

HEADQUARTERS  
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO #234  
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. 516

PLACE: TOKYO.

DATE: 29 November 1945.

Division of Origin: Military Analysis, Ground Branch.

Subject: Invasion of Java by 16th Army.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Major General TAKASHIMA, Tatsuhiko, who was on staff of 16th Army from November 1941 to May 1942, during which time the invasion of Java was accomplished. For further detail on background see interrogation of same officer dated 24 November 1945.

Where interviewed: Room 238, Meiji Building.

Interrogator: Colonel J. F. Rodenhauser.

Interpreter: Lt (jg) McCoy.

SUMMARY

General TAKASHIMA could produce no documents on the subject and gave all details and facts from memory. He outlined the routes followed by the various invasion forces in the approach to Java. The main force was under the command of Lt-General Imamura, who later set up headquarters at Batavia, Java. The total strength of the invasion forces was 50,000 with the main force comprising some 20,000 of this number.

Singapore fell while the force was enroute to Java; hence, in order to move faster off-loaded its heavy equipment at rear area bases while enroute. Heavy opposition was not expected, as Singapore fell a month earlier than had been expected. Because of weather conditions the Java operation was behind schedule. Invasion was made without having initial neutralization of air fields on Java; hence, received air attacks. Just before the main force made landings it lost four (4) transports to the high speed torpedo boats of the Dutch Fleet. The ship on which General Imamura was located was sunk, but the General was saved. However some of his staff was lost along with the Propaganda Teams which were considered of great importance in winning over the 45 million people in Java.

The landing was made on 1 March 1942 and by 7 March 1942 the principal cities and areas of Java had been captured. Very little ammunition was expended in the week of fighting.

General Takashima stated that the 16th Army thought that the plan was to seize the important oil areas of the Indies then negotiation with the United States would follow with Japan getting oil concessions in these areas after which the Japanese would withdraw. However, Tojo and his group on their own initiative went ahead with the idea of permanently holding such areas as Java. General Takashima states that as the convoy approached Java it sighted the USS HOUSTON'S presence indicated that negotiations with the United States had already been consummated and that they were returning to their original bases without having to invade Java. He had no idea that a naval engagement was in progress, as radio silence was being strictly observed.

Q. What were your duties in the 16th Army?

A. I was Chief of Operations, including Air Intelligence and Propaganda.

Q. Describe the events leading up to the actual invasion of Java.

A. I have no documents, as they were lost in the Air Raids on Tokyo; so I shall have to speak from memory only. We had a total force of approximately 50,000 troops, some 20,000 of them comprising the main force. General Imamura was in command. There were several different routes followed by the various forces in the approach to Java. The 48th Division was pulled out of the Philippines fighting and assigned to the 16th Army; it landed finally at Soerabaya. The 38th Division which was to occupy Hongkong was sent from China down to participate in the invasion. The main force came down by way Cameroon to Palembang and finally Batavia, where its headquarters were set up. Singapore had fallen a month earlier than expected; so it was decided to speed up Java operation. The elimination of Singapore took away the threat of the British; so we expected very little opposition to our move to Java. We stopped at various rear area bases and off-loaded our heavy equipment, horses and wagons so that we could travel lighter and faster. Our attack on Java was a bit later than planned, because we had had weather which delayed us. We started the landing operations about 1 March 1942, and were attacked by aircraft from secret fields on Java and by high speed torpedo boats of the Dutch Fleet. The latter sank four of our transports. Lt-General Imamura was aboard one of them, but he was saved. We lost some of his staff and the Propaganda teams. This was particularly bad, as we attached great importance to the propaganda which was to be started immediately to influence the 45 million people of Java. The transports thus were principally Headquarters Ships and carried mostly personnel. By March 4th we had located and put out of operation the secret landing fields and received no more air attacks. Opposition to our landing was very light, and we expended very small amounts of equipment and ammunition. We captured Java by 7th of March; so it didn't take very much effort.

Q. Where were your main supply bases set up to provide support?

A. Ammunition and rice were to come from Japan. The other bases were in Formosa, Cameroon, Batavia and Soerabaya. I was only in Java until May 1942; so don't know what happened after that.

Q. Was the 16th a well-equipped, well-trained army?

A. Yes, it was composed of crack troops from Yamashita in Shingapore and the 14th Army in the Philippines.

Q. Were there any plans for further expansion beyond Java and Timor?

A. We considered it necessary to go to Port Darwin to hold Java, but we did not plan to do it.

Q. Why not?

A. General Staff Headquarters in Tokyo said "no".

Q. When did you get that order from General Headquarters?

A. Possibly after I left in May. We were prepared to move; we had even made a study of the government in New Caledonia, as we had considered going there too for nickel. This was given up no doubt due to a lack of ships. We were not allowed to express our opinions, but we thought that after we had taken the Netherlands East Indies we would be able to negotiate for oil with the United States and then withdraw. However Tojo and his group on their own went ahead. The reason I think this is because, when our transports were approaching Java under navy escort and the USS HOUSTON was sighted, the transports reversed their course and headed back in the direction from which we had come. We in the

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army thought that negotiations with the United States had already been completed and that we would not have to go on to Java. We did not know that there was a sea battle in progress. The fact that the British at Singapore and the Americans in the Philippines were being defeated influenced our thinking that negotiations had perhaps been effected. Many of the army people with whom I had talked in China in 1940 felt that fighting in the Philippines was unavoidable in order to provide bases for the southern movement.

- Q. How rapidly did you pursue the development of the resources of Java and their shipment to Japan?
- A. While I was there, we were unable to do anything because destruction by the Dutch of the Palembang refineries would take a year to repair. The oil was actually flowing into the sea from the hills, but we were unable to send it to Japan.
- Q. To what extent did you fortify and improve the defenses of Java for warding off possible counter-attack from us?
- A. We just had plans to put up barbed-wire as a shore barrier.
- Q. Why didn't you go ahead and provide further defenses?
- A. I believe because GHQ did not consider the United States capable of making a full scale attack for sometime. The men back at GHQ in Tokyo were incapable of making plans for over-all strategy. This was because all of the capable officers had been gotten out of Tokyo and replaced with incompetent officers of limited experience.
- Q. Why didn't GHQ decide to press on through New Guinea and the Solomons?
- A. The areas were divided between the army and the navy. The navy was responsible for everything west of Timor. We didn't have enough men to occupy the islands. It would have been impossible in view of China and the possibility of Russia from a man-power point of view. We considered it best to make diplomatic overtures to U.S. after the Java conquest.
- Q. How soon after March 1 did you concentrate air power and gain control of the air?
- A. We had control of the air when we landed and had cleared all of the secret fields by March 4.
- Q. What levels of supplies did you have in your depots at the time of the invasion of Java?
- A. We had one month of supplies under old conception- only one week under modern methods of fighting.
- Q. How much in the way of supplies did the troops actually have with them?
- A. Sufficient for one week. Each soldier had two days of rice, two days of bread and one full week's ammunition in the combat trains.
- Q. How soon after your landing did you plan on receiving replenishment supplies from transports for troops ashore?
- A. Our rear echelon came within a week with full supply before the original supply was consumed. Rice came from Saigon and Thailand.

- Q. Did the 16th Army stay in the Java area or move elsewhere later?
- A. It remained in Java to the end of the war.
- Q. Some of your troops came from cold climates; did they experience any difficulties in Java because of the warmer climate?
- A. The troops that came from Sendai (2nd Division) were crack troops, but since they were used to a cold country, their efficiency was lowered by the climate in Java. Morale was extremely high as it was a peaceful land without much fighting. There were about 50,000 Japanese to 100,000 Dutch and natives. We treated the prisoners very well and had a good time.
- Q. What effect did disease have on your troops?
- A. Not much sickness - small amount of pests and malaria.
- Q. How much in the way of equipment and supplies did you capture?
- A. Huge amounts of rifles, but not much ammunition for field guns. About five to six thousand cars and trucks of which we could use one or two thousand. The others were used as sources of spare parts to maintain the ones running.
- Q. Earlier you stated that the 16th Army remained in Java throughout the war. Didn't any of your troops see action elsewhere?
- A. Yes. I meant that the 16th Army as such stayed in Java. The headquarters remained in Batavia. The 2nd Division was pulled out and sent to Guadalcanal. The 48th Division occupied Timor, the 38th Division was withdrawn westward somewhere. We had a guard force of two brigades on Java finally.
- Q. Why was the 2nd Division sent to Guadalcanal?
- A. I don't know, but I believe it was sent at the navy's request just previous to your invasion of Guadalcanal.
- Q. Did you believe that had you held Guadalcanal you could hold us east of Java and therefore would not have to fortify Java?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Is it your opinion that the eastward movement of your forces was an over-extension at that time?
- A. At the time of Guadalcanal I was in Manchuria. Crack troops were withdrawn from Manchuria to occupy the many islands of the Pacific. I opposed very strongly the taking of these fine troops and placing them in these islands, as they then became virtually prisoners. We lost upwards of 300,000 excellent fighting men this way. All the generals on the continent felt this way about the dissipation of our strength. However, the military was under even greater suppression than the civilians and had to do exactly as the top command dictated.
- Q. Then you would say that Tojo was very comparable to Hitler in the manner in which he conducted things?
- A. Yes, exactly. However, everyone felt that it would be terrible to lose the war; so we did all we could to win. I gave my best efforts even at the end in preparing the defenses of the Kanto Plain area. As we lost our air power and our shipping, particularly our navy, the supply problems in the Java area became impossible. Our supply situation progressively deteriorated from Guadalcanal on. In the Burma area the supply problem was very difficult from almost the beginning. It was definitely in the Philippines where we lost our air and sea power. From then on it was very bad for us.

- Q. To what do you attribute your supply problems ships or lack of production?
- A. First, because of ship sinkings, and then later lack of production due to lack of raw materials.
- Q. Knowing your capabilities both tactically and logistically at the time, how did you feel about the situation on December 8, 1941?
- A. I, and many other top ranking officers, felt that we should have negotiated with the United States both before and after December 8.
- Q. Do you blame the Japanese army's defeat on the top level, GHQ, planning or what?
- A. A great many people both in and out of the army agreed that Japan should surrender. The planners and top commanders did not understand the full conditions. From January 1, 1945 the very heart of the country was pressed, but the fighting spirit increased, because they knew they had to fight and were going to fight. The most trustworthy men in Japan now for works of peace are the same military men who obeyed the order to carry on the fight. I understand that the Americans are anxious lest this group be secretly organize. That is absolutely not so - it will never be.
- Q. Who was responsible for the protection of the Lines of Communication?
- A. West of 120° (line through Timor) Army Air was responsible, with a small amount of navy. East of that line the navy was responsible.
- Q. Were local commanders responsible for protection of the lines of communication or was Tokyo?
- A. Army area commanders were responsible, I believe. The navy was under central control.
- Q. What was your reaction to the Imperial Rescript?
- A. I felt a great sadness at the time, but felt that I must follow the Emperor and his words. It was unavoidable. The Army was confident, but the people would be exterminated; so what good is it to have an army if it cannot protect the people. I have been considered an idealist for years, because my ideas of the army were that it existed to permit the people to live. If it cannot help the people to live, then there is no good in having the army.