

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO. USSBS 252
(NAV NO. 60)

Place: TOKYO
Date: 1 November 1945
Time: 1330-1630

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: (1) Transports at MIDWAY.
(2) Transports at Battle of Eastern SOLOMONS 25 August 1942.
(3) Battle of TASSAFARONGA 30 November 1942.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi, IJN; Chief of Staff Second Destroyer Squadron, flagship JINTSU (CL), at MIDWAY and Eastern SOLOMONS. OTC at TASSAFARONGA. (This officer seemed particularly well informed. Also referred to several personal notebooks).

Where interviewed: Room No. 748 - Meiji Building.

Interrogator: Captain C. Shands, USN.

Interpreter: Lieut.(jg) R. P. Brown, U.S.N.R.

Allied Officers Present: Colonel Cole, USA.

SUMMARY

- (a) MIDWAY. List of transport force at MIDWAY. Sketch showing fall of bombs from horizontal-bombing attack 3 June. Also torpedo hit on AKEBONO MARU during night 3-4 June. No other attacks on transports. Loss of carriers during May and June 1942 necessitated reorganization of striking forces. Diversion of seaplane tenders and battleships for reconversion to carriers further reduced available Naval ships. Offensive war ended, defensive started.
- (b) EASTERN SOLOMONS. Transport KINRYU MARU (?) damaged and abandoned after dive-bombing attack. MUTSUMI (DD) sunk by B-17's in horizontal-bombing attack. Reinforcement of Japanese forces cancelled due loss of air support as a result of sinking RYUJO (CV) and damage sustained by SHOKAKU. JINTSU (CL) damaged by dive-bombers.
- (c) TASSAFARONGA. DesRon 2, while reinforcing Japanese forces on GUALCANAL, engaged United States Cruiser Force. United States cruisers damaged by torpedoes. TAKANAMI (DD) sunk by shell fire from cruisers. NAGANAMI (DD) received superficial damage. Landing operations repulsed.



TRANSCRIPT

MIDWAY

Q. What ships were present in the occupation force at MIDWAY?

A. The occupation force was divided into several smaller units as follows:

INDIRECT ESCORT

Second Fleet

Vice Admiral KONDO, N., CinC; Rear Admiral SHIRAIISHI, Chief of Staff

PatDiv 3
Rear Admiral MIKAWA

CruDiv 4
Vice Admiral KONDO

KONGO (BB)
HIEI (BB)

ATAGO (CA)
CHOKAI (CA)

DesRon 4
Rear Admiral NISHIMURA

NAKA (CL)
4 DD's
Supply Group and Tankers

Fast Support

CruDiv 7; Rear Admiral KURITA

SUZUYA (CA)
KUMANO (CA)

MOGAMI (CA)
MIKUMA (CA)

1 Tanker

Direct Escort and Occupation Force (Kuchiku Sentai)

DesRon 2
Rear Admiral TANAKA, R., OTC; Captain TOYAMA, Y., Chief of Staff

JINTSU (CL) (F)

DesDiv 15 (15 Kuchikutai) 3 DD's
DesDiv 16 (16 Kuchikutai) 4 DD's
DesDiv 18 (18 Kuchikutai) 4 DD's

CarDiv 11 (Koku Sentai)
Rear Admiral FUJITA, R.

CHITOSE
KAMIKAWA MARU
1 DD

4 Patrol Boats
3 Submarine Chasers
1 Tanker

6 Transports: KINRYU MARU
ARGENTINE MARU

KYOZUMI MARU
BRAZIL MARU

2 Army Transports
(Names unknown)

Special Navy Landing Force Troops.
About 1500 Marines for SAND ISLAND.
1000 Army for EASTERN ISLAND.
11th and 12th Construction Battalion (Setsueitai).
1 Survey Force.
1 Weather Group.
About 50 Marines and 11th Air Flotilla for KURE ISLAND Seaplane Base.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION (Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi, IJN)

(The MIZUHO was supposed to accompany the CHITOSE but was sunk by a United States Submarine between OMIYAZAKI and DAIOAZAKI May 1942 so the KAMIKAWA MARU was substituted.)

Q. What was your navigation track?

A. The Direct Escort led by the JINTSU departed SAIPAN, passed to the west of TINIAN, then proceeded to about 28N, 165W, then east to the rendezvous point 26-15N, 175-40E. Some of the slow transports started from ENIWETOK. We were given air coverage by the 24th Flying Squadron from the MARSHALLS and by the 26th from MARCUS. Due to a submarine report we did not quite reach the rendezvous point with the Second Fleet but changed course to the northeast. About two days before the carrier battle we joined the Second Fleet but operated as a separate force. We cruised several miles apart, at maximum speed ten knots due to slow transports.

Q. Did you zig-zag in formation?

A. Yes, the Naval vessels zig-zagged day and night; but due to the slow speed, the transports did not zig-zag. If near a submarine they would avoid by independent action.

Q. In what direction were you intending to approach MIDWAY for the landing?

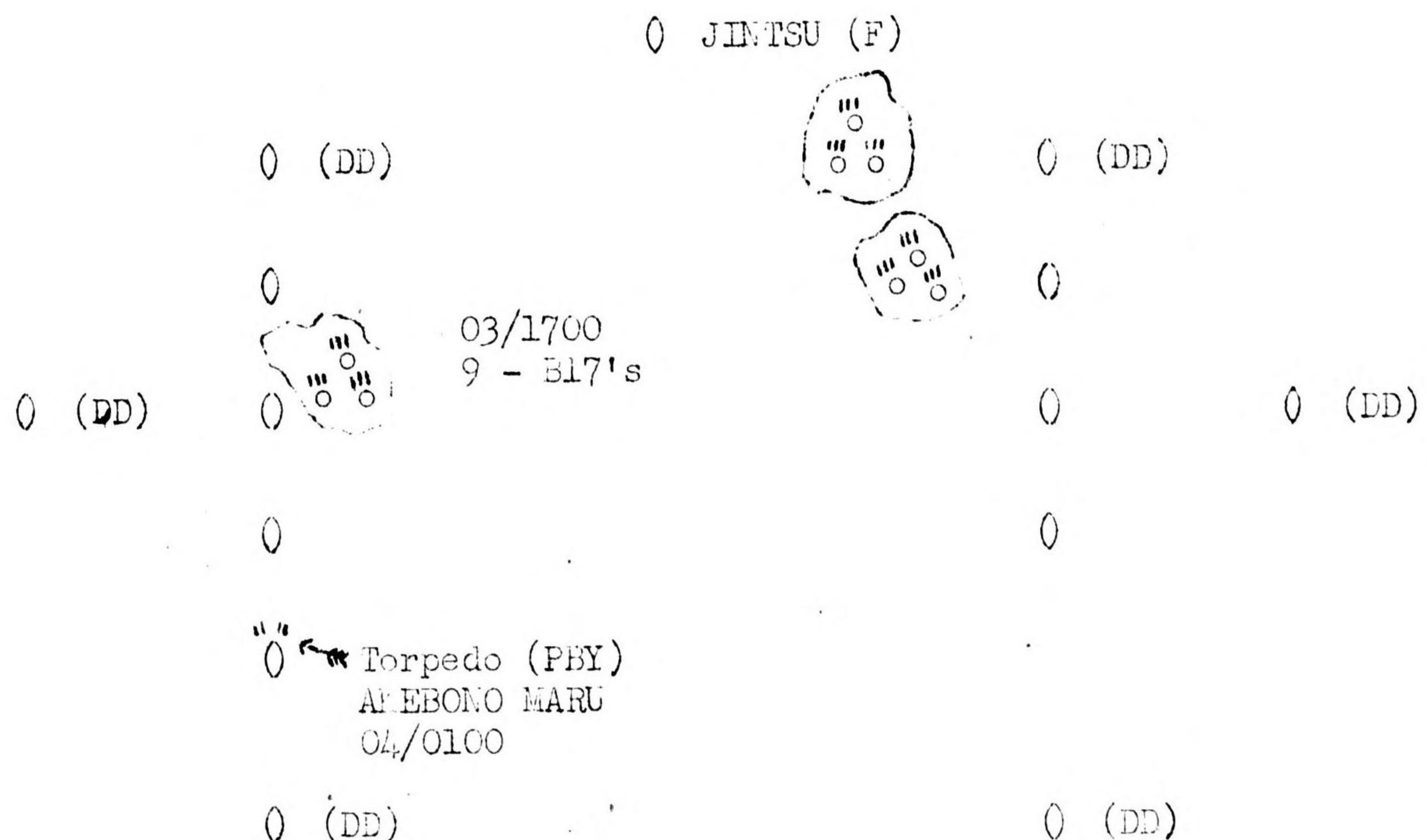
A. We were going to approach the south side, sending out landing boats as far as the reef. We had many different kinds of landing boats but did not think that many would be able to pass over the reefs. If they got stuck the personnel were supposed to transfer to rubber landing boats. We had plenty of equipment for a three month's occupation without help, but were not sure of our boats.

Q. Did you plan to send ships to PEARL and HERMES REEF?

A. No, only to KURE, EASTERN and SAND ISLANDS.

Q. During your approach were you attacked?

A. About 0915, 3 June, we saw one PBV circling formation about 600 miles west of MIDWAY, but no attack. About 1700 the same day, we were attacked by 9 B-17's. They were at different altitudes, between 5-6000 meters. They surprised us, but did not have time to open fire. The nearest bombs landed about 200 meters from a ship. No damage. (See diagram).



B-17 attack on MIDWAY Transports - 1700/3 June
PBV torpedo attack on MIDWAY Transports - 0100/4 June

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION (Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi, IJN)

A. (Continued) We saw 2 PBY's later but they did not attack. About midnight that same night we were attacked by two or three more PBY's. One dropped a torpedo which hit the tanker AKEBONO MARU in the bow. Eleven men were killed and 13 wounded but it did not sink, only slowed down. The PBY's also strafed the column of ships killing a few men but did no damage.

Q. Were you maneuvering during these attacks?

A. The Naval vessels were steaming about 12 knots, zig-zagging. The transports did not zig-zag because both attacks surprised us. They held a steady course at about ten knots.

Q. Were there any battleships or heavy cruisers in your formation?

A. There were none in our formation. Only the JINTSU. The battleships and heavy cruisers were several miles away.

Q. When did you retire?

A. During the night after the carrier battle we received orders for the transports to retire. The 15th Destroyer Group (3 DD) accompanied them. The JINTSU with the 16th and 13th Destroyer Group (8 DD) were directed to proceed to the carrier area and rendezvous with the main body in that vicinity in case of a surface action. CruDiv 7 (SUZUYA, KUMANO, MOGAMI and MIKUMA) were ordered to proceed towards MIDWAY. During the night the MIKUMA collided so the entire Division retired. The JINTSU and 8 DD's approached the battle area and saw one carrier burning. About the same time we received a report that the United States Task Force was coming, so we retired and joined the YAMATO and Main Body about 0855, 6 June (ZT-9). About 0900/Z, CruDiv 7 (SUZUYA, KUMANO), FOURTH Squadron (ATAGO, CHOKAI), EIGHTH Squadron (TONE, CHIKUMA) and SECOND Destroyer Squadron (JINTSU, 8 DD's) left the main body and went south to rendezvous with the MOGAMI in case fast units of the American Fleet were there. We rendezvoused with the MOGAMI at 0600, 8 June (ZT-9), about 28N, 171E; then proceeded due west to rejoin the Main Body and transports, joining at 1300, 9 June (-9). The entire fleet rendezvoused and refueled all day 9 June (-9). The fleet then proceeded west. Later some ships went to JAPAN, some to TRUK and the transports to GUAM and SAIPAN.

Q. While you were retiring were you attacked?

A. No, but we expected it. The MOGAMI and MIKUMA to the southeast of us were attacked on 6 June (Plus 12); MOGAMI damaged, MIKUMA sunk. We were trying to come between the MOGAMI group and the American force to help the MOGAMI. The destroyer ARASHIO rescued the survivors from the MIKUMA.

Q. Did the Battle of MIDWAY have any effect upon your planning?

A. The loss of five carriers in May and June with several others damaged made it necessary to reorganize our striking forces. We wanted to capture MIDWAY to prevent another air attack upon JAPAN similar to the attack on 18 April. We also wanted to use it for search as we did MARCUS and WAKE. We did not think the American forces were so strong as they were at MIDWAY. The loss of the carriers was later felt in our operations. We were unable to use seaplanes for long-range reconnaissance because we had to convert seaplane tenders, like the CHITOSE to aircraft carriers. We also had to convert the ISE and HYUGA (BB's) to carriers so they were lost to us for a long time. After MIDWAY we were defensive trying to hold what we had instead of expanding.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW (Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi,)

BATTLE OF THE EASTERN SOLOMONS, 25 AUGUST 1942.

- Q. What was your mission in the SOLOMONS Area in August?
 A. We were escorting special Army and Navy troops to CAPE DABIT on GUADALCANAL. I was Chief of Staff to Rear Admiral TANAKA on the JINTSU (CL). We also had four destroyers and four transports with us. The RYUJO was operating to the east of us. Sometimes we would see it. The SHOKAKU and ZUIKAKU were also operating to the east but we never saw them.
- Q. Were you ever attacked?
 A. Yes, the morning of 25 August we were attacked by dive-bombers.

We were about 100 miles north of GUADALCANAL proceeding south at about 9 knots because of a slow transport. About 0700(-9), about 12 dive-bombers attacked us. The JINTSU was hit on the port side between number one and two turrets. The Second Destroyer Squadron Staff then transferred to the NAGANAMI (DD) and the JINTSU returned to the homeland for repair. One transport was also badly damaged at the same time. I think that it was the KINRYU MARU.

- Q. Did you receive any other attacks?
 A. The JINTSU was not attacked again, but the KINRYU MARU and the MUTSARTI (DD) were attacked by B-17's about two hours later. The transport had been abandoned and was sinking. The MUTSARTI had stopped and was preparing to torpedo the transport when 9 B-17's bombed and sank it. A number of men were rescued by other destroyers. The transport was not hit at that time but was torpedoed by another destroyer.
- Q. Were those destroyers from your own force?
 A. No, we had retired a few miles to the north. There were four destroyers, I think from the Eighth Fleet. They had bombarded GUADALCANAL the night before and were to join us on the 25th as additional escort. They had been attacked by dive-bombers during the night but not hit.
- Q. Where did you go after the attack?
 A. We escorted the remaining transports to the SHORTLAND ISLANDS. The Second Destroyer Staff then shifted to the KAGERO (DD).
- Q. Why didn't you continue and land your troops at GUADALCANAL?
 A. We were ordered back. I think that it may have been because of the loss of the RYUJO and damage to the SHOKAKU. We did not have air support for a landing.

BATTLE OF TASSAFARONGA, 30 November 1942.

- Q. What ships were present during the Battle of TASSAFARONGA?
 A. Flagship NAGANAMI (DD), Rear Admiral TANAKA, and the Second Destroyer Squadron which was composed of the Fifteenth Destroyer Division (OYASHIO, KURASHIO, KAGERO), the Twenty-fourth Destroyer Division (KAWAKAZE, SUZUKAZE) and the Thirteenth Destroyer Division (TAKANAMI, NAGANAMI and the MARANAMI).
- Q. Were there any heavy ships present?
 A. No, just destroyers. The JINTSU was being repaired in JAPAN. No other cruisers or transports were there.
- Q. What was your objective that night?
 A. We had left BUIN on the night of the 29th, passed through BOUGAINVILLE STRAIT on course 090°, just past RONCODOR REEF; then south to RAMOS ISLAND, passed west of PUADIKI and BUENA VISTA ISLAND, then south of SAVO ISLAND. We were intending to land supplies and a few troops at TASSAFARONGA.
- Q. Did you receive any air attacks during your passage?
 A. No air attacks either going down or returning except flares which were dropped during the night action.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION (Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi, IJN)

Q. Did you have radar search or fire control equipment?

A. No radar of any sort. Visual fire control only. We received a wireless report from RABAU that some of your cruisers were present in the GUADALCANAL Area, but no details.

Q. Give a description of the battle.

A. We were proceeding on a southwesterly course between CAPE ESPERANCE and SAVO ISLAND, speed 15 knots. The ships were in column with the TAKANAMI on the port bow as a picket ship. Between CAPE ESPERANCE and TASSAFARONGA we had slowed to 12 knots, getting ready to land our supplies, when your ships were sighted. Just after we had slowed down and just before we turned, we saw two torpedoes pass ahead of us. You also opened fire at the same time. That was the first time we saw your ships. We immediately increased speed to 24 knots and reversed course. The three divisions made a simultaneous column turn, with the division leaders in the lead. We had practiced this turn for about a year and one-half at night. I had sent out a signal not to open fire with guns unless necessary. The TAKANAMI fired about seventy rounds and was the only ship to open up. Because it opened fire, it was concentrated upon by the American ships and sunk. It was the only ship sunk during the action.

When we sighted your ships, I sent out a signal to turn and to execute a mass torpedo attack. The destroyers fired as fast as they could. We saw torpedoes hit the flagship of your force and also hit several destroyers which were burning. Because of your starshells and airplane flares, I was afraid that your ships would follow us. Our ships were again in column about five miles north of CAPE ESPERANCE. I thought that your force would pass north of SAVO ISLAND and try to intercept us if we retired the same direction that we came in; so we retired at full speed to the northwest between NEW GEORGIA and SANTA ISABEL ISLAND.

Q. Did you return and land your supplies?

A. No, we returned to BUIN. We landed the troops and supplies later on 3, 7 and 10 December.

Q. Were any more of your ships hit by American torpedoes or gunfire?

A. The TAKANAMI (DD) was the only one sunk. The NAGANAMI received two shrapnel hits in the after stack. That was the only damage. Many near misses, no torpedo hits.

Q. Did your destroyers zig-zag during the battle?

A. We did not zig-zag, only increased speed.

Q. Did you have any ships present with just one stack?

A. No, only new type destroyers with two stacks.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

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Washington, D.C.
January 1946

Interrogation No. USSBS 252 - Sup
(Nav No. 60)

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(3) Battle of TASSAFARONGA 30 November 1942.

Interrogation of: Captain TOYAMA, Yasumi, IJN.

Interrogation by: Captain C. Shands, USN.

The attached chart(s) supplement Interrogation No. USSBS
252 (Nav No. 60).

Enclosure: Annex "B"

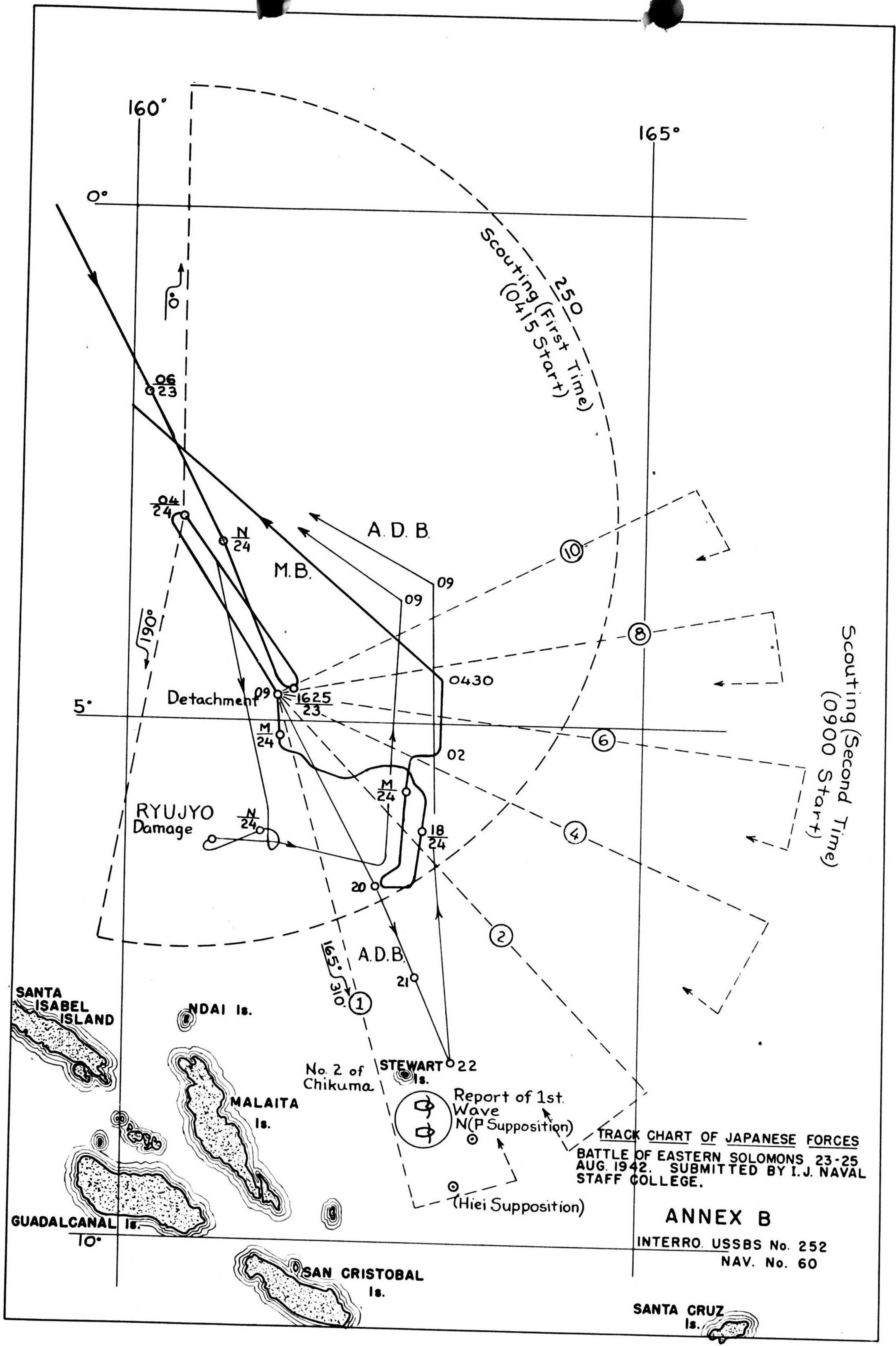


PLATE 60-2