LT. O'NEAL INTERROGATED BY SCIENTISTS

Peking, NCNA, in English Morse to Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America, Sept. 22, 1952, 0807 GMT--W

(Text)

Peking, Sept. 22--The following is the first part of the full text of the interrogation of Lt. Floyd O'Neal by the International Scientific Commission:

Interpreter: Would you give your full name, rank, and address, Lt. O'Neal? And also what instructions you received regarding bacteriological warfare?

O'Neal: My full name is Floyd Breland O'Neal. I am second lieutenant, U.S. Air Force Reserve, serial number AO1848575. My home address is Box 66, Moye Ave., Fairfax, South Carolina. The instructions which I received in regard to bacteriological warfare consisted of two lectures. One lecture was given at Luke Air Force Base in the United States at Phoenix, Arizona, on Dec. 1, 1951. This was a short lecture lasting only 30 minutes. The second lecture was given at K 46, the advanced base of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group in Korea here. This lecture was given on Jan. 2 , 1952. This lecture was much more complete on the bacteriological weapons which we would be using. This lecture lasted approximately 2 hours. Then the only other instruction I received, of course, was the order to carry out my germ warfare mission.

Andreen: At the lecture you attended did they quite clearly tell you that bacteriological warfare was taking place?

O'Neal: My answer to the question is, at the first lecture at the lecture at Luke, no, ma'am. At the second lecture at K-46, yes, ma'am.

Needham: Other questions, please.

Malterre: Mr. O'Neal, could you tell us how many pilots attended each of these lectures?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, at the first lecture which was given at Luke Air Force Base, there were approximately 70 students there, which comprised all the students at the gunnery school. There were approximately 40 from the F-84 squadron and 30 from the F-51 squadron.

Malterre: And the second conference?

O'Neal: At the second lecture there were only four of us present, who were 4 out of 10 new pilots assigned to the 18th group. We received it because we were newcomers.

Malterre: In accordance with your reply to this, can we take it for granted that at this base the other pilots had already received their instructions in bacteriological warfare?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, all the pilots had previously received instructions in bacteriological warfare at K-46.

Malterre: In this instruction, did they try to give any justification whatsoever for the use of this weapon, or did they just go ahead in a more brutal fashion of explaining the technical methods to be employed?

O'Neal: They gave no explanation whatsoever. The first lecture was given with the thought in mind * * * the lecturer said that the reason for it was to give us basic background in the subject. No other reason was given. In the second lecture here in Korea, there was no reason whatsoever. He went straight into the technicalities, the methods of using the bacteriological weapons.

Details of Capture

Malterre: Will you explain how you were captured?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, on the 4th of March, 1952, I was flying a rail-cut mission approximately 10 miles west of Sinmak in North Korea. At approximately 0915 hours I was hit by antiaircraft fire. My aircraft was disabled and I bellied in a ricefield and was captured immediately by the Chinese People's Volunteers.

Malterre: What did you feel like? What was your state of mind when you carried out this germ warfare mission?

O'Neal: Frankly, I was I think the most nervous I've ever been in my life. I also felt like--it was rather like a funeral rather than a usual mission. It's difficult to describe the feeling in these cases. Although I never wanted to participate in bacteriological warfare, I guess you might say I was cowardly enough to go ahead and do what I was told. These thoughts were certainly in my mind. They were in the back of my mind, you might say I tried to force the thoughts down like swallowing a very bitter pill. I tried as much as I could not to think about it.

Malterre: Although perhaps you may have rejected the thought at that time, you probably thought of your own family at home and the possibility of such a weapon one day affecting your own family. Did those thoughts occur to you?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, they did very much. That was one of the most horrible things which I went through, was knowing what I was doing was such a dastardly thing in defiance of all regulations of humanity. The most horrible part, of course, was the thought of retaliation, of seeing my own country, my own family being bombed by bacteriological bombs, plagued by insects.

Needham: Dr. Malterre said that he thinks he's asked enough questions and would like to hand over to others but he'd like to come back to some technical points later.

While waiting for questions, I'd like to take up some of the points left off and ask one question about the international code and usages of war. As I've already said at earlier meetings of this commission, I got the impression that in the British Armed Forces there are in the King's Regulations and Army instructions, there are some paragraphs which state the recognized usages of war, as for example the not shooting of prisoners and things like that, and I was wondering whether Mr. O'Neal has come across any paragraphs in the U.S. Air Force Manual which gave any inducation about the conventions of war, the treatment of prisoners and the like, and whether there is anything about bacterial warfare in them and, if so, whether it occurred to him that there would be a possibility of protesting on legal grounds against having to obey such an order. I think that's a very important and interesting point which ought to be investigated and brought out.

O'Neal: No, sir, I've never come across any paragraphs anywhere in any Army regulations which I've studied during my ROTC training or during my Air Force career which deals with anything similar to this, in other words prohibiting any weapons of dealing with the humane aspects of war. It was only after I was shot down, as a matter of fact, after I was captured, during my reading I came across the Geneva Protocol which specifically banned it. I had never heard of that convention before.

Needham: Any other questions, please? Maybe it would be a good idea to keep to questions of a rather general sort before coming to the more technical points.

Dr. Olivo: What were the reasons for you to give your testimony about bacteriological warfare, what you have told us now, and what you may have said at other meetings?

O'Neal: First, I think I should like to say that it was of my own free will that I gave this testimony. There was no physical, no mental pressure brought to bear. The only mental torture which you might say that I suffered was that which was in my own mind as a result of what I had done. Certainly it wasn't brought on by anybody else. It was brought on by myself. I actually had participated in the germ warfare as I had done.

Realization of Crimes

O'Neal: Following that up, I think I can say with the dictates of my mind and soul or heart, whichever you want to call it, it was just sort of wound up in me like a spring, like a clock spring or something of that sort. It was tight, and all of a sudden it was turned loose. I had to say it. It had to come out because of the terrible things, the suffering I had caused. That realization, I think, was the most difficult phase I've ever gone through. Mental development, if you would call it that, to realize the horrors, the damage which I was causing to people, the suffering which I was bringing them.

It was a desire also on my part to let the whole world know what was going on over here in Korea with regard to germ warfare and bacteriological warfare, to let everybody know the truth of the matter, to tell them, the world, how the U.S. forces were using this weapon against innocent people. The realization made me more determined than ever to speak out you might say my conscience was sort of locked up before I made my testimony. And afterwards, through this realization of a true desire to let everybody know about this inhuman warfare, I made my testimony to stand before the world help them lick those who instigated the use of this weapon.

Olivo: Did you consider at the time you gave your testimony that this would help in assisting to expose the facts of germ warfare?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, I did. I considered that surely the word of one who has participated in it, who has done these things, would carry at least a little force in letting everyone know about it.

Dr. Zhukov: Would you describe the reaction of your comrades when they knew that the U.S. forces were waging bacteriological warfare in Korea?

O'Neal: Well, sir, I can only describe the feelings which I observed in the fellow pilots who attended the second lecture, the other three pilots, because those are the ones whom I observed the reactions in immediately after we found out that the U.S. forces were using germ warfare in Korea.

Among those men and myself, I think the main thing was the sense of horror, or abhorrence. Certainly there was a great element of surprise in it. It was *** * as I said before, I felt that I was well on my way to somebody else's funeral. We'd been told that we were not to discuss this even among ourselves, and coming out from the lecture, coming out from having just been told this, no one said anything. The four of us were in what you might call stunned silence. I know that I was wondering myself why on earth we were using this terrible weapon in Korea, even while the peace talks were going on in Kaesong when the war was practically stopped. It's very difficult to say how the others felt--I could only judge from their looks and their actions.

That was the reaction which I observed when we first found out. Of course, the reaction later was quite different. I know from our observations of other pilots when they had been on the germ missions--they would be rather conspicuous by their silence, for usually the pilots would be very talkative among one another all during the day, telling each other what they had done, telling new jokes, the news from home, and those things. But those who had been on a germ mission would just be terribly gloomy. They would usually be found in the club in the evening, trying to drink away their troubles.

Needham: Now has anybody else got any questions of a general character before we go on to more technical matters?

Andreen: Yes, it would perhaps be interesting to know both the date and the place when you went on missions of bacteriological warfare.

O'Neal: The date of my first and only bacteriological mission was the mission on the 15th of February this year, 1952. Our target was the town of Sibyon-ni, in North Korea. There were four of us in the flight, each of us carrying two germ bombs, a total of eight germ bombs. We did not know what type of bacteria they were--we only knew that they were germ bombs.

Interpreter: You said bacteria in these bombs, did you?

O'Neal: Yes, germ bombs. I don't know what type of bacteria they were.

Needham: Well, we may come back later to more general things, but we might just go on to the more technical things now. I would like to ask whether in the lectures which Mr. O'Neal received there was any mention of encephalitis as a possible disease which might be spread. Of course, there would be the obvious sort of usual things, cholera, typhoid plague, and so on, the usual stock things, but I wondered whether any encephalitis had been mentioned.

O'Neal: No, sir, they were not. Only the common types of diseases were mentioned which you have just referred to. None others were mentioned. However, I wouldn't exclude that possibility because of the tremendous amount of work which is being done.

Olivo: Did they speak during these conferences only of germ warfare launched by planes? Or did they mention of the possibilities of artillery--germs or bacteria being fired by artillery shells?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, that was mentioned in the first lecture, that bacteriological weapons could be used in artillery shells. The lecturer only qualified to the extent that there were different types of bacteria which could be used in the shell and he went no further than that except to explain that the range of artillery was limited, whereas aircraft could carry the bombs much further.

Needham: Could Mr. O'Neal tell us something about the...were mentioned in the containers? For example, was there anything said about self-destroying containers, either which would break into a very large number of minute fragments or which might be made of some paper-like material which would set itself on fire?

O'Neal: No, sir, no such self-destroying weapons were mentioned. The first lecture was only a general lecture covering the general feature of it. The second lecture, the only purpose of bacteriological warfare which were described were the germ bombs of the various types which were in use by the U.S. Forces at that time. There was a mission of infected leaflets and papers, but that would be the only other weapon besides the germ bomb and artillery shells which were mentioned.

Malterre: Would you be able to give a description of the contents of the two lectures you received?

O'Neal: Yes, sir, the first lecture which was given at Luke Air Force Base was more or less an over-all picture of bacteriological warfare in general. There was no mention made of where it was being used. The lecturer began by telling us that it was secret. He then went into the fact that bacteriological warfare could be waged two ways, either by artillery or by bombs dropped from aircraft. He gave the advantages and disadvantages of both of these manners of dropping germs or bacteria-infected insects--that the range of artillery was limited, while the germ bombs could be dropped a considerable distance behind the enemy lines.

At this lecture it was also brought out that the U.S. Air Force and scientific men in U.S. research into bacteriological warfare were working on and had developed special types of bacteria and insects for use in cold climates. The lecturer told us that the bacteria themselves were made to be cold-withstanding by a process which he called acclimatization. That is, the bacteria were subjected to various small lowerings of the temperature at a time. When they could become used to the new temperature, then they would be--the temperature would be lowered still again, still lower. In this manner, the bacteria would become used to lower and lower temperature.

The lecturer also mentioned that special insects were then developed which could withstand the cold. These insects were being developed by crossbreeds, one insect which had the desired disease-carrying characteristics with another insect of a similar type which could withstand the cold climate. The offspring from each of these marriages would then be crossbred again with the cold-withstanding insect and gradually an insect could (be) obtained which was used to cold climates. The insect would have both the disease-carrying characteristics and be used to the cold climate.

Research Done at Aberdeen

That is about the extent of the first lecture in Luke. The lecturer was a Maj. Bethel W. Williams, an Air Force major. The officer who introduced him said that he had come from Washington especially to give this lecture. The major said that this work, this research, on developing the cold-withstanding bacteria and insects, was done at the special projects at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. The Chemical Corps and the Army Ordnance Department have quite extensive laboratories in Aberdeen. The work in Aberdeen is done both by men who are in the service, in the Army, who are specialists in their fields, and by Civil Service scientific workers, civilians who are working for the Government. And too, of course, the Government had leading scientists all over the Nation available for consultation purposes, when their own researchers run into difficulties.

The second lecture which was given to us at K-46 more or less took up where Maj. Williams left off. The second lecture was given on the 22d of January, as I mentioned previously. It was given to us by a Capt. McLaughlin, who was the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group intelligence officer. I don't know his initials, I only know he was called "Captain Mac" as everybody called him. He was about 30 years old, about 5 feet 10 inches tall, had dark hair which was beginning to turn gray.

We were called into--the four of us, 2d Lt. Pete Nibley, Jim Horsley, Greyell, and myself--were called into the group operations building when someone told us that Capt. McLaughlin wanted to see us. The captain led the way into a small debriefing room which is in the back of the group building. It's a very small room, room enough only for a table, and I believe there were six chairs. There is a small blackboard on one wall at the end of the room.

The captain began the lecture by telling us that, although our regular missions which we flew were classified as secret, we were still allowed to talk about them among ourselves. He told us, however, that what he was about to tell us now, the subject which he was bringing up, was top secret. Top secret is the highest classification given to military information in the Air Force--U.S. Air Force. He stressed this point several times, that it was top secret, and then he began telling us the technicalities, the technical side of germ warfare.

Two Types of Bombs

He said that insofar as the Air Force was concerned there were two methods of waging bacteriological warfare--two general types of bombs, that is. There are the airburst type, that is the bomb that bursts in the air. This type is used for carrying bacteria, no insects. The second type was the parachute-type bomb which is let down to the earth by a parachute. This type of bomb carries bacteria--infected insects. Of course, aside from the bomb there are insects--bacteria-infected insects--or the bacteria themselves could be sprayed from aircraft.

Interpreter: You said the spraying method--insects could be sprayed and also bacteria, both.

O'Neal: Both, yes, sir. The captain mentioned at this point that our group--the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group--was using only the airburst type of germ bomb and carrying out spraying missions. We were not using the parachute type bomb, at that time.

Needham: Speak on.

O'Neal: The airburst-type germ bomb, which carries only bacteria, resembles a regular 500-pound bomb in size and in looks--that is, it is about 3 feet long, approximately 1½ feet in diameter, only it does not weigh as much, it weighs from 150 to 200 pounds. The outer casing of this type of bomb is very thin, being only one-quarter of an inch thick. These airburst-type bombs contain approximately 100 pounds airburst-type of the jelly, the culture media in which the bacteria are grown. There is a small explosive charge directly behind the fuse of the bomb which is in the nose. There is not an awful lot of explosive, only enough to scatter the bacteria over an area. The fuse itself is in the nose of the bomb. It's what is known as a variable time fuse, or the airburst fuse. That is, it explodes the bomb in the air at approximately 50 to 100 feet. It's a radar fuse, operates on the radar principle, has a miniature radio actually in the fuse in the nose of the bomb, and this fuse is set up to explode at a certain height above the ground. When it reaches that height it will explode and scatter the bacteria.

The next type of bomb which the captain covered was the parachute-type bomb, which was used for dropping bacteria-infected insects. There were two general types, you might say, of the parachute bomb, the bombs which were dropped and let down to the earth by parachute. The first type was for carrying only one type of insect, in other words it was only ***. Of all the insects in there they were all of the same type inside the bomb.

This type of bomb had a mechanism in the nose which operated so that when the bomb touched the ground the bomb would split into two sections, into half as it were, and allow the insects to escape. This bomb had the same designs as the other germ bombs, 3 feet long, 1½ feet wide, thin outer casing one-fourth inch thick, and weighed 150 to 200 pounds.

Needham: Okay.

O'Neal: The mechanism for opening the bomb, that is, for allowing the bomb to split open was consisted of a switch which was in the nose. When the bomb hit the ground, the act of hitting the ground would close an electrical circuit. This switch was connected up with the battery and a small D.C. electric motor. When the motor was starting, it would pull a pin out of the latches which were holding the bomb together, holding the halves together. When that pin was released, the bomb would split open and the insects could fly out.