

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(Pacific)
APO 234 C/O PM, SAN FRANCISCO

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO. 352

PLACE: Kyoto
DATE: 9 Nov 45

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Military Analysis.

SUBJECT: JAAF 30th Flying Group (Sento Hikoshudan).

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND:

Maj Gen MIYOSHI -- Single engine fighter pilot, 30 years in Army; C of S, 5th Flying Div, Rangoon, Burma, Aug 42 - June 43; established Hitachi Training Flying Div at Mito, Honshu, originally as a branch of Akenogahara Training Flying Div, in 1943; instructor on air operations at Army Military Academy (Rikugun Dai Gakko); CG, 12th Flying Div, Ozuki, Yamaguchi ken, June 44 - Mar 45; CG, 30th Flying Group (Sento Hikoshidan), Mar 45 until end of war.

WHERE INTERROGATED: Japanese Liaison Office for U.S. Sixth Army

INTERROGATOR: Capt Chalmers M. Roberts, AC

INTERPRETER: Capt Dow Parkes, MI

ALLIED OFFICERS PRESENT: S/Ldr Edward W. Bloxham, (RAF) MI
1st Lt Donald Meiklejohn, MI

SUMMARY:

Offensive plans of JAAF in S Kyushu against Allied landings; regular and suicide units involved; plan for mass suicide attack on 16 Aug 45.



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Interrogation

- Q. Where were the Hq of the 30th Flying Group when you joined?
- A. Tokyo.
- Q. They returned to what place from the Philippines?
- A. Kyushu; later Ibaraki Ken and then Tokyo.
- Q. How many men came back?
- A. I don't know - not so many.
- Q. Why was it called a Hikoshudan?
- A. It was intermediate between a Flying Div and an Air Army.
- Q. Had the same distinction been used before? In 1942?
- A. No - the unit then called a Hikoshudan was what became an Air Army and was quite different.
- Q. What mission was assigned you by Air Hq (Koku Hombu)?
- A. Not from Koku Hombu, but from Imperial GHQ (Daihonei).
- Q. Who issued your orders?
- A. The Air General Army (Koku Sogun) to prepare attacks against Okinawa.
- Q. Your mission was not defensive?
- A. No.
- Q. When did you go to Kyushu?
- A. In May, I think. All our records in Tokyo were burned.
- Q. You took command after 1 April?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What units were under your command?

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A. I forget - about 500 planes; about 50 independent units (ground service) - 5 offensive fighter Flying Regts - about 40 or 50 Special Attack Units (TOK-KOTAI); the individual Flying Regts changed from time to time, but there were always about 5; in Tokyo we had the 16th Flying Brig, but left that behind when we went to Kumamoto, 24 June. We were at Kumamoto until 15 August.

Q. What other Flying Brigs did you command?

A. I commanded the 43rd and 59th Flying Regts in Kyushu.

Q. How about the 71st, 72nd, and 73rd Flying Regts?

A. Not in Kyushu.

Q. Nor earlier?

A. They were under the 16th Flying Brig.

Q. Did you command the 51st and 52nd Flying Regts in Tokyo?

A. Yes.

Q. And the 200th Flying Regt?

A. I don't recall.

Q. You always had five Flying Regts?

A. From two or three to five.

Q. Always fighters?

A. Yes - to provide cover for Special Attack Units.

Q. Had you recce planes?

A. Yes - one independent Flying Squadron (Dokoritsu Hikochutai).

Q. How many Special Attack Units?

A. About forty or fifty - some had only one pilot, some had only two - generally, they had six planes; when first set up, they were supposed to have twelve planes.

Q. Do those figures include reserve planes?

A. At the end of the war, six planes and two or three reserves constituted the standard.

Q. What plane types were employed?

A. Some trainers - some very good combat types.

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- Q. What per cent were trainers?
- A. Most were trainers - the better units were assigned to attack Okinawa.
- Q. Did you command attack groups (KOGEKI SHUDAN)?
- A. I was CG of them. I had three of them, at Chiran, Miyakonojo, and Kikuchi. There also were Special Attack Units at dispersal areas, but none at Navy fields.
- Q. Were you responsible for the defense of Kyushu against Allied air attacks?
- A. We never thought of defense.
- Q. No interception against Allied attacks was carried out?
- A. While I was at Ozuki (as CG of the 12th Flying Brig) I used to send up planes to 10,000 meters using oxygen - I myself went up once or twice a month.
- Q. Who defended your fields (in Southern Kyushu)?
- A. No one - we would have lost too many planes: we depended on AA.
- Q. What were your relations with the 6th Air Army?
- A. In Tokyo I was not under the 6th Air Army; I was under the 6th Air Army after we moved to Kumamoto. In central and S. Kyushu, we had 400 planes whose main mission was to prepare for attacks against Allied forces in Okinawa area: However, shortly before the war's end, a staff officer came to Hq from Tokyo with an order that those (suicide) attack preparations be ended at once and that I prepare at once for suicide attacks in defense of S. Kyushu against Allied landings by the end of September. I was to be ready by then, though the landing might be later.
- Q. How many Special Attack Units had you sent out before then?
- A. None.
- Q. Did you receive any orders from Gen Sugawara (CG of 6th Air Army)?
- A. No attack orders.
- Q. Did you have any conferences with Sugawara?
- A. Yes, I did go to Fukuoka.
- Q. Were all the attacks against Okinawa carried out by the 6th Air Army?
- A. Yes. On 12 August, a staff officer from the 6th Air Army ordered me to carry out anti-shipping attacks off Okinawa at dawn 16 Oct ("as soon as possible," said the orders). I planned to use 110 planes, including my own: About half the planes were to be trainers. This order was transmitted by a staff officer of the 6th Air Army who had heard rumors of peace moves in Tokyo.
- Q. Where did the orders originate?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Who was the staff officer?
- A. He is a very intimate friend - please permit me the privilege of no answer.
- Q. Why did he tell you about this? It was an order?

- A. Yes, it was an order: I intended to lead the attack myself.
- Q. Why?
- A. The men were ordered to die - their morale required that I go, too.
- Q. You thought the war was about to end?
- A. I didn't think about that at all - it was an order and I was carrying it out - as I carried out the order for the war's end.
- Q. Why did you not wait for the defense of Kyushu to go on a suicide mission?
- A. The textbook of the Special Attack Units (TOKKOTAI) requires that the commander die with his men.
- Q. Why in that particular attack? Were you personally ordered out? Did you plan to go because you thought the war about to end?
- A. The attack was, in fact, part of the "Ketsu" defense operations against Allied landings. I regarded this long-range attack as best, though others preferred to wait until the ships were near Kyushu. The problem was discussed in the 6th Air Army and at Tokyo. The first order was to prepare for Kyushu defense, but the 12 August order changed that to direct the Okinawa attack as soon as possible - to attack ships shown by our recon planes to number 300: I set dawn on 16 August as the time.
- Q. How many additional Special Attack Units (TOKKOTAI) did you expect to come to Kyushu before an Allied landing?
- A. A staff officer in the 6th Air Army told me there would be about 2,000 JAAF and 1,500 JNAF Special Attack planes in "Ketsu" operations. I don't know if that's true.
- Q. What were your relations with the Navy?
- A. There was no control - only cooperation: The commands were separate but exchanged staff officers - the 6th Air Army exchanged with the 5th Air Fleet (Hq at Kanoya; and after bombing, at Oita) - the Vice C of S, Aoki, of the 6th Air Army, was with the 5th Air Fleet.
- Q. Was the 5th Air Fleet to remain at Oita?
- A. I don't know exactly.
- Q. When you moved to Kumamoto, did you plan to continue training of Special Attack Units?
- A. I left at Tokyo all the units which I could for training - only my Hq moved to Kumamoto: The only training carried out in Kyushu consisted of one hour early in the morning and one hour in the evening of test flying and diving.
- Q. How many of your forty to fifty Special Attack Units were actually in Kyushu?
- A. About half - the best remained in Tokyo.
- Q. Were you handicapped by a shortage of gasoline?
- A. When I commanded the 12th Flying Div, I had twenty hours a month for training Special Attack Units. In a year, that was reduced to four hours a month.
- Q. How were your maintenance units dispersed?
- A. Most of them went with their units to Kyushu - each served a special type of aircraft.

Q. Did you plan to move them all to Kyushu?

A. Most.

Q. Were you satisfied with the maintenance work?

A. No.

Q. Why?

A. The maintenance personnel were unskilled; we also lacked parts and that kept us from the use of older planes - the serviceability rate for Special Attack Units was never more than 50% and generally 20% in Kyushu.

Q. You were once in the United States?

A. Yes, about 13 years ago; in Washington, D.C. as assistant Military Attache in 1936 with Saito. He was our best ambassador to the U.S., and had he been alive, I think this war would not have happened.

Q. When did you first begin to hear peace rumors?

A. Not more than two or three days before the war ended. I was very surprised. My young officers would not believe it. Seven officers of Special Attack Units committed harakari at Chiran, and others flew off to commit suicide. I have heard Admiral Ugaki did so - probably it is true. I don't know exactly.

Q. Have you any textbooks of the Special Attack Units?

A. No, they were all burned: the book says that the commander of a unit goes with his men, as according to the pilot's book of the 6th Air Army; Sugawara also was going to do so.

Q. What do you think of Tominaga (Lt. Gen. Tominaga, Kyoji, CG of the 4th Air Army in the Philippines, directed suicide attacks in the Philippines, but himself escaped to Japan and Manchuria)?

A. I don't like him: he is timid and probably now a prisoner of the Russians.

Q. What did you think of the Special Attack Unit as a tactical weapon?

A. I have many thoughts on that, three hours worth! Their spirit is duty to the Emperor. They were all voluntary at first, but later it was made compulsory and that was bad.

Q. Where did the volunteers come from?

A. Educated in Shiken Gakko (Army Air Academy) and at first, in the Philippines, they were mainly officers. In Okinawa, they were mainly NCO's who had been ordered out and their quality was not so good. Various unit commanders formed Special Attack Units in schools and Flying Regts. In some, all members were officers.

Q. Some Flying Regts were entirely converted to Special Attack Units?

A. No, only a part would be such units. When I was at the 12th Flying Div, I asked for volunteers. I got six from one unit and eight from others.

Q. Did you use skilled pilots to operate Special Attack trainers?

A. I used some pilots with 2,000 hours flying time.

Q. Wasn't that wasteful?

A. Yes, it was, but I couldn't stop it. I didn't keep any man from volunteering, though I did try to dissuade some of them.

- Q. Where did the men come from who were ordered into Special Attack Units?
- A. Training schools and all units including training flying units (Rensei Hikotai).
- Q. Had your regular training for Flying Dive stopped just before the war's end?
- A. Yes, normal training had about stopped. Almost all that remained was Special Attack training.
- Q. When you went to Kyushu, did you plan to use Special Attack Units at night?
- A. Yes, but the skill of the units was insufficient. My heavy bombers could attack at night.
- Q. Would you have used the Special Attack planes in Ketsu operations (defense of Kyushu) at night?
- A. Yes, by moonlight, within fifty Km of the coast.
- Q. Had you navigation aids - lights and radio?
- A. Yes, the guide planes (heavy bombers) would lead, not a Special Attack plane; these guide planes belonged to a Special Attack Unit, not a regular Flying Regt.

NOTE:

Following the formal interrogation, Gen MIYOSHI volunteered that he had a number of ideas on the Special Attack Units, and he was asked to explain them informally.

MIYOSHI said that the idea of compulsion in forming such units was wrong and was one with which he could not agree. When the Special Attack Units were composed of volunteers they got capable pilots, but compulsion, following losses, had lowered the standard of their efficiency. The idea of ordering men into such units did not in his view accord with the principles on which they were originally formed.

When asked where and when the idea for their use originated, he intimated that when the Prince of Wales was sunk, an accidental crashing had opened up the possibilities of such attacks as being more effective than the orthodox type. The most critical phase of the war was at Leyte (and it was here MIYOSHI thought the war was lost) and consequently it was natural that they should endeavor here to make use of their most effective weapon. But in the Philippines it was a volunteer force.

This statement by MIYOSHI was followed by a remarkably impassioned and emotional passage which resulted in the shedding of tears by the General. The substance of the passage was as follows:

He, like his men, was fully imbued with the spirit of Bushido. He had been assigned the mission of preparing his Command for "Ketsu". The offensive planned for August 16th was an essential part of that program. In the Special Attack code of procedure it was laid down that the Commander should lead his men into the attack. Consequently, he planned on the 16th to lead the suicide attack of some 110 aircraft himself. He was ready to sacrifice himself at this stage and to carry out the orders he had received from his superior and to die for the Emperor. Then came the order calling off the attack and the end of the war. As it was the order of the Emperor, he saw to it that his officers and men complied. But there had since been much unjust and unreasonable criticism of the Army which had resulted in victimization

that was not merited.

"I was ready as a soldier to die, to give my life. The Emperor announced the defeat of Japan and the end of the war. Very well, as a soldier I obey. But if the Emperor orders me into fight again, I cannot do it." (It was at this point that the General broke down and cried.)

In response to further questions about his views, he intimated that he thought it was opportune for the Emperor to abdicate since he, himself, signed the rescript that brought war to Japan. Incidentally, MIYOSHI thought that General Tojo was "a very bad man."

If United States troops were to withdraw quickly, he said, Japan would return forthwith to Zaibatsu and Gumbatsu and the old regime. It would need, in his view, a new generation to bring about a change and to that end he believed Allied occupation should last for a generation (i.e. for 20 to 25 years).

MIYOSHI said that since the capitulation, the Government's treatment of the Army was unfair and bad. Before the war ended, the prestige of the Army had been high. But now, all sorts of malicious stories and discriminatory treatment of demobilised soldiers were bringing the Army into disrepute and the General cited the case of his Adjutant, a reserve officer, who had been refused his old job at Tokyo Imperial University and was now "unemployed." Since the Army came under the direct control of the Emperor and consequently, reflected his authority, it was a bad thing that the service should be so smeared. But MIYOSHI did not blame the Emperor.

Those who really deserved the rebuke were the top few - the Gumbatsu. MIYOSHI agreed that the Zaibatsu should be broken up. But the Gumbatsu was the Zaibatsu - they were, to all intents, the same people.

MIYOSHI did not think the present government was good. It was more bureaucratic than the Military itself. Again, it was a case of the top few people wielding the power.

The order of August 12th was given to MIYOSHI personally by a Staff Officer of the 6th Air Army. MIYOSHI did not know whether or not the order originated in Tokyo, but the visiting Staff Officer gave him to understand that there was talk going on in Tokyo of a possible peace move. The instruction he received was to make the attack as soon as possible. He planned to carry out the raid on August 16th and reconnaissance had shown a large concentration of shipping at Okinawa. He, himself, would lead the attacks which were to be directed against the ships.

An attempt was made by the interrogators to determine whether MIYOSHI planned to go on this particular suicide mission because of the peace rumors he admitted hearing, but he would not give that as a reason. The following questions were raised in the interrogators' minds:

1. Did MIYOSHI, in fact, really ever plan such an attack by his planes with himself a member? Interrogators thought he probably did, but that in retrospect he was enlarging on the plan.

2. Was the mission planned in conjunction with officers in the 6th Air Army who were frightened by the peace talk and who wished to pull off a mass attack to demonstrate to those attempting to make peace that the Army Air Force could still pack a punch? Interrogators thought this quite likely and they consider MIYOSHI emotionally in accord with such anti-peace officers.

3. Was the mission planned because the officers felt peace was inevitable and they wished to strike one final glorious blow? Interrogators thought this also was quite likely and possibly more likely than #2 above.

No satisfactory reply was received to any of these questions.

MIYOSHI, like most of the JAAF generals interrogated in the field by this field team, stated that when his present work is over he intends to take quietly to farming. He stated that eleven of his near relatives were killed at Hiroshima.