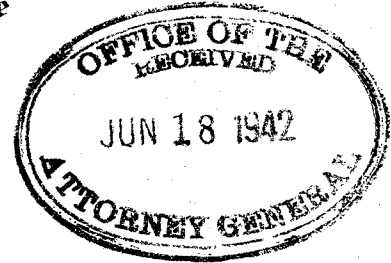


DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 76716



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.  
JUN 17 1942



MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

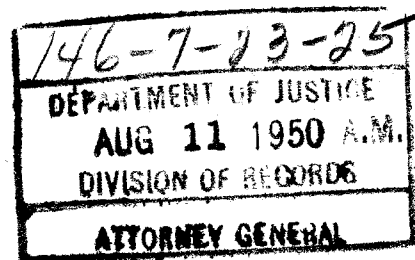
I am attaching hereto for your information a copy of a memorandum dated June 16, 1942, which I have transmitted today to Mr. William D. Mitchell. This contains some of the information specifically requested by Mr. Mitchell in his memorandum to me of June 15 and which he desired in connection with the study he is making of the newspaper story carried in the Chicago Tribune concerning the Midway Battle.

Respectfully,

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director

Enclosure

RECORD



June 16, 1942

MEMORANDUM

Re: Newspaper Story Carried in Chicago Tribune  
and Other Papers Concerning Midway Battle -  
June 7, 1942

There is attached hereto a copy of "Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press", issued by the Office of Censorship. This code was in effect on June 7, 1942.

There is also attached an amendment having to do with the "Ships Clause" of the aforementioned code, which will be effective on June 22, 1942.

Mr. N. R. Howard, Assistant Director, Bureau of Censorship in Charge of the Press, stated the present code of wartime practices now in effect is being amended, and that the new printed edition will not be available until it is issued on June 22, 1942, at which time it will become immediately effective. He furnished a rough draft copy of the amendments which will be made to the "Ships Clause" of the code, and stated these amendments as furnished in the rough draft will undoubtedly be incorporated into the new code as set out. Copies of the new edition of the code will be secured as soon as they are published.

There is attached hereto a copy of a letter signed "Franklin D. Roosevelt", January 27, 1942, addressed to the Honorable Byron Price, Director, Office of Censorship, which authorizes and directs Mr. Price to coordinate the efforts of the domestic press and radio in voluntarily withholding from publication military and other information which should not be released in the interest of the effective prosecution of the war.

There is attached hereto a copy of an Executive Order signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt on December 19, 1941, which establishes the Office of Censorship and sets out the methods by which this office should operate.

There are attached hereto copies of the articles which comprise the entire file of the Office of Censorship for their dealings with the Chicago Tribune relative to the article which was published on June 7, 1942. These articles are identified as follows:

- Memorandum by N. R. Howard, dated June 9, 1942;
- Memorandum by Byron Price, dated June 8, 1942;
- Memorandum by N. R. Howard, Attention Mr. Price, dated June 7, 1942;
- Telegram dated June 7, 1942, addressed to Mr. Arthur Sears Henning, signed "Tom Morrow, Chicago Tribune";

- 2 -

Memorandum by N. R. Howard, dated June 7, 1942;  
Memorandum by N. R. Howard and R. K. Richards, dated  
June 7, 1942;  
Letter dated June 7, 1942, from Arthur S. Henning to  
Mr. N. R. Howard, and a copy of the enclosure to  
the letter;  
Memorandum to Mr. Howard from Wm. Mylander, dated June 9, 1942.

Mr. N. R. Howard explained that the articles above mentioned, which appear in his file, correctly set out all transactions regarding the publication of the story of June 7, 1942, and stated his agency contemplates no further action in this matter. He explained that although there was some doubt in his mind at the time he first read the story published, as to whether or not it actually violated the letter of the code, after the receipt of the letter from Mr. Henning which furnished the viewpoint of the Chicago Tribune, he was convinced this was such a borderline case that no action should be taken.

It will be noted the memorandum to Mr. Howard from Mr. Mylander, dated June 9, 1942, states Commander Berry ascertained from appropriate Naval officials in Hawaii that Stanley Johnston did not sign a full Navy commitment, and accordingly he was not committed to Navy censorship of his dispatches in any way. Mr. Howard explained that the usual Navy commitment which is signed by authorized war correspondents consists of three parts. Part one provides that the correspondent will obey the military or naval commanding officer in all respects; Part two provides that the correspondent will file all stories with the appropriate military or naval censor while he is in the field, and upon his return to the United States will submit any further stories pertaining to the activities which he observed in the field, to the appropriate Army or Navy officials for clearance; and Part three is a release to the Army or Navy authorities for any personal injuries suffered by the correspondent.

Mr. Howard stated that to the best of his knowledge Stanley Johnston is the only war correspondent who did not sign a full commitment, and remarked that due to this fact Johnston's case is unique. In reply to a direct question, Mr. Howard stated the Office of Censorship does not have any set policy regarding such a situation. In all instances when articles and stories are submitted to the Office of Censorship by newspapers or other publications, and there is any doubt whatsoever in Mr. Howard's mind as to the advisability of furnishing clearance, he refers the articles and stories to the appropriate Army or Navy authorities. In all cases involving duly authorized war correspondents who have signed the usual full commitment, Mr. Howard does not attempt to furnish clearance for any story, but instead refers the correspondents directly to the appropriate Army or Navy authorities.

- 3 -

He concluded by stating he did not believe there was any possibility of another instance arising whereby a war correspondent was allowed to visit a combat area without having signed a full commitment, and accordingly he did not think it would be necessary for the Office of Censorship to establish any policy for circumstances and conditions similar to those involving Stanley Johnston's status in the present inquiry.

Commander R. W. Berry was contacted at the Navy Building, and he verified the fact that he had communicated with officials in Hawaii and had been informed that Johnston did not sign a full commitment. When questioned directly as to whether or not there was any possibility that there might be any signed special restrictions which would apply to Johnston on file in the Navy Department here, Commander Berry stated he was fairly certain there were no such restrictions, but that he desired to make a complete check of his files before he furnished a definite answer. This check of the files is being made at the present time.

Lieutenant J. G. Harold Requa, Assistant Public Relations Officer, Navy Department, San Diego, California, stated Johnston informed him he would visit his office on the morning of June 4, 1942, however Lieutenant Requa did not see Johnston on that date, but did receive a sealed envelope of copy left there by Johnston for censorship. This material was given a very cursory examination by Admiral Ralston Holmes, who noted it contained only dispatches concerning the Coral Sea engagements. Holmes did not allow the release of any of the material, but instead forwarded all of it to the Navy Department in Washington, through Commander Sullivan of the staff of Admiral King. Appropriate inquiry is being made through Commander Berry to determine the exact handling of this material when it reached Washington.

C O P Y

## SHIP MOVEMENTS, CARGOES, ETC.

The identity, location, and movements of United States naval or merchant vessels, of neutral vessels, or vessels of nations opposing the Axis powers in any waters, unless such information is made public outside continental United States; the port and time of arrival or prospective arrival of such vessels, or the port from which they leave; the nature of cargoes of such vessels in any waters, unless made public outside United States; the assembly, identity or movements of transports or convoys; the existence of mine fields or other harbor defenses; secret orders or other secret instructions regarding lights, buoys and other guides to navigators; the number, size, character, and location of ships in construction, or advance information as to the date of launchings or commissionings; the physical setup or technical details of shipyards.

NOTE.-This has no reference to the movement of merchant vessels on the Great Lakes or other sheltered inland waterways, unless specific instances require special ruling.

## SHIP SINKINGS, DAMAGE BY ENEMY ATTACKS, ETC.

Information about the sinking or damaging from war causes of war or merchant vessels in any waters, unless such information is made public outside continental United States, and its origin stated.

NOTE.-The appropriate authority for the release of news about the sinking or damaging of American naval or merchant vessels in or near American waters is the Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington; for results of the commanding officer of the district in which the action occurs, or the Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington.

Information about damage to military objectives, including docks, railroads, air fields, or public utilities or industrial plants engaged in war work, through enemy land or sea attacks on continental United States or possessions.

NOTE.-In reporting such attacks, counter-measures or plans of defense should not be disclosed, except through appropriate military authorities.

The appropriate authority for information about damage from enemy attacks to military objectives on land within continental United States or possessions is the commanding officer in the zone of combat, or the Army Bureau of Public Relations, Washington. (For the Hawaiian Islands, the Navy.)

C O P Y

EXECUTIVE ORDER

-----

ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP AND PRESCRIBING ITS FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and particularly by section 303, Title III of the act of December 18, 1941, Public Law 354, 77th Congress, 1st Session, and deeming that the public safety demands it, I hereby order as follows:

1. There is hereby established the Office of Censorship, at the head of which shall be a Director of Censorship. The Director of Censorship shall cause to be censored, in his absolute discretion, communications by mail, cable, radio, or other means of transmission passing between the United States and any foreign country or which may be carried by any vessel or other means of transportation touching at any port, place, or Territory of the United States and bound to or from any foreign country, in accordance with such rules and regulations as the President shall from time to time prescribe. The establishment of rules and regulations in addition to the provisions of this order shall not be a condition to the exercise of the powers herein granted or the censorship by this order directed. The scope of this order shall include all foreign countries except such as may hereafter be expressly excluded by regulation.

2. There is hereby created a Censorship Policy Board, which shall consist of the Vice-President of the United States, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of War, the Attorney General, the Postmaster General, the Secretary of the Navy, the Director of the

Office of Government Reports, and the Director of the Office of Facts and Figures. The Postmaster General shall act as Chairman of the Board. The Censorship Policy Board shall advise the Director of Censorship with respect to policy and the coordination and integration of the censorship herein directed.

3. The Director of Censorship shall establish a Censorship Operating Board, which shall consist of representatives of such departments and agencies of the Government as the Director shall specify. Each representative shall be designated by the head of the department or agency which he represents. The Censorship Operating Board shall, under the supervision of the Director, perform such duties with respect to operations as the Director shall determine.

4. The Director of Censorship is authorized to take all such measures as may be necessary or expedient to administer the powers hereby conferred, and, in addition to the utilization of existing personnel of any department or agency available therefor, to employ, or authorize the employment of, such additional personnel as he may deem requisite.

5. As used in this order the term "United States" shall be construed to include the Territories and possessions of the United States, including the Philippine Islands.

(Signed)

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,

Washington, D. C.

December 19, 1941

*Memo  
& FILE*

June 9, 1942

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. ~~Howard~~

FROM: Wm. Mylander

SUBJECT: Chi Trib Correspondent Didn't Sign Commitment.

In discussing another matter with Commander Berry, he asked me to tell you that on the Stanley Johnston affair, he had called Hawaii last Saturday and was informed over the telephone that Mr. Johnston had signed the full Navy commitment not to write anything from the combat zone area without prior approval by the Navy. Now, however, Hawaii has notified the Commander that its first report was erroneous; that Mr. Johnston told us the truth when he reported that all he had signed was an injury release; and he was not committed to Navy censorship of his dispatches in any way. Commander Berry said he regretted this and would have to get after Hawaii.





National Security Archive,  
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,  
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,  
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)