Takeo Yoshikawa - Charts Used in Pearl Attack

Takeo Yoshikawa was known as "Tadasi Moriumura" to everyone but the Japanese Imperial high command. That's because he had a specific job to do at the Pearl Harbor Japanese Consulate - and it wasn't doing consulate work.

During the first part of 1941, Yoshikawa had arrived in Hawaii. Tasked with helping pilots (who had never been to Pearl Harbor) find their individual targets, Yoshikawa created very detailed information and charts.

He worked for nine months, keeping his superiors in Tokyo advised about activities on the island of Oahu. Freely able to move about, wherever he wanted to go, his information was accurate.

Without his input, the surprise attack would have been less deadly - or - may never have occurred (as noted in "Japanese Spy at Pearl Harbor," by Jules Archer):

> *As Japanese planes roared in to put the finishing touches to America's worst defeat, Takeo Yoshikawa swelled with pride. For he, and he alone, had been responsible for the success of the infamous sneak attack.*

If anyone paying attention to all of Takeo's activities had authority to stop him, perhaps the spy would have been caught. Such, however, was not the case. As observed in *And I Was There:*

> *Our ONI and FBI agents might have been more suspicious about the role the counsel was playing if they had paid more attention to the peripatetic journeyings of his energetic third secretary, Yoshikawa, alias Morimura.*

Actually ... agents were paying attention to all of Yoshikawa's comings and goings. In fact, U.S. military intelligence suspected him of spying. One officer even commented that "Morimura" was able to go unhindered "all over the _ _ place."

Working diligently, the FBI's chief investigator in Honolulu was tracking the 27-year-old Japanese spy, but there wasn't enough evidence to arrest him.

At the time, Hawaii was not-yet an American state. Officials in Washington did not want to risk antagonizing the loyalty of Hawaii's population by arresting a "diplomat" without hard evidence of spy activities. (About 160,000 people of Japanese ancestry lived in Hawaii in 1941.) Suspicions were not enough to stop Yoshikawa from going about his business.

So ... because no one did stop him ... Yoshikawa's spy charts would provide perfect routes of travel for all the comings and goings of Japanese pilots on the 7th of December, 1941.

The night before, the diplomatic spy sent a cable to Tokyo. His message, intended for Admiral Yamamoto, contained these words (in Japanese):

> *Vessels moored in harbor: Nine battleships; three Class-B cruisers; three seaplane tenders; seventeen destroyers. Entering harbor are four Class-B cruisers; three destroyers. All aircraft carriers and heavy cruisers have departed harbor. No indication of any changes in U.S. fleet.*

Later in his life, when he talked about that cable, Yoshikawa said:

> *I held history in the palm of my hand.*

He sent the cable, then went to bed.

Thereafter ... Admiral Yamamoto read the message and sent it on to Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo. In charge of the task force then located about 200 miles from the island of Oahu, Nagumo received the communication around 1:20 in the morning, Hawaii time.

It was the final message he needed before authorizing the Pearl Harbor bomb run.

On the morning of December 7, Yoshikawa was listening to a short-wave radio broadcast from Tokyo. During the weather forecast, he heard a reporter very slowly say these words:

> *East wind, rain.*
>
> *East wind, rain.*

Yoshikawa knew what those code words meant. Japan had decided to start a war against America.

The weatherman's words did not contain any other codes. That meant Japan was not declaring war on Britain or Russia.

Yoshikawa and Japan's counsel in Hawaii knew what they had to do. Federal agents would soon search their offices, so they had to destroy every piece of incriminating evidence, including their code books.

By the time U.S. agents showed-up, every shred of spying evidence against Yoshikawa no-longer existed. No evidence against him ever surfaced, while he was in American custody. In 1942, he returned to Japan. During the rest of the war, he held his rank of ensign in Japanese intelligence.

After the war, when the U.S. occupied Japan for several years, the Pearl-Harbor spy worried that he'd be caught ... and hanged. He left his wife, whom he had married after returning to Japan, and went into hiding as a Buddhist monk.

When America's occupation of Japan ended, in the mid-1950s, Yoshikawa returned home and opened a candy store. He planned to support his family as a businessman.

By this time, however, people knew about his spying days. No one considered him a hero. No one wanted anything to do with him. In fact, many Japanese people blamed him for the whole war:

> *In 1955 Yoshikawa opened a candy business. But people knew who he was. They wouldn't buy from a spy - a spy whose country had lost the war. "They even blamed me for the atomic bomb," he declared with tears in his eyes. And he might have starved over the years if his loyal wife had not supported him by selling insurance.*
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> "*My wife alone shows me great respect,*" *said the old spy. "Every day she bows to me. She knows I am a man of history.*"
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> *The he lifted his cup. "I am drinking to forget. I have so many thoughts now so many years after the war ... Why has history cheated me?*" (*World War II Journal # 2, Pearl Harbor*, edited by Ray Merriam, at page 58.)

Things didn't change for Yoshikawa in his later years. When he applied for a pension, he was turned down:

> *I have been wiped clean from Japanese history ... Five years ago when I applied for a pension, they said, "We never heard of you."*
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> *When I told them of my espionage assignment of the long years working to become an expert on the American Navy and of my dangerous mission in Honolulu, they were without sympathy. They told me Japan never spied on anyone.* (*World War II Journal # 2, Pearl Harbor*, edited by Ray Merriam, at page 57.)

The old spy died, in a nursing home, on the 20th of February, 1993. Just days from his 80th birthday, which would have been on March 7, he was still penniless. He'd never been able to find anyone who would hire him, including the Japanese government.

Credits:

First quoted passage - from "Japanese Spy at Pearl Harbor," (pages 72-77) by Jules Archer, in *WWII Journal #2 - Pearl Harbor*.

Second quoted passage - from *"And I Was There" Pearl Harbor and Midway - Breaking the Secrets*, by Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, USN (Ret.), with Captain Roger Pineau, USNR (Ret.) John Costello.

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