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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 434)
NAV. NO. 91

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 23 November 1945



Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Shore-based Aircraft in the MARIANAS Campaign.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain SASAKI, Akira, I.J.N., served on the Staff of the Combined Fleet aboard the NAGATO, November 1941 to November 1942, from November of 1942 to March 1943 he was with the Naval Staff College in TOKYO; March 1943 to October 1943 he was Staff Officer of the 12th Air Force; from October 1943 to March 1944 Captain SASAKI was back with the Naval Staff College in TOKYO; March 1944 to July 1944 he was with the YOKOSUKA Air Corps at YOKOSUKA; from July 1944 to September 1945 he was Staff Officer with the 3rd Air Force at KISARAZU; and from October 1945 to the present he is attached with the KURE Naval Station.

Where interviewed: Conference Room. (Meiji Building)

Interrogator: Rear Admiral R. A. OFSTIE, U.S.N.

Interpreter: Lt. Condr. Seymore MILLSTEIN, USNR.

SUMMARY

The function of units at the YOKOSUKA Naval Air Station in mid-1944 was purely training, with no operational units stationed there.

As soon as the SAIPAN landing developed, attempts were made to get together the maximum number of planes for an early strike against the UNITED STATES landing force. At YOKOSUKA they were able to scrape up about 120 - 130 miscellaneous naval aircraft including BETTY'S, carrier bombers, torpedo planes and fighters. Of the pilots employed, only about one-third were experienced, the others being students. This conglomerate attack was launched on 18 June 1944 with the specific objective of attacking the land-beaches or the landing ships. Enroute, however, they became involved with UNITED STATES carrier aircraft with result that few, if any, reached the assigned target.

Practically all attacking aircraft were lost either through being shot down or as a result of forced landing and landing crashes instant to battle damage. However, approximately 50 pilots survived the action.

The Japanese were unable to employ regularly organized combat air groups from the Mainland for the simple reason they didn't have such groups available. The campaign against the MARIANAS was initiated before the training program had accomplished useful results.

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(No Transcript)