

June 22, 1942

M E M O R A N D U MRE: STANLEY CLAUDE SAMUEL JOHNSTON;  
ESPIONAGE - J.

This memorandum brings up to date investigative work completed since the submission of the memorandum dated June 20, 1942.

Reference is made to page five of the memorandum dated June 17, 1942, wherein information is set forth concerning the position of the United States Navy relative to the Japanese code. The Honolulu Field Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation has advised that Naval authorities in Honolulu will not state privately or publicly, officially or nonofficially, whether they know anything about the Japanese code and, therefore, no information is available from Naval officers in Hawaii concerning the Japanese code.

Accrediting of Johnston as a Tribune Correspondent

Lieutenant Commander Waldo Drake and Lieutenant James E. Bassett, Staff Officers, United States Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, have both advised that Stanley Johnston arrived in Honolulu March 2, 1942, and reported to Lieutenant Commander Drake on March 3, 1942. Johnston displayed basic credentials from the War Department and advised that he had been told by Commander R. W. Berry, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., that his credentials to the Pacific Fleet would be in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet at the time of Johnston's arrival in Honolulu. However, Johnston's credentials had not arrived and a dispatch was sent by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, to the Secretary of the Navy asking that Johnston be accredited to the Pacific Fleet as a correspondent. The Secretary of the Navy approved the accrediting of Johnston by Naval dispatch of March 11, 1942, according to Lieutenant Commander Drake. Upon the basis of this authorization, credentials of the United States Pacific Fleet signed by Lieutenant Commander E. T. Layton, as Fleet Censor, were executed for Stanley Johnston on or about March 11, 1942, for the period ending July 1, 1942. These credentials were given to Stanley Johnston in person by Lieutenant Commander Drake in the presence of Lieutenant Bassett, and the credentials identify Johnston as "Accredited Press Correspondent, U. S. Pacific Fleet." The Naval dispatch from the Secretary of the Navy to Admiral Nimitz authorizing Johnston to take passage on the USS Lexington was not shown to Johnston, but the privileges conferred on Johnston were explained to him by Lieutenant Commander Drake.

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Clearance of Johnston's Stories

At the time Johnston was given his Pacific Fleet credentials he was also given a mimeographed copy of a memorandum for correspondents dated January 9, 1942, entitled "Subjects Not To Be Released For Publication" and the contents of this memorandum were read to him by Lieutenant Commander Drake in the presence of Lieutenant Bassett. A copy of this memorandum has been forwarded to Commander R. W. Berry, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., by Admiral Nimitz and will be obtained as soon as available. Lieutenant Commander Drake in the presence of Lieutenant Bassett further discussed orally with Stanley Johnston the various restrictions imposed by the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, on press copy and specifically advised Johnston that all copy written by him while operating on his Pacific Fleet credentials must first be submitted to a representative of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, for censorship. Three articles were turned in by Johnston for publication prior to the time he sailed on the USS Lexington, April 14, 1942. One of these articles, according to Lieutenant Commander Drake, was rejected and two were released for publication. One article was sent in by tanker by Johnston after his departure from Hawaii, which article was also released for publication.

Lieutenant Commander Drake has advised that Stanley Johnston did not sign a release for personal injuries before boarding the USS Lexington. It is noted that it has been previously reported that Commander R. W. Berry, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., understood that Johnston had signed the release for personal injuries before boarding the USS Lexington. /X

Official Navy Photographs in Johnston's Possession

According to Lieutenant Commander Waldo Drake, Staff Officer, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, Johnston was specifically told that he was not authorized to take photographs or to have photographs in his possession except upon the approval of the Commander-in-Chief or until the photographs had been released by the Commander-in-Chief. Lieutenant Commander Drake also stated that no authorization was given to Stanley Johnston or to the Chicago Tribune to have possession of official Navy photographs of the burning of the USS Lexington prior to the general release of the photographs, which release was made at Washington, D. C.

Lieutenant Larry L. Booda, Photographer, USS Minneapolis, advised that thirty exposures of the USS Lexington in a sinking condition had been made from the USS Minneapolis by R. T. Mosby, Photographer, Third Class, and J. E. O'Connell, Yeoman, Second Class. These exposures were developed and printed by Mosby in the laboratory of the USS Minneapolis. These negatives were given serial numbers 0151 to 0181. Eight sets of certain of

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these negatives were printed and delivered to Lieutenant Brandt of the USS Astoria to be delivered to Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, then on the USS Astoria. One set was turned over to Admiral Nimitz and one set consisting of twenty-six prints now remains in the possession of Lieutenant Booda on the USS Minneapolis. On June 15, 1942, all negatives taken of the USS Lexington from aboard the USS Minneapolis were forwarded to the Bureau of Aeronautics, United States Navy Department, under the classification of "Secret". All of the prints were stamped "Official Photographs Not To Be Used For Publication By Order Of The Chief Of The Bureau Of Aeronautics."

Handling of the Secret Message on the USS Barnett

Advice has been received from the Honolulu Field Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, that Admiral Nimitz forwarded a photostatic copy of secret message number 311221, the message in question in this case, to Admiral King, Washington, D. C., on June 19, 1942; copies of this message will be obtained through the Navy Department as soon as available.

There is attached to this memorandum a photostatic copy of secret dispatch number 311221 as it was received and decoded on board the USS Barnett. This copy shows the initials of the various officers who saw and initialed the secret message aboard the USS Barnett, and it is noted that it has written thereon the word "Secret" in two places.

Additional Interview with Lieutenant Commander Edward J. O'Donnell, Gunnery Officer, USS Lexington

Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell advised that he did not at any time show the secret message to Johnston nor did he discuss the message with Johnston. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell advised that it is possible that Johnston may have been within earshot when Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell discussed the message with other officer personnel in Commander Seligman's quarters. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell did not make a copy or any notes from the secret message and does not know whether any of the other officers made a copy or notes therefrom. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell stated he does not know how Stanley Johnston may have obtained the contents of the secret message. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell saw the message for the first time in his quarters on the USS Barnett and recalls that Commander Junker was present at the time and that Johnston was definitely not present. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell further stated that on the occasion when he and Lieutenant Commander Eldredge were in Commander Seligman's quarters he saw some pencil notations giving the line-up of the Japanese ships. However, he does not know who made these notes and recalls that in addition to Eldredge, Commander Seligman and Lieutenant Commander R. E. Bixon, USS Lexington, were also present.

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Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell advised that he saw some of the photographs of the exploding of the USS Lexington while he was on the USS Barnett. He does not know from what ship they were taken nor by whom they were developed, and he did not see any photographs in Stanley Johnston's possession. Lieutenant Commander O'Donnell could furnish no information as to who might have furnished any photographs to Stanley Johnston.

Attachment



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