

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

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS NO. 438)
NAV NO 93

Place: Tokyo
Date: 24 November 1945
Time: 1330 - 1500

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis.

Subject: Aleutian Campaign, The Japanese Historical Account of the Naval Battle fought off the KOMANDORSKI Islands, March 1943.

Personnel Interrogated: Commander OKUMIYA, Mastake, I.J.N. who conducted the research for the Historical Division of Japanese Naval War College. Commander OKUMIYA was the air officer on the staff of the Second Mobile Force when that force made the carrier attacks on DUTCH HARBOR in June 1942.

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

SUMMARY

The most authoritative account yet received from the Japanese on the Naval Battle off the KOMANDORSKI Islands is given. A track chart from the personal papers of the Commanding Officer of the TAMA, a chronological table of gun and torpedo fire with remarks on the progress of the battle, and a chart of damage received are included.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

War History Investigation Department, Japanese Naval War College,
23 November 1945.

Summary of the KOMANDORSKI ENGAGEMENT.

Note:

Information given by following officers who took part in the engagement, summarized by Commander OKUMIYA.

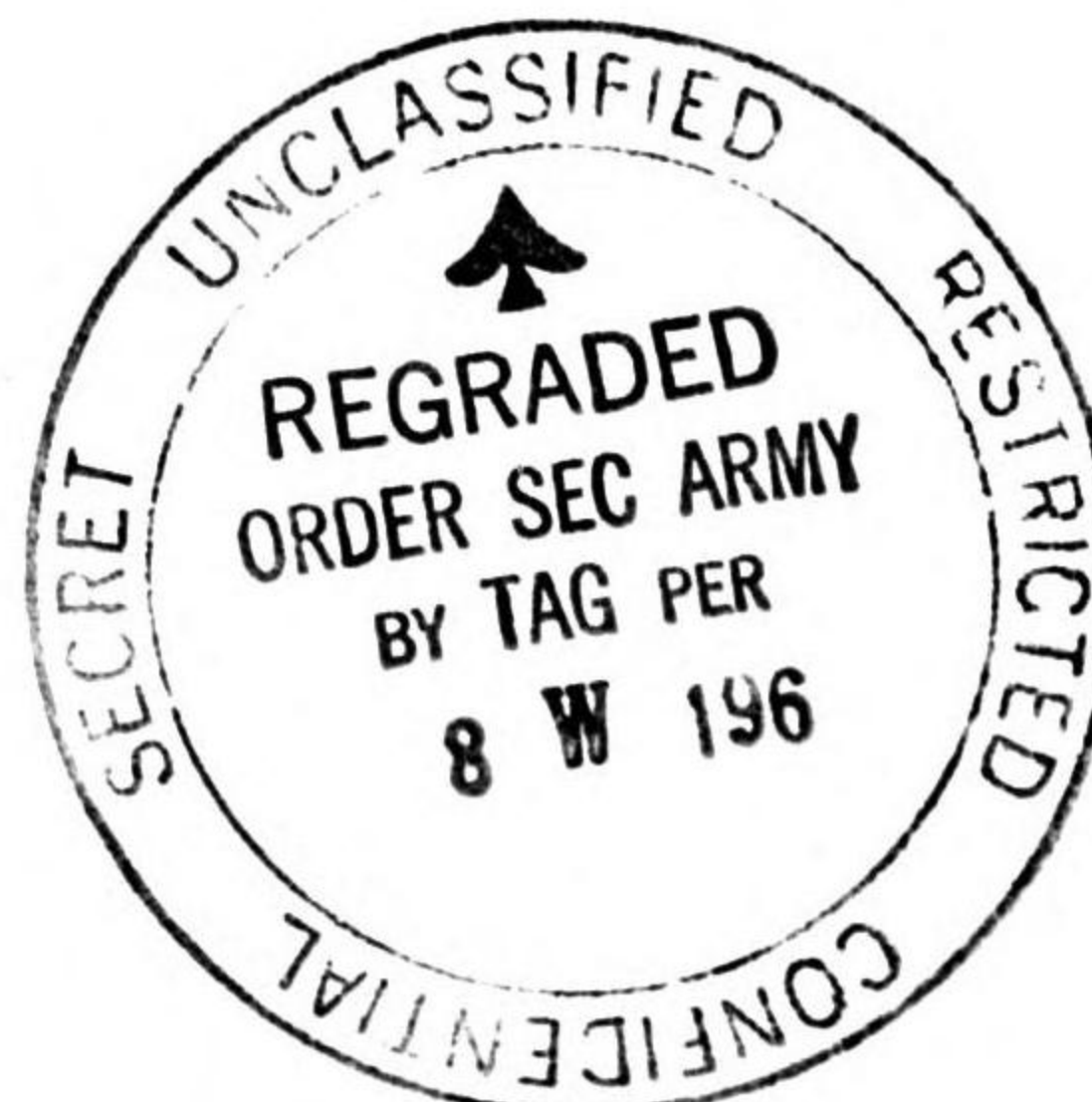
Senior Staff Officer of the 5th Fleet	Captain TAKAHASHI, Tadao
Staff Officer of the 5th Fleet	Cmdr. HASHIMOTO, Shigefusa
Chief of Staff, 1st Des Ron	Captain ARICHIKA, Rokuji
Captain of H.M.S. TAMA	Rear Adm KANOME, Zensuke

1. Time
From: March 22nd, 1943
To: March 28th, 1943

2. Participating forces.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Commanding Officer</u>	<u>Force</u>	<u>Main Mission</u>
Main Body	Commander, 5th Fleet	21st Squadron (NACHI (FF) MAYA, TAMA) 21st Des Div (WAKABA HATSUSHIMO)	Support Force Throughout Operation
Escort Force	Commander, 1st Des Ron	ABUKUMA (F) 6th Des Div (IKAZUCHI, INAZUMA)	Direct Escort of "D" Convoy Indirect Esc- ort of SANKO- MARU Participated in Engagem- ent.

-1-



<u>Division</u>	<u>Commanding Officer</u>	<u>Force</u>	<u>Main Mission</u>
2nd Escort Force	C.O. of USUGUMO	USUGUMO	Direct Escort of Sanko-Mar
"D" Convoy Independent Transport	ASAKA-MARU, SAKITO-MARU SANKO-MARU		

3. Summarized Account of Operation.

(a) Own Situation

(1) Defensive Force	KISKA	3000
	ATTU	2800

(2) As the transportation by any single transport of slow cruising speed was out of consideration, it was decided to escort a high speed convoy with all the power of the northern force. Such an operation had been successfully carried out to ATTU early in March. That operation was called "The First Urgent Transport as a part of "A" Operation".

(b) Estimate of Enemy situation.

(1) U.S. forces landed on AMCHITKA I. on 24 Jan. and constructed an air field. The enemy is trying to recapture KISKA and ATTU, by cutting off the Japanese transport lines to those Islands. Repeatedly heavy air raids are being made against these islands from bases at ADAK and AMCHITKA.

(2) The Northern Fleet of the United States, consists of one heavy cruiser, 2 light cruisers and 6 destroyers. It has been operating around KISKA and ATTU, shelled ATTU, and to the west of ATTU, it shelled AKAGANE-MARU and sank it.

(c) Purpose of Operation.

- (1) Escort of convoy destined to ATTU.
- (2) To catch the enemy fleet and destroy it.

(d) Description of Engagement.

March 22	1500	The 2nd Escort Force and SANKO-MARU, sailed from HOROMUSHIRO.
March 23	1200	Escort Force and "D" convoy sailed from HOROMUSHIRO.
March 23	1700	Main Force sailed from HOROMUSHIRO.
March 26	1100	Main Force and Escort Force joined together.
March 27	0313	One enemy cruiser and a destroyer came in sight.
March 27	0326	Another enemy cruiser and 3 destroyers appeared.
March 28	0328	Convoy retired.

Note: The 2nd Escort Force saw the engagement at 0355, directed the convoyed ship to retire, and tried to join the main force, but at 0653 headed to HOROMUSHIRO by order.

The Japanese force deployed in order of column, NACHI, MAYA, TAMA, and 1st DES RON, cut off the enemy's line of retreat, engaged at 0342 on opposite courses. The Japanese fleet closed to 11000 meters from the weatherside and shelled heavily. One enemy heavy cruiser got several direct hits and the forward turret was damaged. Then the enemy fleet began to lay a smoke screen, started evasive maneuvers in dispersed formation, and tried to disengage. However the Japanese kept contact with the enemy for about 4 hours, and pursued him closely, but could not sink him. The actual record of the battle for each ship is listed separately.

Before the engagement was over, at about 0630, it was reported from KISKA that some enemy large bombers took off to attack us. At the same time, almost all of the armor piercing shells of NAGHI and MAYA were consumed and the fuel remaining in the destroyers was becoming low. Therefore we gave up the pursuit and turned back toward HOROMUSHIRO at 0730.

At 0930, the 1st DES RON departed from the main force to pick up the convoy. From 0915 to 1105, the convoy was tracked by one to three enemy large planes, but anti-aircraft fire against these made them retreat.

At 1305, the convoy was picked up.

On March 28, the main force anchored at HOROMUSHIRO at 0800, the convoy at 1800.

4. Results.

On account of the appearance of the enemy fleet, the main purpose of this operation, the transportation, was not achieved, however, we were able to give the enemy considerable damage.

(a) Estimated Enemy Losses.

Heavily damaged: HEAVY CRUISER (PENSACOLLA TYPE)
Moderately damaged: 2 DESTROYERS
Slightly damaged: 1 LIGHT CRUISER (UNKNOWN TYPE)

(b) Our Damage

NACHI	5 direct hits
	15 killed
	27 wounded
TAMA	2 direct hits
	1 slightly wounded.

5. Disposition of Submarine Forces.

(a) I-169, I-171

March 22, 0400, Sailed from HOROMUSHIRO
March 25, 0300, Commenced duty at the 1st scouting line.
(I-171 at 52° 55' N, 174° E)
(I-169 at 53° 15' N, 174° E)

(b) I-168

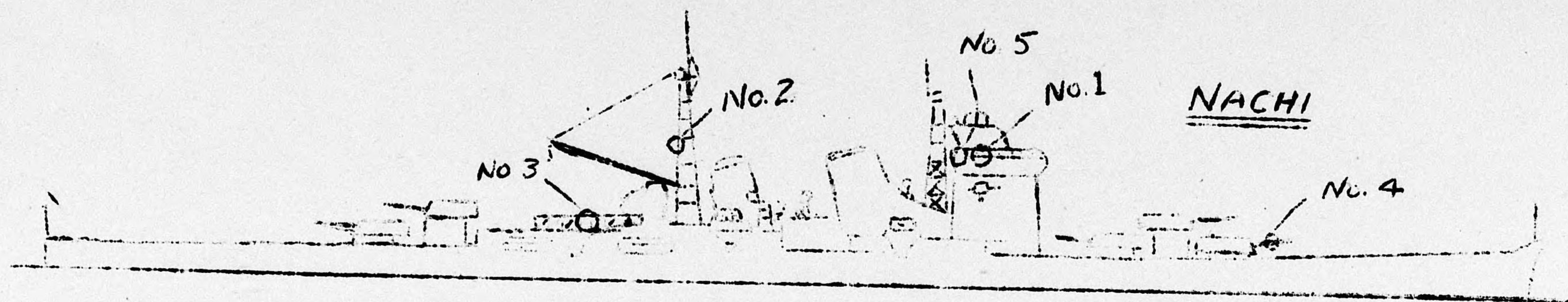
March 18, sailed from KISKA, patrolled area to South of AMCHITKA, returned to KISKA on April 2.

(c) I-31

March 23, 0400 sailed from HOROMUSHIRO, March 25, 0300; arrived at the point of patrol, 10 nautical miles south of AGATTU Island, returned to ATTU on April 1.

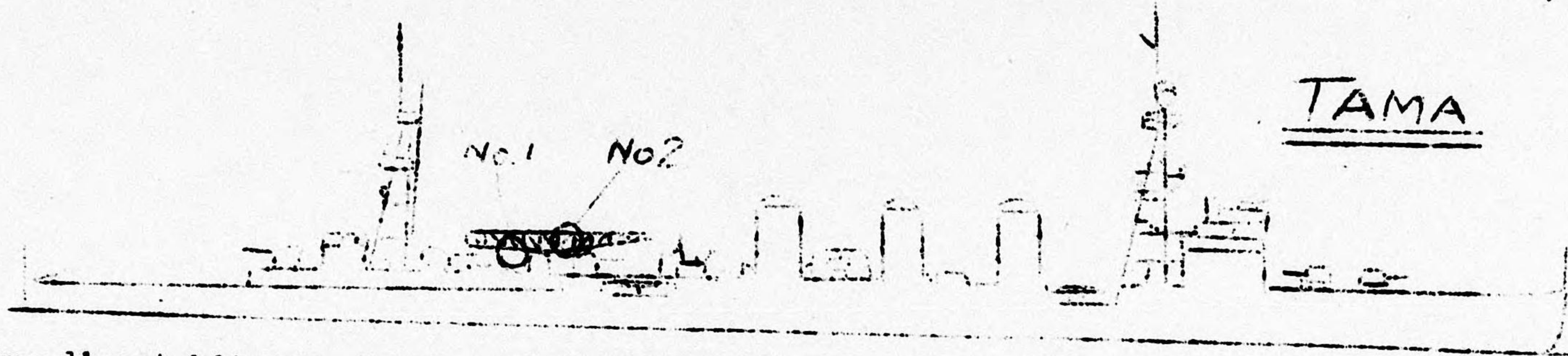
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ACTION

Time	NACHI	MAYA	TAMA	ABUKUMA	WAKABA	HATSUSHIMO	IKAZUCHI	INAZUMI	REMARKS
0342		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A solid line below the ships named to the left indicates that their main batteries were firing.
0346		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A few minutes later we opened fire.
0350		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NACHI fired 8 torpedoes.
0352		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	One hit each on the mainmast and starboard side of bridge of NACHI, 11 dead, 21 wounded.
0354		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	One hit on the torpedo tube compartment of NACHI, 2 dead, 5 wounded.
0356		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No. 1 plane of NACHI launched, planes no. 2 & 3 were jettisoned.
0358		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	An enemy CA on fire
0407		⊕	-	-	-	-	-	-	MAYA fired 4 torpedoes
0430		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0443		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0451		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Concentration of fire by Americans on ABUKUMA
0457		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0502		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Orders for entire force to attack
0507		-	⊕	-	-	-	-	-	TAMA fired 4 torpedoes.
0515		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A little later the enemy laid a smoke screen.
0518		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0519		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0525		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0529		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0531		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0537		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0538		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0540		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0545		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0547		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0548		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0552		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Concentrated fire on TAMA by the enemy.
0605		⊕	-	-	-	-	-	-	MAYA fired 4 torpedoes.
0607		⊕	-	-	-	-	-	-	NACHI fired 8 torpedoes.
0610		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0613		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0615		-	-	⊕	-	-	-	-	ABUKUMA fired 4 torpedoes
0619		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0620		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0621		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0632		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	The enemy CA began losing oil and fled because of hits by the main battery of NACHI.
0636		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0639		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0640		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0642		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0643		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0645		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0647		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	The enemy ship is listing about 15° and withdrawing.
0648		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NACHI receives a hit on No. 1 Turret, 1 killed, 1 wounded.
0649		-	-	-	⊕	-	-	-	WAKABA fires 6 torpedoes.
0650		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	All of the enemy ships entered the smoke screen, their movements are difficult to discern.
0651		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	TAMA made a hit on the 4th ship of the enemy and the ship listed about 15° and withdrew.
0654		-	-	-	-	⊕	-	-	HATSUSHIMO fired 6 torpedoes.
0658		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0700		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	We perceived the wakes of 4 enemy torpedoes and the CA on fire.
0706		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Hits on mainmast of enemy destroyer by main battery of MAYA.
0708		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0711		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0717		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0720		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
0730		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	We lost sight of the enemy force



- Hit No. 1 - 0350 - Direct hit just behind the bridge. The electrical circuit for the fire control system was damaged. Electricity was cut off to make temporary repairs. Torpedo officer was injured. 11 killed, 21 wounded.
- Hit No. 2 - 0350 - Slight damage to mainmast structure.
- Hit No. 3 - 0352 - Catapult and cutter were damaged and had to be replaced. 2 killed 5 wounded.
- Hit No. 4 - 0648 - Direct hit on gun tube, shell did not detonate. However, turret was damaged and could not be used thereafter, - this hindered the action in pursuit. 1 killed, 1 wounded.
- Hit No. 5 - ??? - Penetrated the bed of a staff officer directly behind flag plot. Damage was slight.

Total Casualties: 15 dead, 27 wounded. No 20 cm shell hits, many bracketing shells observed, 2000 to 3000.



Two direct hits were made. No particular damage was encountered, except that one enlisted man, a member of No. 5 Turret crew, was injured.