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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
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INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS NO. 461) Place: Tokyo
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Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division

Subject: ALEUTIAN Campaign, Deployment of Japanese Army Forces
in the KURILES, 1942 to 1945.

Personnel Interrogated and Background of Each:

Major SHIMADA, Masuda, I.J.A., a graduate of the Military Academy and Army War College, served as a staff officer throughout the war. As a member of the Military Affairs Section of the Army Headquarters in TOKYO, he presented the material contained in the following report in response to a formal memorandum to the Japanese Government (Nav. Memo. 26) requiring information of the Army activities in the defense of the KURILES.

Where Interviewed: Room 618, MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Captain J. S. Russell, U.S. Navy.

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

Other Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

The deployment of Japanese Army troops in the KURILES is given.

The retaking of ATTU by U.S. forces marked the beginning of a movement on the part of the Japanese to strengthen the northern island flank of the Empire. In the first half of 1943 the numbers of battalions in the north, central, and south KURILES were 3, 1, and 2 respectively. The 3 battalions in the north were augmented by an additional 3 battalions evacuated from KISKA at the end of July. As a reinforcement for the island forces, one division was being brought up to strength in HOKKAIDO. By November 1943 the so-called 'First Reinforcement' was complete, with the addition of an amphibious brigade and 3 battalions to the north KURILES, and an amphibious brigade in HOKKAIDO.

The spring and summer of 1944 witnessed a further and much greater increase of Army strength in the KURILES. This was a part of a general scheme for a strong island frontier for the protection of the Empire, in which the KURILES were the northern end of a line continuing south through the OGASAWARAS, MARIANAS and CAROLINES to NEW GUINEA. At this time the Army forces in the KURILES were augmented, in the north, to one division plus an amphibious brigade and an air brigade, - in the center, to one division less two battalions, - and, in the south, to two mixed brigades and one amphibious brigade. This deployment was backed by two divisions in HOKKAIDO.

In November 1944, because of the approach of heavy winter weather which made certain beaches impractical for assault, and which, likewise, made the supply of defense troops at these locations very difficult, most of the troops on the ONNEKOTAN-SHIMUSHIRU Island Group were shifted to PARAMUSHIRO, and those on SHIMUSHIRU, to URUPPU.

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The year 1945 found the Japanese island frontier well perforated, and this was reflected in the KURILES although considerable forces were maintained there until the end of the war. One amphibious brigade was removed to KYUSHU, and one to the KANTO Plain; while one division was sent to KARAFUTO.

The above deployment can be summarized in approximate totals of men as follows:

KURILES	1943	8,000 to 14,200 men,
	1944	41,000 men,
	1945	27,000 men;
HOKKAIDO	1943	17,000 to 20,800 men,
	1944	34,000 men,
	1945	17,000 men.

Those men were Japan's answer to threat of U.S. invasion from the north, via the ALEUTIANS. The men were not in action, except in defense harassing air raids, or against sporadic shore bombardment by light U. S. naval forces. However, they were required to maintain their defensive positions and hence were unavailable for combat assignment elsewhere. Moreover their supply and movement afforded excellent shipping targets for aggressive U.S. submarines. This resulted in a heavy loss of ships to Japan as well as a loss of about 10 percent of the total personnel deployed in the islands.

The report is given in the form of a series of charts, the last of which shows a plot of Army shipping losses in as complete detail as the destruction of official records permitted.

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