

## Note on and about *Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto and His Manner of Death Re-considered*

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*Credo quia absurdum* (I believe it because it is absurd.)

Among the eleven bodies including the C-in-C Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's, there lay on the ground of that Bougainville's jungle one naval commander's in his olive-drab combat dress sprawled aground with his face up, his coat all unbuttoned, and one other naval officer's with the insignias of the rank of rear admiral in an immaculately white uniform, sprawled face-down on the same ground as if the latter had tried to crawl on his hands and knees so as to attend on Admiral Yamamoto. Of the latter's, the author of this article would like to take up on the closing part of this brief note.

The former body had been without much difficulty identified as that of Commander Kurio Toibana's or the Fleet HQ's Air Staff officer's. Born in the year 1903, and died in the year 1943, his life span lasted 40 years. When the young as well as old were dying in hordes, we could have hardly lamented upon his as the premature one. Nevertheless, the life span of this staff officer indeed overlapped the length of the motorized aerial flight pioneered by the Wright Brothers, at Kitty Hawk, on December 17, 1903.

Just a case of coincidence, you might say upon this curious overlapping; but when we consider this otherwise anecdotal occurrence within the scope of psycho-historical analysis, especially within the frame of our discipline, or in the scope of *psychological hysteresis*, we could hardly dismiss this as a thing trivial.

In the first place, the fact that his birth year happened to coincide with the very year of the Wright Brothers' powered flight, might have been carrying far more challenging import and implications for Commander Toibana. It looks particularly so for him, inasmuch as Commander Kurio Toibana in his *Strum und Drang* days had volunteered for the naval aviation, and died as the flyer warrior in the historical

mid-air combat.

In this connection, the author would like to call the reader's attention to the following other episode. He would like to have the reader's notice to the existence of the woman aviator or aviatrix whose name had been well around at least in the pre-WW II days, far well known than that of Toibana; that was, the name of an English lady pilot by the name of Amy Johnson. Born in the year 1903, and died in 1941, off the mouth of the Thames estuary, while carrying some important secret documents for the Crown, her manner of death is even now shrouded in the airs of mystery.

And, with rather scarce biographical materials available to this writer, there are as yet no further evidences that prove the undeniable notice by both aviators of the overlapping of their birth years with that of the men's powered initial flight. For all these, the writer of this research article could not help feeling the presence of comradeship or positive identification they must have been feeling towards the Wright Brothers.

For all that, when we consider these coincidences from the angle of human comradeship in almost any known profession, credibility scores for us to assure or assume that they had been in the know of the overlappings. In other words, both Kurio Toibana (1903–1943) and Amy Johnson (1903–1941) should have been carrying quite a load of comradeship affinity towards the Wright Brothers. Well, so much for this bold inference until the day on which we could find some more supporting evidences.

What seemed like the case of the Western Cultured naming or by naming the Japanese child as that of the Grecian Goddess of History Curio, is of course, a totally misleading as well as mistaken one. In fact, the parents of some village hamlet could not have named their son with such fancy Grecian legacies. Though homonymous in their sounds, Commander Toibana's first name Kurio meant nothing as such; it simply meant *Ku* (Everlasting) *Ri* (Welfare) *O* (Boy).

Nevertheless, as Toibana grew in his years of professional career, this seemingly secondary coincidence that could suggest the Western Cultural legacies also came to enhance a certain positive pseudo-hallo effect upon his person in his mid-career.

That was; when he was assigned to an overseas post as an aid to the IJN's naval attaché at the Japanese Embassy in Paris, he became quite a sports man among the *parisienne*. The fore-mentioned closeness of his first name Kurio to the Western (or

to be exact, the ancient Grecian Goddess of History) *Curio* might have played a trick or kick that drew a smile. The fast prominence this naval officer obtained in all his walk is not of extra-curricular activities as these. Indeed, early in his Naval Academy days, he not only placed himself above his classes, but graduated with the honor of receiving the Imperial Sword. This meant that he had been man of all-round abilities as well as performances.

Another distinguished point betraying in his career is his deliberate act of having entered the naval aviator's career; to be exact, this move itself had not been considered as a promising career in those days; yet, he had volunteered for it in dead earnestness, completely disregarding the officers' well-meaning counsel against it. 'Men of your calibre would do far better one of those days', had been the standard phrase spilled out of the mouth of out-moded senior staffs.

As the history proved, those old-schooled senior admirals found their oracle wrong; but like Cassandra or the prophet John, Commander Toibana and his senior Yamamoto had to die their heroic deaths.

No doubt, Commander (made Capatain after his death) Toibana had repulsed all these seemingly wise but worldly counsel and entered the world of the pilot training programs; furthermore, he went up to the Naval War College, once again getting the honor of receiving the Imperial Sword.

Inasmuch as such had been his vision, he must have paid due respect to that courtesy visit to Tokyo, in the year 1931, by Amy Johnson (1903–1941), the fore-mentioned British aviatrix, using De Havilland Tiger Moth named *Jason*. At the time of this visit by Amy, Toibana had been at Paris, serving as the aide to the fore-mentioned naval attaché in the Japanese Embassy there. And thus, should have been stirred by her feat of global aerial hoppings.

Nevertheless, Kurio Toibana had never been a civilian airman; in fact, he had served the Imperial Japanese Navy all through his life as a naval officer. And as such, he had been employing all his high-calibre intelligence, for the betterment of his country's national air defense. To be more specifically detailed, he had endeavoured in acquiring high-calibre knowledge and performance skills, especially in the field of aerial bombing weaponry as well as methods.

In this respect it should be reminded that such things as the high-performance reflector gunsight that came, to be sure in years later, to have been installed in the cockpit of the famous Zero fighter had been of the French *OPL*'s and the medium

attacker's bomb sight equally installed in the nose cockpit of the very medium attacker (in which Toibana himself flew to his death) was of the French designs developed, (studied, copied and adapted).

Thus, upon hearing the sinking of Battleship *Prince of Wales* and Battle Cruiser *Repulse* off the Malayian Peninsular, on the 10 th, December, 1941, no one but Commander Kurio Toibana was more rejoiced. While, as we now know, Sir Winston Churchill was writhing in agonies, eating thousand pieces of wormwood as betraying in his famed War Diary pages.

For all this, Lieutenant Commander Toibana's job had been, since November 1940 up to October 1942, at the Naval General Staff's HQ at Tokyo, as a member of the Strategic Affairs First Section, and certainly not at the Yamamoto's all-powerful Combined Fleet HQ. It was only after the debacles and defeats at the Midway and Guadalcanal campaigns that he had been called for the coveted post of Air Staff officer's at the Combined Fleet's HQ. His tour of duty had commenced on the 1st of November 1942 and abruptly ended with his premature death, that day April 18 th of the year 1943, or the hated anniversary of the Doolittle Air Raids to Tokyo and several other strategic points on our mainland.

Why had this able commander whose capabilities as well as foresight could have turned tide had not been pulled into the Combined Fleet's HQ far earlier than its actual execution, is again a case for everybody's surmising. But at present, and as the first reasonable reason, the author of this research paper would suggest that ever-important order of seniority system once again ruled out Toibana as the foremost successor to the job.

Nevertheless, it was in the midst of the grand changing stream that the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Naval Ministry had hand-picked Toibana as their panacea man.

Inasmuch as such had been the past historical and hysteresis-wise environs, it could be rightly surmised that he should not have un-buttoned all of his coat buttons, despite blazing sun and its ray effect on him in the glassed cockpit; alas, even this could not have been true, when we scrutinized the conditions that possibly existed there. As you might recall in my first part deliverance, Commander Toibana must have been sitting atop the stool-like seat inside which the retractable tail gear pipes were housed. This contraption was sticking out of the floor just afore the bulkhead that separated the compartment end of the plump Betty (this happened to

have been the Allied code name for the Mitsubishi's medium attacker for torpedo- and level-bombing).

And inasmuch as all the Japanese planes of the days had been minus such the extra comfort as the pressurized cabin (enjoy-ed by the Allied people then), the fuselage as well as the tail bulkhead corner could not have been raised to the roasting temperature condition, so as to force Commander Toibana's unbuttoning his coat. From this point alone, one could well guess the other version of the tragic last few minutes.

The above reasoning, in turn, makes it easy for us to believe, or at least reason that the said commander should have been living for some time after the tragic crash. This supposition, furthermore, seems to have clinched with the data of the so-called Vice Admiral Ugaki's diary description which mentions of someone moving across the aisle of the doomed No. 1 plane! Although, the writer of this research paper is forced to take up the position of at one time believing in the data offered as such, and at other time disbelieving, had Admiral Yamamoto been a real living C-in-C aboard, why his most knowledgeable and capable Air Staff Officer Kurio Toibana had not been seated across the aisle in the oval-windowed port-board sponson side? The fact that our C-in-C's body had been found strapped to a bucket-seat-like contraption that placed alongside the star-board side can only telltale the probable fact of the admiral's death or else he had been in the state of needing the medical attention; for the very person that had been occupying the port-board contraption inside the port-board oval sponson happened to have been that Fleet's Medical Officer Rear Admiral Takada!

It should be realized, furthermore, that the voice tubes and electric buzzers were placed all over the fuselage, from its nose to the tail-end Charlie's turret. So that the crew can hardly be needed to move, so far as each others' communications concerned. Had someone been observed walking to and fro in the cockpit, it could have been none other than Commander Toibana, who seemed to have tried to stop-gap every chance for the cockpit crew members to snipe at what had been going on in the rear.

In short, *j'accuse* (I accuse)! Not just someone, but practically all those people who have been pronouncing the Great Admiral should have succumbed in his heroic mid-air combat. In my humble view, they are not in the know of what they are doing or have been doing. Or else they are either lacking in integrity or courage.

Main References

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