

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS NO. 233)
(NAV NO. 58)

Place: Tokyo
Date: 3 November 1945
Time: 1330 - 1645

Division of origin: Naval Analysis Division

Subject: Battle of SURIGAO STRAIT

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Commander **MORI, Kokichi**, IJN, was Torpedo Officer on the staff of Vice Admiral SHIMA, CinC 5th Fleet, from March 1944 to February 1945, and in this capacity took part in the night action in SURIGAO STRAIT in October 1944. He was Captain of destroyer, **YUNOSUKI** from December 1941 to August 1942; Staff of 16th Squadron from August 1942 to February 1943; Captain of destroyer, **SATOKAZE** from March 1943 to May 1943; Student, Naval Staff College from May 1943 to February 1944; Staff of 5th Fleet from March 1944 to February 1945; Navy Headquarters from February to September 1945.

Where interviewed: Heiji Building, Room 748

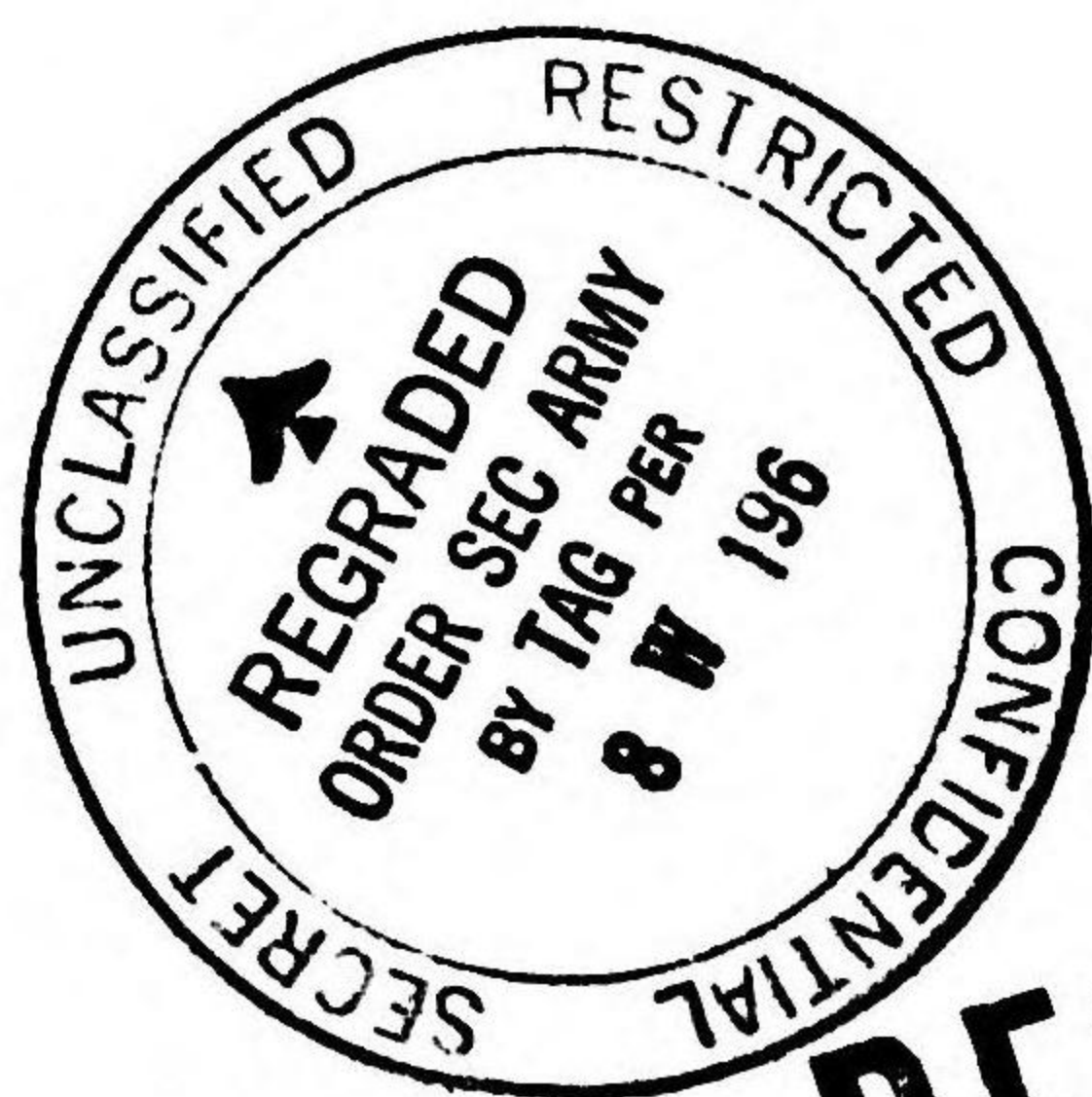
Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. J.A. Field, Jr., USNR

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. S. Hillstein, USNR

Allied Officers Present: None

SUMMARY

Commander MORI discusses the composition of the Japanese 5th Fleet in the latter part of 1944 and its planned assignment in the defense of the shrinking Japanese perimeter. He tells the story of their abortive sortie against the crippled United States 3rd Fleet and of their part in the Battle of SURIGAO STRAIT. The interrogation clarifies the hitherto puzzling question of why two apparently separate Japanese forces were present in that battle, and provides interesting information on the quality of Japanese operational planning at that period of the war.



RESTRICTED

TRANSCRIPT

Q. What was your duty on the Staff of the 5th Fleet?

A. I was Torpedo Officer, I was in charge of torpedo action.

Q. Were you on the same ship as Admiral SHIMA or were you on the destroyer flagship?

A. I was on the fleet flagship.

Q. I would like to know what the composition of the 5th Fleet was, what ships formed the 5th Fleet in October 1944.

A. The 5th Fleet was composed as follows:

21st Squadron (first section)

NACHI (CA)
ASHIGARA (CA)

1st Torpedo Squadron

ABUKUYA (CL)
SHIRANUHI (DD)
KASUMI (DD)
USHIO (DD)
AKEBONO (DD)

Q. Were TAMA and KISO in this fleet?

A. TAMA and KISO belonged to this fleet before this action. Just before this action, two of them went to other fleets, TAMA to OZAWA's Fleet, I do not remember about the other. I think it was about October 10th; this 5th Fleet was originally a part of OZAWA's fleet.

Q. Do you mean, for example, it was part of OZAWA's fleet in the MARIANAS action?

A. This 5th Fleet was assigned to the defense of the northern part of JAPAN and stationed at OMINATO. In August of 1944 they were attached to OZAWA's fleet - to the 1st Mobile Fleet, that is; not to the 3rd Fleet

Q. Was the 16th (cruiser) Squadron ever a part of the 5th Fleet?

A. The 16th Squadron was for a time a part of the 5th Fleet; those cruisers were attached to the 5th Fleet for a very short period from October 20 to October 24. Just before the SURIGAO Battle they were separated from the 5th Fleet.

Q. You left the INLAND SEA on the 14th of October, is that correct?

A. Left the INLAND SEA at midnight 14-15 October.

Q. For what purpose did you leave the INLAND SEA; what was the purpose of this sortie?

A. To attack the remainder of your fleet after the battle off FOMOSA, also to take care of Japanese survivors of the air crews which were shot down.

Q. Why did you not continue, why did you turn westward to ANAMI-O-SHIMA?

A. When we came down we found your task force very strong, so we changed course, intending to watch the development of the Japanese air attack from FOMOSA.

Q. Originally, however, had you been informed that our fleet was greatly weakened?

A. Although we knew the American task force was around we were not sure of the strength and location, we did not know the exact strength of the task force.

On the other hand, Japanese strength was not strong enough to face American task force face to face; so our mission was to find a remnant of American force and center attack on weak point. We expected that there must be quite a number of damaged vessels around here, so our intention was to give an attack on those ships, not touching the sound force.

- Q. At the time of this sortie, was the 5th Fleet just the 21st (cruiser) Squadron and the 1st (destroyer) Squadron?
- A. One or two destroyers of this 1st Squadron were delayed on account of repair, one or two destroyers were not there.
- Q. However, there were no cruisers on other heavy ships except for NACHI, ASHIGARA, and ABUKUMA?
- A. Those were all the cruisers, that is correct; no battleships.
- Q. After your force retired to AMAMI-O-SHIMA, what was your next mission?
- A. At the time when they left AMAMI-O-SHIMA, the operation of KURITA's fleet was not decided yet; so the order was for us to come to BAKO and await further instructions.
- Q. Was it intended at that time that the 5th Fleet should go to LINGGA and join KURITA's fleet there; was that ever intended?
- A. There was not intention like that.
- Q. For whose instructions were you to wait at BAKO-for instructions from OZAWA, TOYODA, or KURITA? How did your movement depend on KURITA?
- A. Waited for instruction from TOYODA. It did not exactly depend on KURITA's movement but that is one factor. Headquarters did not know exactly for what purpose they should use this fleet because there were chances of joining to KURITA's fleet or to OZAWA's fleet or to reinforce the PHILIPPINES by transport of Army troops from FORMOSA; so we had to wait anyway until TOKYO Headquarters decided.
- Q. Was it at BAKO that you were joined by the 16th Squadron?
- A. 16th Squadron did not join us. They came under command of the 5th Fleet; but, however, did not join with it in the action.
- Q. Where was the 16th Squadron at this time when they reported to your command?
- A. When we were at BAKO, the 16th Squadron was engaged in transport of troops into the Central PHILIPPINES.
- Q. Then when you left BAKO what was your mission?
- A. We knew the movement of KURITA's fleet and the order was to cooperate with KURITA's fleet and attack LEYTE.
- Q. You were instructed to attack LEYTE; you knew that when they left BAKO?
- A. Yes, we knew that.
- Q. Was it specified when you left BAKO where you should join and how you should cooperate with KURITA's fleet?
- A. Not to join his fleet, we would not do that. The instruction was to cooperate with KURITA's fleet by coming from the south, the mission was to support or cooperate with KURITA's fleet coming from the south, and it consequently happened that we cooperated with NISHIMURA's fleet.
- Q. When you left BAKO did you know that NISHIMURA's fleet was also intended to approach from the south?
- A. I am not quite sure but am inclined to think that NISHIMURA's movement became known after we left BAKO.

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We did not know the exact course of NISHIMURA's fleet, but knew his fleet would come to LEYTE on the 25th.

Q. When you left BAKO did you believe you would have to force the entrance to SURIGAO STRAIT alone, or did you believe you would have the assistance of other ships?

A. We expected to make approach alone until we learned of NISHIMURA's movement.

Q. Could you say just when you learned of NISHIMURA's movements?

A. I cannot very well remember when we learned of NISHIMURA's movements, but I remember that when they were northwest of LINGAYEN we sent airplanes to MANILA to get information of NISHIMURA and KURITA's movements. The airplane had the mission to get information; but before we received the information through this airplane, we received the information from somewhere to the south concerning KURITA's fleet by radio.

Q. For this operation did you hold all necessary plans and documents-communication plans, operation plans, etc?

A. We had no documents for plans, just knew according to radio messages; but we had rather thorough documentary plan for the operation when the American Force comes to the PHILIPPINES.

Q. Then you had the basic overall plan but not the later detailed plan for the operation?

A. No; because this was a deviation from the overall original plan.

Q. In the original plan, had you expected to form a part of OZAWA's force or did you expect to cooperate with him?

A. In the original plan SHIMA and OZAWA were supposed to cooperate. The deviation was that our force did not cooperate with OZAWA but went down to cooperate with KURITA.

Q. How long did you remain at CORON BAY; what did you do there?

A. I am not sure but believed that we arrived at CORON before the dusk of the 23rd and left there at 2 o'clock of the morning of the 24th. We refueled there, and as there was no tanker there we had to take fuel from cruisers to destroyers.

Q. Did you expect to find a tanker there?

A. We did not know the movement of the tankers; so really did not expect tanker should be there; but we had the feeling that there might be a tanker there.

Q. Did you receive any further instructions after the first radio message you spoke of, giving a detailed time, or route, any further instructions?

A. We received no further instructions.

Q. Your purpose in approaching through SURIGAO STRAIT was what? What were you to do when you entered LEYTE GULF?

A. KURITA's fleet was supposed to attack first and the mission of our fleet was to attack the remainder after the confusion of KURITA's attack.

Q. Do you mean the part of KURITA's fleet that he himself commanded was to attack first, or that NISHIMURA's part of the fleet was to attack first?

A. Our fleet did not know the liaison between KURITA and NISHIMURA, but we knew the mission: we were supposed to attack after these combined forces attacked LEYTE.

Q. You approached then, following NISHIMURA, is that correct?

A. Yes.

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- Q. In what ship was Admiral SHIMA embarked?
A. The flag was in NACHI.
- Q. When you approached south of NEGROS did you sight Admiral NISHIMURA's fleet? Did you travel in company?
A. No, we did not see it.
- Q. Did you ever see it during the course of the operation?
A. Even though we did not sight the body of the fleet, we knew they were at SURIGAO STRAIT by the gun flash, and by that knew NISHIMURA was there.
- Q. When you were passing NEGROS did you know how much distance separated the two forces?
A. I thought NISHIMURA's force was about forty miles ahead.
- Q. How did you know NISHIMURA's fleet was ahead of you; when did you receive precise word so that you knew where he was?
A. I knew when we left CORON that NISHIMURA would go through SURIGAO at 0100 of the 25th, I think this is the case but I am not positive in my memory.
- Q. What time did you expect to go through SURIGAO?
A. The plans were to go through SURIGAO at 0600 in the morning, I am not sure when; but while passing through SULU SEA we changed this time to 0500 in the morning because we knew KURITA's force had been delayed. We made this change of advancing the time by one hour in order to give more effective support to NISHIMURA in view of the delay to KURITA's force. Then perhaps when south of NEGROS, we made the second change to make our entry at 0300 in the morning with the same purpose, because we knew KURITA's force took reverse course during the afternoon. NISHIMURA ought to have received some information from us and NISHIMURA should have made new time here. However, as NISHIMURA did not change his own entry time, his position would be even worse than before; so we changed our time to 0300 in the morning to give him appropriate support.
- Q. What was your speed of advance while passing through SULU SEA?
A. 20 knots.
- Q. Then when you decided to advance the time, how fast did you go?
A. 22 knots, wanted to make more speed but couldn't do it because of lack of fuel.
- Q. On the 24th while passing through SULU SEA and MINDORO SEA, were you attacked by our aircraft at all?
A. We received no attack at any time.
- Q. Did you see any of our aircraft?
A. No. We worried that we would be discovered by your planes but did not see them.
- Q. I would like to know what type of information you had on the 24th, on the progress of the other forces. You knew Admiral KURITA was under attack and reversed course for a time, is that correct?
A. That was the only information we got about KURITA's movements; as for the other fleets, we did not know.
- Q. You heard no message from Admiral OZAWA concerning the operations of his carriers?

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- A. We intercepted a message from OZAWA's fleet that he was giving attack but we did not receive that message directly.
- Q. Did you have any communication with NISHIMURA's force that day?
- A. No information was received - radio silence. I am not sure when it was overheard but NISHIMURA sent over the telephone that he was receiving attack by your torpedo boats.
- Q. Did you know that Admiral NISHIMURA had been attacked by our aircraft the morning of the 24th?
- A. We did not receive any information like that and did not know that. We thought that both NISHIMURA's fleet and our fleet did not receive any air attack on the 24th. We thought NISHIMURA's fleet and SHIMA's fleet were progressing without any attacks.
- Q. What information did you have of our force inside LEYTE GULF? What force did you expect to meet when you entered?
- A. I think we received the information from our planes of the result of the search on the 23rd saying that the force in the Gulf was very formidable, the main body in the Gulf and some torpedo boats at the entrance. As to the full details, the information did not tell anything further.
- Q. You then did not know how many battleships, cruisers, etc.?
- A. One information told us seven or eight battleships and one report said about forty transports in the Gulf.
- Q. In your position on the staff of Admiral SHIMA you naturally had access to all the available information, did you not?
- A. Yes, and in this operation I was standing on the bridge all the time, I think that I saw all information that was received.
- Q. The purpose of the 5th Fleet (Admiral SHIMA) was generally to attack our ships, is that correct? We had some information that you were carrying troops as reinforcements.
- A. Our only purpose was to attack your ships; we were not carrying troops.
- Q. Would you sketch the disposition of your fleet, the cruising disposition as well as the attack disposition?
- A. (See Annex A.) In the disposition assumed for entry, two destroyers were kept ahead as lookouts, but it was intended before making the attack to have them fall in astern and to have NACHI lead the entry into the Gulf.
- Q. About what time did you receive the message from NISHIMURA that he was under attack by torpedo boats, and what was the location of SHIMA's force at the time you got the message?
- A. That was at midnight. I think we were about 28 miles, bearing 030 from CAMIGUIN ISLAND.
- Q. Will you tell us briefly in your own words what followed?
- A. From about 2200 we were followed by American torpedo boats; we did not see them but we heard inter-torpedo boat communications, the telephone.
- Q. Did you get any information of value from those communications?
- A. We could guess from the communication that your main force was waiting off PANANON ISLAND. We were caught in a very heavy storm after 2400.
- Q. From 2200 you had been followed by our motor torpedo boats, is that correct?

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- A. I think your motor torpedo boats followed from perhaps 2000 but 2200 was the actual interception of the messages.
- Q. But you did not hear from NISHIMURA until 2400 that he was being attacked, is that correct?
- A. I think that is about right.
- Q. Was your force attacked by motor torpedo boats? If so, when?
- A. ABUKUMA was attacked by motor torpedo boats about 0300 on the 25th.
- Q. Shortly after midnight you passed through a storm?
- A. Yes.
- Q. At what speed were you then travelling?
- A. We were doing 22 knots, we were in the approach disposition.
- Q. When did you begin to see the flash of gunfire from NISHIMURA that you spoke of earlier?
- A. I am not sure about the time, think about 0100.
- Q. What happened or what did you see from your force between the time you left this storm and 0300 when you were attacked by torpedo boats; did anything of importance occur?
- A. We proceeded peacefully without any attacks.
- Q. Did you receive any further information from NISHIMURA?
- A. We overheard the telephone sent by NISHIMURA to his fleet to reverse course to avoid torpedo attack and take evasive action, that was the last message we had from him; I do not know whether or not it was destroyers or torpedo boats,
- Q. Do you remember whether this telephone came before ABUKUMA had been attacked by torpedo boats or afterwards?
- A. Before the attack.
- Q. This was an instruction from NISHIMURA to SHIMA to reverse, or merely to his own force?
- A. No, it was his own force.
- Q. So you continued your approach, is that correct?
- A. We proceeded regardless of this conversation and heard nothing further.
- Q. What was their action after that, what did their force do, what happened to them?
- A. (See Annex C) The tide was running north so we were set too close to PANASON ISLAND so we had to change course to the eastward; so we changed course by turn movement to the eastward and again resumed our original course, and then those two destroyers which had been in front fell in astern of the disposition; and right after taking the northerly course ABUKUMA received an attack from the port side, I remember it was about 0315.
- Q. Did you see the torpedo boats or fire on them?
- A. We knew by seeing the machine gun on the torpedo boat.
- Q. Did this attack damage ABUKUMA, any hits?
- A. The wireless room which was under the bridge structure was hit and water came in and the crew in this room were all killed, and those above that room were suffocated by gas, She was down at the bow, reduced to about ten knots, about 30 were killed.

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Q. What did the remainder of the disposition do at this time; did they continue?

A. The remainder of the fleet went on leaving ABUKUMA behind with no escort. On a course of 010° after the attack, we increased speed to 26 knots and very frequently received torpedo boat attacks from the vicinity of PANAGON ISLAND, but no damage was done. Later we changed course to 000°. Although the rain stopped, we could not determine our position, poor visibility, and then we sighted two fires. It was about 0330 when we saw two fires, two ships burning, very big ships, about 0330. We saw also a very dense smoke screen, we sighted on either side of these burning ships smoke screens laid by American ships.

Q. At what range were these burning ships at the time of sighting?

A. When we first saw that fire, I judged it was about 20,000 meters from their position. Although we knew they were Japanese vessels on fire we did not bother with them, just progressed. When we came to that place the smoke screen was very dense, as explained before, and the Japanese radar on those ships were not working effectively for search; they could detect no American ships on the radar. We knew however American forces were there because of the smoke screen and I judged from the situation that the American force was behind the smoke attacking NISHIMURA's force.

Q. Could you see other ships of NISHIMURA's force besides the two which were burning? Did you know where they were?

A. We knew that other part of the NISHIMURA's fleet was there behind the smoke; there were flashes from gunfire and we saw the trail of the shells, but we could not see the body of the vessels.

Q. You passed those burning ships and went on?

A. Yes, the cruisers swung to the right and fired their torpedoes and the destroyers advanced to deliver their torpedo attack. The intention was to have the cruisers change course in column and fall in astern of the destroyers which would in turn conduct their torpedo attack. When we reached the point for the cruisers to make their torpedo attack, we saw another ship afire. Later we found out that this was MOGAMI.

Q. Did you know which were the two burning ships when you passed them?

A. We thought it was two battleships, but when we arrived at MANILA we heard that it was one battleship (YAMASHIRO) and three destroyers close together instead of two battleships. About 0420 the radar picked up a convoy, a group of American ships, but there was no more definite information than that. At that time we received no other information, so intended to center attack on that group. They ordered the destroyers to conduct attack, the cruisers turned and delivered their torpedo attack and then ordered destroyers to make their attack.

Q. What range were these American ships? How far?

A. About 12 kilometers, we thought at first that MOGAMI which was burning was stopped, but evidently it was not stopped but on a southward course; and after delivering the torpedo attack, NACHI, which was turning away, collided with MOGAMI on converging course about 10 degrees. We were all concentrating on the attack, so did not know the course of the MOGAMI until they collided. Although, we thought it was dead in the water, it was moving slightly and we simply over-estimated our own speed, and the MOGAMI was moving faster than we thought perhaps about eight knots, and in spite of hard rudder we collided. It was un-

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avoidable; after all, her rudder was useless- MOGAMI did not have steering control.

NACHI's speed was forced to lower to 18 knots as a result of the collision. ASHIGARA turned safely outside MOGAMI and fell in astern. The original intention was that NACHI would fall in damage, so we took southward course for about 10 minutes, We went south and then turned north again. The destroyers went to full speed of about 30 knots and closed further. At this time NACHI could not make any more than 20 knots which was insufficient to make the attack; and also by the smoke screen we could not guess exact position of your force ; so Admiral SHIMA ordered to stop further attack of these cruisers at this time, called back destroyers, discontinuing the attack.

Q. Did the destroyers fire their torpedoes?

A. Destroyers made approach for about 30 minutes but they did not see the American force at all.

Q. For 30 minutes after the cruiser attack the destroyers closed?

A. After 0420 they made approach for 30 minutes at 30 knots but they did not fire any torpedoes because still hadn't picked up anything on the radar.

Q. It was the cruisers who picked up the American convoy on the radar?

A. Yes, the NACHI's radar caught the group. The first destroyer SHIRANUI and destroyers closed until they could see HIBUSAN ISLAND.

Q. But the destroyers did not see our ships?

A. No, and they fired no torpedoes; at about 0500 Admiral SHIMA gave order to retire and recalled his destroyers. A little after that we saw one destroyer taking southward course and it was later known that it was one of NISHIMURA's fleet. Knowing that American torpedo boats were near PANASON ISLAND, we took a course close to the northern tip of MINDANAO. We received a torpedo attack again and also received machine gun fire from the torpedo boats and I believe that one American torpedo boat was sunk and one set on fire; that attack was repelled by machine guns and also anti-aircraft guns.

Q. Was that the last attack you had by our ships and torpedo boats? What time was that?

A. I think it was a little before 0600; it was the last attack.

Q. What course did you take to retire?

A. Our fleet met the ABUKUMA and MOGAMI and we proceeded together. When we encountered them, ABUKUMA was still headed north following original instructions to attack, but at reduced speed. We assigned one destroyer each to escort MOGAMI and ABUKUMA. While we were assembling all the ships, we received the first air attack. We saw the airplanes but the attack was not severe at all, and I do not think there was any damage. At 0900 we received the second attack. We were still trying to assemble the convoy and then the MOGAMI received a bomb hit. NACHI and ASHIGARA with two destroyers went ahead taking westward course leaving other ships with one destroyer, and ABUKUMA was ordered to proceed into BUTUAN BAY and effect repairs. MOGAMI received very heavy damage in that air attack, and while the main force was south of BOHOL we decided to abandon MOGAMI and began to shift personnel off MOGAMI to the destroyer, perhaps the name of the destroyer was AKEBONO, and one hour later I believe MOGAMI sank.

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We lost sight of that destroyer which was part of NISHIMURA's fleet, we did not sight it again; but it was later learned it had gone to BRUNEI BAY. That destroyer was the only surviving ship of NISHIMURA's fleet. When the order was given for the ABUKUMA to go to BUTUAN BAY we knew it was not a suitable place for repairing, so we sent a second order to go to DAPITAN BAY for repairs. However she sank later that day after receiving further damage from air attack. NACHI and ASHIGARA with two destroyers continued westward and returned to CORON BAY. The destroyer squadron commander was changed from the ABUKUMA to the SHIRANUI.

- Q. Did the two destroyers that were sent to be with MOGAMI and ABUKUMA later return to CORON BAY?
- A. The destroyer accompanying MOGAMI after they shifted personnel, this destroyer went to CORON BAY; the destroyer that accompanied ABUKUMA, this destroyer rescued personnel off ABUKUMA when she sank and proceeded to CORON BAY.
- Q. Did your group receive any more air attacks after this time?
- A. The main body of our fleet received the attack by carrier planes, which was about 70 carrier-based planes at about 124 E; it was about 1500 in the afternoon.
- Q. What damage was done in that attack?
- A. No damage, but we destroyed about ten planes.
- Q. That was the last attack?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your force was not at any time attacked by B-24's (Four-engine bombers)?
- A. I thought I saw about 20 big planes come close to the body, but did not attack.
- Q. Were they going northwest?
- A. I do not know. The only damage from all attacks on the 25th was to SHIRANUI, by machine guns, but very light damage. At dawn of the 26th the destroyers received a bombing attack but no damage. I do not know what kind of planes.
- Q. During the action in SURIGAO STRAIT, what reports did Admiral SHIMA send; what reports and when and to whom?
- A. About 0500 on the 25th, we sent message to KURITA's fleet and also to TOKYO and probably to MANILA that we were going to reverse our course.
- Q. In this message did you give any details of what you had seen during the night?
- A. The message contained just our movement.
- Q. Did it give reasons for your movements?
- A. It gave the reason saying that after the collision the speed got very slow to make the attack and that we were going to take reverse course and later renew the attack, but no mention was made of when it would be renewed.
- Q. Did you not include any information on NISHIMURA's force which might have been valuable to KURITA?
- A. We thought that NISHIMURA's fleet had sent their own message to KURITA, so we did not send any details. We would not know about that message because we didn't have that wave length; the previous plans did not allow for that wave length. The arrangement was not made for communication between SHIMA's and KURITA's force, therefore we could not overhear message sent by NISHIMURA.

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- Q. However you said earlier that you had heard NISHIMURA telephone, saying to avoid torpedo attack.
- A. Not being a wireless officer I am not sure, but I believe it was a telephone message.
- Q. Did they have a telephone for short-wave communication between ships, did you have such a telephone and were all ships on the same wave length?
- A. All ships have the telephone for the near communication and if the telephone of NISHIMURA's fleet was fixed to a certain length we could have overheard. I believe that is why we received that message.
- Q. Do you know roughly what the frequency for close communication was?
- A. No.
- Q. When you heard our torpedo boat telephone messages, was it due to the fact they had a special telephone watch or because by chance we were on the same wave length?
- A. It was intentional.
- Q. What was the effective range of your torpedoes?
- A. With high-speed setting on torpedoes the effective maximum range would be 20,000 meters.
- Q. What speed setting did you use that night?
- A. 48 knots, high speed.
- Q. Was the speed setting of torpedoes the same in all ships or do you speak just of the flagship?
- A. Among our destroyers; that speed is only applicable to the new large type, the KASUMI and SHIRANAHI.
- Q. Did you send out a signal to all ships regarding setting and speed of torpedoes or did every ship decide for itself?
- A. I did that.
- Q. When you made this torpedo attack, why did you send the cruisers first and then the destroyers?
- A. In night battle this is the most effective formation; also it is the tradition for the Japanese Navy that the Commander should be in the leading position. That is why we used this formation.
- Q. What was your professional opinion, as Torpedo Officer of the attacks by our torpedo boats? Were they effective?
- A. I cannot give you a definite opinion because I did not know where the attack came from. NACHI did not receive any torpedo attack; I do not have an opinion.
- Q. We are puzzled by the fact that there should have been two separate forces, SHIMA's force and NISHIMURA's force, sent to the same place at the same time to do the same thing, and yet be entirely independent as far as their command is concerned. I would like to know whether or not such cooperative efforts were usual or frequent in Japanese practice - whether or not you think it best to unite two such forces under one command?
- A. I think it is not right this way and it is necessary to have one commander on such occasions; but, as explained before, we could not make arrangements beforehand so SHIMA's fleet decided to get as close as possible to NISHIMURA, but it could not be carried out very effectively because of fuel shortage.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION OF (Commander MORI, Kokichi, IJN).

On the 27th the SHIRANAHI went to PANAY to assist in the rescue of personnel of the KINU and was there sunk by aircraft attack. The other ships proceeded to MANILA subsequently. NACHI and the destroyer AKEBONO were later sunk off MANILA; the others returned to BRUNEI and then to CAMRAHN BAY.

- Q. Was it your force that bombarded MINDORO on night of 26th November?
- A. Destroyers and cruisers which were part of the 5th Fleet bombed there, but I did not participate in the attack. That attack was made by OYODO, ASHIGARA, and 4 or 5 destroyers. The attack was conducted by commander of the destroyer squadron; the headquarters of the Fleet remained at SAIGON.
- Q. Concerning the operation in the PHILIPPINES in October, what do you think was the main reason for Japanese failure?
- A. The lack of efficient air force, inefficiency in aircraft search, shortage of fuel, the strength of your force against which we were not strong enough and could not give any substantial attack; for the purpose of defense work our force was divided and we could not concentrate or assemble the defense very well.

				NACHI (Flagship)
	ABUKUMA CL(Flagship)	o DD-- 2 KM --o DD-2KM	()	()
DD o	()	o DD	NACHI (Flagship)	ASHIGARA
	NACHI CA(Flagship)	()	()	()
DD o	()	o DD	ASHIGARA	800 M. ABUKUMA (Flagship)
	ASHIGARA CA	()	()	()
	()		ABUKUMA (Flagship)	o DD
			()	o DD
			o DD	o DD
			o DD	o DD

CRUISING

APPROACH

BATTLE

DISPOSITION OF FIFTH FLEET
BATTLE IN SURIGAO STRAIT

Annex A

	: Adm. TOYODA :	
	: CinC Combined Fleet :	
	: Tokyo :	

: V. Adm. KURITA :	: V. Adm. MIKAWA :	
: CinC Second Fleet :	: CinC SW Area Fleet :	
: YAMATO Flagship :	: Manila :	
: San Bernardino Strait :	-----	
	: V. Adm. SHIMA :	
: R. Adm. NISHIMURA :	: CinC Fifth Fleet :	
: "C" Force :	: Surigao Strait :	
: Surigao Strait :	-----	

Command Relationship of
Japanese Forces
Battle of Surigao Strait
24-25 October 1944

Annex B