

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

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO: 309
(Japanese Intell. No. 15)

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 10 Nov. 1945

Division of Origin: Japanese Section, G-2, USSBS.

Subject: Fleet Intelligence Organization and Procedure.

Person interrogated and background:

NAKAJIMA, Chikataka, Comdr., IJN., staff intelligence officer for headquarters, Combined Naval Force (top tactical and administrative command in the Japanese Navy) from November 1943 until the end of the war. Previous career:

1926, graduated Naval Academy; to December 1932, sea duty on various ships, including seven months at torpedo and gunnery school; promoted to lieutenant December 1932; to May 1933, under instruction, communications school; to August 1934, duty at YOKOSUKA Naval Station; to December 1937, sea duty ships and staffs of 5th Torpedo Flotilla and 4th and 5th Squadrons; to December 1938, communications duty, Naval General Headquarters; promoted to lieutenant-commander November 1938; to April 1940, student at Naval Academy; to September 1941, communications duty, Naval General Headquarters; to July 1942, communications staff officer, 2nd Fleet; to November 1943, communications staff officer, 3rd Fleet; promoted to commander June 1943.

Where interviewed: Navy Ministry.

Interrogator: Lt. S. P. Ahlbum, USNR
Major R.S. Spilman, Jr., AC, AUS

Interpreter: Mr. John Taji

Allied Officers Present: None.



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SUMMARY:

1. The concept of intelligence at the Combined Naval Force, of fleet, headquarters level in the Japanese Navy was not a center through which intelligence matters flowed to higher and lower levels, but rather a center for estimating Allied strength and intentions as a basis for policy and operations orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief. Originally a one-man job, the section in the closing phases of the war had been augmented by eight other officers, most of whom had no training other than aviation administration and, from Comdr. NAKAJIMA's description, would be the Japanese equivalent of A-V(S) officers.
2. No intelligence summaries were prepared at Combined Naval Force level for dissemination to subordinate commands. In fact, situation plots and records were not kept until it became necessary as a means of training the new assistants, and until that time, the only Allied fleet order of battle at Combined Naval Force headquarters was, according to Comdr. NAKAJIMA, the one he kept in his head. The system was described as weak and unscientific.
3. Sources of information tapped by the Combined Naval Force intelligence officer in preparing estimates of the situation for the Commander-in-Chief were dispatch and written summaries received from the central information center at Naval General Staff Headquarters; reconnaissance reports, both from the air and from coast watchers, operational reports from subordinate units, and traffic analysis of Allied communications. No systematic reports were required from subordinate commands, although it was within the province of the Combined Naval Force intelligence officer to request additional information on the basis of the operational reports he received. Specific requests for aerial reconnaissance often were made and sometimes carried out. Photography was done by all reconnaissance planes, but the photos themselves rarely went to Combined Naval Force level; normally, information from the photos was sent by dispatch after examination at lower levels, where photo interpreters were assigned.
4. Full-time intelligence officers were not assigned in the fleet below Combined Naval Force level. Below that, communications officers had intelligence work as additional duty. Although the Combined Naval Force was the top tactical and administrative command in the Japanese Navy, the conduct of intelligence work in subordinate commands was not the responsibility of the Combined Naval Force intelligence officer.

Transcript of Interrogation: (NAKAJIMA, Chikata, Comdr. IJN)

Q. 1. What were your duties on the staff of the Combined Naval Force?

A. I was staff communications officer and later intelligence officer. For six months after I went to the Combined Naval Force in November 1943 I was communications officer, and after that I was intelligence officer until the end of the war. My duties as intelligence officer are hard to define, since intelligence in the Japanese Navy does not mean the same as in the American Navy.

Q. 2. Will you describe your duties, then as Joho Sambo with the Combined Naval Force? (NB: Comdr. NAKAJIMA was listed on the Combined Naval Force organization as "Joho Sambo" intelligence or information officer.)

A. My principal duty was to make estimates of American or other Allied forces, to make deductions on their movements on information received from the central information center.

Q. 3. What were your sources of information?

A. Both the lower fleet units and the Naval General Staff.

Q. 4. How large an organization did you have at the Combined Naval Force headquarters?

A. In November 1943 I was communications officer and had some intelligence duties. I had no men under me doing intelligence work, but I did have three officers and six enlisted men for monitoring radio transmissions. In February 1944 I got one officer to assist me in intelligence, and in October 1944 I got two more. In July 1945 five more officers were assigned to intelligence, but since they had had no previous training they were not much help. All my assistants, except the one I requested in February 1944, were reserve officers.

Q. 5. How were intelligence officers selected?

A. Navy Personnel assigned them. I requested the first man I got by name, and he was a good man. The others who were assigned were average, some good, some poor.

Q. 6. What was the background of men assigned to intelligence?

A. Except for the man I requested specifically because I knew he was exceptionally intelligent, they were mostly men who had just graduated from a school for air adjutant duty, or administrative work, after a month or two of training in writing orders, etc. (NB.: Japanese Navy A-V(S) officers).

Q. 7. Did you get any men with special intelligence training?

A. No.

Q. 8. Why were the men assigned to you selected for intelligence work?

A. I don't know.

Q. 9. Were you responsible for the conduct of intelligence in your subordinate commands - the Air Fleets, Surface Fleets, and Naval Districts?

A. My primary duty was following enemy strength and movements, and I did not have charge of intelligence units in any subordinate command.

Q. 10. Were there organizations similar to yours in the subordinate commands?

A. There were no groups charged with intelligence work, but in the lower units the communications officers had intelligence, as you understand it, as additional duty.

Q. 11. How far down in the fleet organization were full time intelligence officers assigned?

A. Only to Combined Naval Force Headquarters. Below that communications officers had intelligence functions.

Q. 12. Was the increase in your staff for intelligence duties made at your request?

A. Yes.

Q. 13. Did you request that full-time intelligence officers be assigned to subordinate units?

A. No.

Q. 14. On what information were your estimates of enemy strength and movements made?

A. I based them on information from both the forward units and from the Naval General Staff. Information from forward units included reconnaissance reports, reports from coast watchers, and an analysis of the amount and type of communications between your ships.

Q. 15. What sort of information did you get from TOKYO headquarters?

A. It was fragmentary and very general, such as a note on the meeting of generals and admirals at San Francisco or Pearl Harbor.

Q. 16. How was information from headquarters sent to you?

A. Urgent information was sent by radio or telephone, other by written document. The written material was not sent at regular intervals, but whenever it was considered necessary.

Q. 17. What distribution did headquarters make on the type of information sent?

A. I don't know, but I don't think it was distributed very widely. Some information such as material on airplane and ship identification was given wide distribution.

Q. 18. How did you make use of the information you received?

A. I would think it over and come to some conclusion. It was not a very scientific method.

Q. 19. Did you keep situation maps, plots of U.S. and Allied movements?

A. Yes after I got some help.

Q. 20. Where were these maps and charts kept?

A. If afloat, on the flagship; if ashore, at headquarters. From November 1933 to March 1944 I was on the MUSASHI; from May to October 1944, on the cruiser OYODO; after that, our headquarters were ashore at FUYOSHI, in the suburbs of YOKOSUKA.

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Q. 21. How were your estimates passed down to subordinate commands?

A. They were not passed down in most instances. I would give the information and estimates to the Commander-in-Chief who would formulate policy and issue the necessary orders. However, after I became shore-based I used to have conferences with officers of subordinate commands once a week.

Q. 22. Were intelligence or information publications issued by you to lower echelons?

A. No.

Q. 23. What information did you require subordinate commands to send to you?

A. As intelligence officer, none, but I got all the operational information available. Occasionally I would ask for specific information, such as more details on a new plane or ship they might report, from subordinate units.

Q. 24. Did you send any information back to the Naval General General Staff?

A. Very little, but headquarters would get the same information I had through regular channels. My estimates did not always agree with theirs.

Q. 25. Was there any exchange of information with the army?

A. Very little until April 1945. After April the Army held weekly conferences and I was asked to sit in.

Q. 26. How much information was received from Germany and neutral sources?

A. I don't know. TOKYO headquarters received and passed along that type of intelligence.

Q. 27. In making your estimates of Allied strength and intentions did you keep any order of battle or organization chart?

A. I kept the information in my head, but I required my assistants to keep tables and charts to give them experience.

Q. 28. How accurate do you think your estimates were?

A. I think they were fairly accurate as to the composition of your fleet. The organization of Allied fleets were broadcast on your radios. If the broadcasts were false my estimates were bad.

Q. 29. After naval battles the Japanese radio often announced the sinking of some of our ships in an obvious attempt to get information, sort of a fishing expedition. Was this done for intelligence purposes?

A. I don't know. If this were done, headquarters would have done it.

Q. 30. How much use was made of submarine for reconnaissance purposes?

A. At the beginning of the war a good deal. In the latter part of the war we did not have enough submarines for reconnaissance, and they were being used for other purposes.

Q. 31. How valuable was the information obtained from submarines?

A. It was reliable, but submarines are slow and the field of their vision is limited, so we did not get much.

Q. 32. How much use was made by reconnaissance by airplanes launched from submarines?

A. I don't know much about it, although I have seen reports of this type of operation. When I went to the Combined Naval Force left in this type of work, and the new ones being built for this purpose were not yet in operation when the war ended.

Q. 33. How much use was made of aerial reconnaissance?

A. The information received was good, but there was not enough of it. I often requested aerial reconnaissance and sometimes got it.

Q. 34. Did your patrol planes take photographs?

A. Yes, always.

Q. 35. How was the information from reconnaissance planes sent to you?

A. By radio.

Q. 36. Did you ever see the photographs which were taken by reconnaissance planes?

A. I saw some of them, but in most cases getting the photographs to me would take too long, so I would receive the information by dispatch telling what the photograph showed.

Q. 37. Did the Navy have trained photo-interpreters?

A. Yes, but none at my headquarters. The interpretation was done at lower command levels.

Q. 38. What were the principal sources you relied upon in estimating your intentions, as an example, while the MARIANAS campaign was in progress?

A. Aerial reconnaissance. A plane saw the fleet one day before it attacked, and during the attack we received scattered information.

Q. 39. What information did you get from prisoners-of-war?

A. We got none directly. Some came from lower units and some information from headquarters.

Q. 40. How accurate did you consider this information?

A. Information from prisoners-of-war received from below was scarce and some obviously false, such as names of ships I knew were not there. I cannot judge the accuracy of the information which came through headquarters.

Q. 41. What kind of prisoners-of-war information was sent from headquarters?

A. Intelligence summaries were sent to us and I did not know how much came from prisoners, since the summaries gave just the information and not the sources.

Q. 42. Were plane recognition manuals prepared at your headquarters?

A. No, they came from Navy General Staff Headquarters.

Q. 43. How accurate were your estimate of our intentions?

A. Sometimes they were good; sometimes bad. I predicted the OKINAWA line of campaign as early as November of last year and predicted the date of attack ten days in advance.

Q. 44. Do you consider this your most outstanding estimate?

A. I don't consider it outstanding, but other people were so far wrong that I consider it good. On the other hand I missed the time of the LEYTE attack; I thought it would be two months later. The preparations seemed too small for the PHILIPPINES and too large for YAP or the islands south of the PHILIPPINES.

Q. 45. What do you consider the main shortcomings of your Combined Naval Force intelligence as a whole?

A. It is not a matter of short-comings; the whole system was weak. With better intelligence we might have won the war.

Q. 46. The survey needs examples of the situation maps and plots you kept, and of the written intelligence summaries you mentioned receiving from Naval General Staff headquarters.

It is desired that you make a search and find some of these for us.

A. There are none left. All were burned on or before August 15. At my headquarters, it was reported that a transport had been seen approaching the Empire on 13 August, and although I did not believe it, I was ordered to burn all my material.