Johnston noted that there were attached a number of photographs, fourteen in all. He turned over the written material and the photographs to Lieutenant Paul C. Smith, Press Relations, Navy Department. Lieutenant Smith was interviewed on this matter and he stated that he gave clearance to the first three stories which were delivered to him by Mr. Fisher and that subsequently all stories regarding the Coral Sea battle prepared by Johnston were furnished to him by the Washington bureau of the Chicago Tribune direct. He reviewed all of these stories and made suggestions as to changes on some occasions. He personally granted clearance to the entire series of stories prepared by Johnston. However, no copies of this material were retained in Lieutenant Smith's office.

The photographs which accompanied the first three stories were referred by Lieutenant Smith to Lieutenant Commander E. J. Long who is the official photographer of the Public Relations Division, Navy Department. Commander Long stated that he examined these photographs and noted that they were all very clear pictures dealing with the burning and sinking of the USS LEXINGTON. On the back of each photograph there was pasted a tissue paper "flimsey" which contained typewritten data regarding the particular stage of the battle represented by the photograph. At the end of the typewritten material there appeared in parenthesis the words "Stanley photo".

Realizing that the Navy Department does not authorize any war correspondent to write stories regarding activities in the combat area and also take photographs and use same prior to the release of official Navy photographs, Commander Long made some inquiries which resulted in his securing from the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Fleet, Washington, D. C., fourteen official Navy photographs which correspond in every detail with the fourteen photographs furnished with Johnston's stories. Thirteen of these fourteen official Navy photographs have been released to the public. However, the fourteenth has not been released and it is Commander Long's opinion that it will not be released for public use for the duration of the war.

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An examination of the photograph in question reveals that it shows the extent of damage which one torpedo did to the side of the Lexington. Commander Long explained the details of the damage would be of interest to enemies of this country, as would certain other features which are included in the photograph.

After examining the photographs, Commander Long telephonically contacted Lieutenant R. Q. White, U.S.N.R., Acting Public Relations Officer, Ninth Naval District, 333 North Michigan, Chicago, and Lieutenant White immediately contacted Mr. Loy Maloney, managing editor of the Tribune. Commander Long fixes the date for this event as June 9 or 10, last. Lieutenant White requested Mr. Maloney to turn over to him all photographs and all photographic plates which he might have, showing scenes of the Coral Sea battle. Mr. Maloney took out of a locked drawer fourteen photographic plates and fourteen photographs, and turned them over to Lieutenant White, together with a written statement to the effect that this material constituted all that the Tribune had in its possession.

Lieutenant White mailed this material the same evening, in a registered envelope bearing Chicago number 899,283, addressed to Rear Admiral A. J. Hepburn, Press Relations Division, Navy Department, Washington. An examination of this envelope reflects it was postmarked in Chicago, June 10, 1942, and received in Washington June 11, 1942. Commander Long was furnished this material, which he still has in his possession, by Admiral Hepburn's office, and he noted the photographs are the same as those given to Commander Berry by Mr. Fisher in Washington.

Commander Long stated he is certain that fourteen photographs were included in the group which he received from Admiral Hepburn's office, however he could only locate eleven of the photographs at the time he was contacted. It is noted each of these eleven has on the back the official Navy stamp of the Bureau of Aeronautics. Two of the photographs which contain the stamp did not have any serial number noted thereon. The others had the following serial numbers: 0163, 0162, 0161, 0160, 0159, 0158, 0156, 0153, 0151. It was noted the last mentioned photograph, bearing the number 0151, had the following written in pencil on the back: "Capt. Sherman just coming down line under starboard (Comiter?) & ships boat (see action) came in uppicked him from water".

Commander Long explained that undoubtedly the set of photographs which Lieutenant White secured in Chicago was delivered to the Chicago Tribune by Johnston, and the photographic plates were made from these pictures; then the photographs which were forwarded to Washington and were turned over later by Mr. Fisher to Commander Berry were made from the plates.

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It is of interest to note, he explained, that the Chicago set of photographs has the Navy Department stamp on the backs, whereas the set sent in to Washington with Johnston's first three stories had pasted on the backs, as has been previously explained above, the tissue paper "flimsy" giving data regarding the particular stage of the battle at the time the photograph was taken.

Commander Long also explained that all of the Navy Department's photographs are considered secret until they are released by the Public Relations Division, and that no one in the Task Force, which included the USS Lexington, was authorized to give away any of these photographs or to give a release to Johnston for their use. Due to the fact that the serial numbers appearing on the backs of the photographs were incomplete, inasmuch as there should have been certain letters in addition to the numbers, Commander Long was unable to furnish any information as to where they were developed. He suggested that Lieutenant Commander A. D. Fraser of the Bureau of Aeronautics might be helpful in this matter, however Commander Fraser did not have any further information other than an opinion that they most likely were developed on a cruiser which was included in the Task Force. He suggested that Lieutenant Commander Bonney Powell be contacted in Honolulu in a further endeavor to secure detailed information. Appropriate steps have been taken to have Commander Powell interviewed for further details along this line.

Section five of the memorandum mentioned above referred to the original Nimitz dispatch, and queried as to whether or not the word "Secret" or anything similar appeared thereon. Captain Carl F. Holden was requested to have the proper Navy officials in Honolulu forward a photographic copy of the original dispatch in question to Washington. At this time he was also questioned as to the identity of Navy personnel in Honolulu who could establish the source of the data contained in the dispatch.

Captain Holden stated he would take this matter up with Admiral Russell Willson, and accordingly, later in the day, Admiral Willson was interviewed in the presence of Captain Holden. Admiral Willson first remarked that he had presented the above request to Admiral King, and Admiral King had informed him the Navy Department did not desire under any circumstances or conditions to have information made public, or used at a trial, which would deal in any way with the sources of information which were used for the data in the dispatch.

Captain Holden explained that there may have been some misunderstanding as to how the information contained in the dispatch of May 31, 1942 was obtained by the Navy Department. He stated the Navy Department did not intercept any one, two or three radio messages and secure all of the information

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in that manner, but rather that the dispatch in question was a summation of various bits of information which had come into the possession of Admiral Nimitz in several ways. He stated that undoubtedly part of the information came from reports of submarines, other parts of the information were furnished by aircraft patrols, some data was furnished by the Naval Intelligence Services, possibly through the use of informants, and also some of the information was obtained from Japanese messages. He elaborated on the latter manner of acquiring information and explained that the mere fact that there is a large increase in the number of Japanese messages at any one time is of significance to the Navy authorities, and also that undoubtedly certain messages had been intercepted by American ships at sea, in addition to those messages which were intercepted at Honolulu.

In concluding his remarks, he mentioned that there was no one source from which all the data was obtained, and that even the Japanese radio messages were received by a number of American stations at sea and on land, and that the radio messages intercepted did not necessarily constitute the bulk of the information available which went into the dispatch. Captain Holden is very doubtful, in fact, if all the information contained in the dispatch is accurate, because he stated a summary dispatch such as the one in question very often contains a number of estimates and plain guesses on the part of the officers who send out the summary to the ships at sea. The dispatch only purports to be the best information available at headquarters as to the probable disposition of the Japanese forces on the particular day on which it is sent out.

Admiral Willson instructed Captain Holden to forward a radio dispatch to Honolulu, requesting that a photographic copy of the original dispatch be air mailed to Washington, together with the deposition of a qualified Naval officer in the Honolulu headquarters, to the effect that it is an authentic copy of the original.

Admiral Willson concluded this interview by stating that the Navy Department is willing to take a chance that some persons may be able to figure out from the contents of the dispatch that the U. S. Navy may have been successful in deciphering part of the Japanese code, however he explained that Admiral King was very emphatic in stating that under no conditions would Navy personnel testify to this fact, and that the Navy did not intend to furnish any information which would go behind the contents of the dispatch or deal in any way with the sources from which the Navy Department secured the information contained in the dispatch.



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