

A F F I D A V I T

COLONEL DAVID D. BARRITT, General Staff Corps, U. S. Army, Acting Military Attache, Embassy of the United States of America, Nanking, China, deposes and states as follows:

I was Assistant Military Attache of the Embassy of the United States of America, Peiping, China, in July 1937. My commanding officer, the Military Attache, was General (then Colonel) Joseph W. Stilwell. On the morning of 9 July 1937, Colonel Stilwell directed me to proceed to Wanpinghsion, generally referred to by the Chinese as Lukouchino, a small walled city about ten miles southwest of Peiping near which is located the bridge commonly known as the "Marco Polo Bridge." Colonel Stilwell directed me to investigate the report on the situation at Wanping, as he had been informed that a clash had taken place there the day before between forces of the Chinese 29th Army and Japanese troops who had been conducting maneuvers in the vicinity for several days.

I arrived at Wanping about 0800, and found the east gate shut and barricaded. Some small houses near the gate had been demolished, apparently by mortar fire from positions outside the town. One or two sentries were visible on the city wall, but there were no Chinese soldiers or civilians to be seen outside the city. A sentry posted on the wall above the gate shouted to me that I could not enter the city.

I then walked around the northeast corner of the city wall to the Peking-Hankow railway at a point approximately due north of the city. There I found a battalion of Japanese infantry assembled along the north side of the railway. A few sentries were posted along the top of the railway embankment observing the city of Wanping to the south. I observed one or two dead Japanese soldiers lying near the railway embankment.

From the Japanese position behind the railway embankment I then proceeded past the northwest corner of the city wall and into Wanping through the west gate which was shut, but not barricaded. Some Chinese sentries were posted on the Marco Polo Bridge just west of the city and at points near the ends of the bridge.

Inside the city, I visited the office of the Usien Magistrate where police officials showed me damage apparently caused by mortar fire from outside the walls. The police official informed me that the Usien Magistrate was in Peiping consulting with the mayor. The officials gave me an account of what had happened since the night of July 7-8. This account was substantially the same as that contained in the affidavits presented by General Chin To-chun and Mr. Wang Len-chai, which I have read. I then returned to Peiping.

During the time I was visiting the city and adjacent areas, there were only a few scattered shots exchanged between Chinese sentries on the wall and Japanese troops behind the railway embankment.

On my return to Peiping, I reported to Colonel Stilwell what I had observed substantially as noted above, and stated that as far as I could determine the clash had been on a very small scale and was not nearly so serious as many other clashes which had occurred since September 18, 1931. I further stated

that I believed the incident could easily be settled if the Japanese really so desired, as I had observed absolutely no signs of any aggressive attitude on the part of the Chinese.

On at least five different occasions between 9 July and 25 July, I visited Wanping, and on at least two of these occasions I accompanied the Military Attaché, Colonel Stilwell. During these visits, I observed evidences of fighting on a small scale near Wanping between Chinese and Japanese forces, but at no time did I actually see any such fighting although occasionally I heard a few shots fired. It was my firm conviction during this period that the incident could have been settled at any time the Japanese so desired. In many discussions of the situation between Colonel Stilwell and myself, we agreed that we could see no indications whatsoever that the Chinese would refuse a settlement of the incident, even if it involved further extension of Japanese military authority in North China.

On or about 12 July, Colonel Stilwell and I were informed that a settlement of the incident had been or was just about to be effected and Japanese forces were to be withdrawn from near Wanping. We visited Wanping on the morning of 14 July, and observed Japanese forces assembling on the road at a point about a mile east of the city. Some of these troops were actually moving east on the road toward Peiping. We visited Wanping and found all quiet there. On our way back to Peiping, however, we observed that the withdrawal of Japanese forces toward the city had apparently been halted and we saw some troops moving west again. We were at a loss to explain this apparently sudden development as we had seen or heard nothing in or near Lukouchiao which would indicate any aggravation of the situation which had prevailed since the night of 7-8 July.

On the morning of 28 July, I observed Japanese planes attacking an area to the south of the city of Peiping. I estimated this area to be the Nanyuan Airfield, about ten miles south of the city. Later in the day, I observed Chinese infantry straggling in to the city along the street which runs to one of the gates leading to the Nanyuan Airfield. These troops did not appear to have been engaged in combat, but something had evidently occurred which had disrupted their normal military organization.

On or about 31 July, Colonel Stilwell and I went outside the gate of the city through which the road runs to Nanyuan Airfield. About a mile south of the gate, we found hundreds of dead bodies of men and horses and quantities of materiel lying on the road, indicating that a Chinese unit had been attacked while in close column. Numerous wounded, still alive, were in the ditches on both sides of the road and in the nearby fields. Hundreds of corpses, rotting in the summer heat, were still jammed in the trucks in which Chinese troops had been riding when the Japanese attacked. It was evident that the Chinese unit had been taken by surprise and had had no time to deploy. Identification badges on dead bodies indicated that the unit was the Special Brigade of the 37th Division, 29th Army.

As the Japanese attack on Peiping on 28 July came from the south and this Chinese unit was moving north when attacked, I believe the Chinese troops had no aggressive intentions whatsoever and were seeking merely to withdraw within the gates of Peiping.

I was stationed in Tientsin, China, with the 15th U.S. Infantry, from October 1931 to October 1934, during which period I was assigned as Assistant Intelligence Officer and Intelligence Officer of the regiment. I returned to China again in July 1936

as Assistant Military Attache of the Embassy of the United States of America in Peiping, and have served in China ever since. The nature of my duties during the three years I was stationed in Tientsin, and during the year I served in Peiping prior to the Japanese attack on Wanping, afforded me an unusually fine opportunity to observe the conduct of Japanese troops in China during this period.

I consider that the conduct of the Japanese troops towards the Chinese during the period referred to was arrogant and offensive, and that their actions in many instances constituted an insult to and direct violation of the sovereign rights of the Chinese nation.

During a period of at least seven days, either late in October or early in November of 1931, clashes occurred in Tientsin between Chinese police and Japanese forces stationed in the city. The Japanese alleged that the clashes were provoked by the actions of Chinese police stationed in an area adjacent to the Japanese concession in Tientsin. I personally observed the measures taken by the Japanese as a result of the incident and, in my opinion, they were far more severe and on a much larger scale than the importance of the incident justified. At one time during the period of tension resulting from the incident, Japanese military forces were deployed in a position from which they could have attacked the large and important area of Tientsin known as the Chinese City. The Japanese officer in command of the force deployed informed me at 1600 one afternoon that Japanese forces would begin an attack on the area in question at 1830. The attack never took place. Why, I do not know.

During the first few days of January 1932, Japanese forces attacked and occupied the city of Shanhaikuan. The Japanese alleged they had attacked because of aggressive actions on the part of Chinese forces stationed in Shanhaikuan at the time. I visited Shanhaikuan two or three days after the Japanese occupied the city and made a careful investigation of the situation. I was unable to find any definite proof that Chinese forces had provoked the incident. Here again the measures taken by the Japanese appeared to me out of all proportion to the importance of the incident itself, regardless of the causes thereof.

In my opinion, the action of the Japanese in conducting night maneuvers near Wanping during the first week of July 1937 was deliberately provocative. The Japanese could not but have been aware of the strained relations then existing between Japan and China, and of the chances for misunderstanding and friction which might arise during such maneuvers. The fact that movements of large Japanese forces from Manchuria to areas south of the Great Wall began within a period of twenty-four hours after the Japanese attack at Wanping inevitably suggests that the Wanping incident was the carefully prepared excuse for the second stage of Japan's undeclared war on China, the first stage having been begun at Lukden on the night 17-18 September 1931.

Subscribed and sworn to before
me this ____ day of June, 1946.

COLONEL THOS. LORROW

/s/ David D. Barrett
COLONEL DAVID. D. BARRETT