

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USBS NO. 250) Place: TOKYO  
Japanese Intell. No. 7 Date: 5 Nov. 1945

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

Subject: Japanese Naval Intelligence.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

YOKURA, SASHIZO, Comdr., IJN, aeronautical engineer; from 1943-45, Air Intelligence Member, 5th Section, Navy General Staff.

Graduated Naval Engineering College, 1930; from 1930-1936, engineering duty aboard various ships; April 1936-November 1937, instructor YOKOSUKA Naval Engineering School; to February 1938, engineering duty BB YAMASHIRO; to April 1940, engineering duty, Naval Air Corps, at OMURA, YOKOSUKA, SASEBO; to October 1940, student, Naval Academy; to April 1942, staff officer, 12th Naval Combined Air Corps; made a Lt. Comdr. October 1941; to December 1942, 23rd Air Group Staff; to June 1942, student, Naval Academy; to June 1945, Air Intelligence Member, 5th Section, Third Department, (Naval Intelligence) of Navy General Staff; made a commander 1 November 1944; to August 1945, duty at Headquarters, 3rd Fleet Air Force; to September 1945, instructor, YOKOSUKA Air Corps.

Where Interviewed: Navy Ministry.

Interrogators: Lt. S. P. Ahlbum, USNR  
Maj. R. S. Spilman, Jr., AC, AUS.

Interpreter: Maj. J. C. Pelzel, USMCR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

1. The aeronautical intelligence organization within the Navy General Staff was a one-man proposition until the last few months of the war, when a number of surplus new Naval Academy graduates were made available for assistance. The one man, Comdr. YOKURA, was responsible for both U. S. and British air intelligence, technical, statistical, and order of battle. Therefore, it was necessary to concentrate on the U. S. picture, and failure to obtain any organization to effectively carry this out prompted Comdr. YOKURA to resign two months before the war ended.

2. Sources of information were reports from naval units afloat and in the field, observations following attacks by U. S. planes, radio reports from the U. S., prisoners of war, crashed aircraft, captured documents, and reconnaissance. Some exchange of technical information was maintained between the Aviation Section of Naval Intelligence and Germany. The information obtained from all sources was colated and distributed to lower echelons in written reports, which were not issued on a regular basis. The Aviation Section of Naval Intelligence also distributed recognition sheets on U. S. planes to aviation units.

TRANSCRIPT

- Q.1. With regard to the 5th Section of the Navy General Staff, you were the "D" member, were you not?
- A. Yes.
- Q.2. What was the organization for aeronautical intelligence under the "D" membership?
- A. I was the only member. I had charge of American and British aircraft. Since I could not follow both, I concentrated on U. S. aircraft.
- Q.3. Please describe the aeronautical intelligence organization for the briefing and interrogating of pilots.
- A. I had nothing to do with the Japanese Air Force. I studied technical details of U. S. aircraft, and statistics.
- Q.4. What were your sources of information?
- A. First, there was the information coming into the THIRD DEPARTMENT. Secondly, reports from the field. Third, was information from U. S. attacks - strikes were tabulated by dates and estimates made by adding up the number of planes which had to be in different units. Fourth was radio reports from the U.S., short and long wave. Other sources were prisoner of war reports, crashed aircraft, captured documents, and attaches in foreign countries.
- Q.5. Were the reports from the field sent in by special officers? How were they received?
- A. Reports were by radio from the field. There was no real Fleet intelligence. There were a few written reports, however, which came infrequently.
- Q.6. How much information did you get from visual or photo reconnaissance?
- A. We received little from photo interpretation. I have seen a few photos. I did see some photos of IWO JIMA where interpreters have identified and counted aircraft, but this is a rare case. I received little from reconnaissance planes which were sent out by the fleet.
- Q.7. How much information did you get from scouting plane visual reconnaissance?
- A. I would have liked to have had more reconnaissance. I would have liked to have known the number of planes at SAIPAN, for instance. However, Headquarters could not initiate reconnaissance. Reports from field units were scanty, and were in the form of dispatches on the number of planes and types of planes. Little information came from bases which the U. S. attacked, due largely to breakdown of communications.
- Q.8. Before the U. S. occupation of IWO JIMA, there were almost daily reconnaissance flights over SAIPAN. How did the information these flights obtained get to Headquarters?
- A. They made reports by radio from the air to their base at IWO JIMA.

Transcript of Interrogation YOKURA, Sashizo, Comdr. IJN.  
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- Q.9. Did you ever suggest or recommend further reconnaissance by the fleet, or to lower echelons?
- A. I realized fully the lack of system in reconnaissance. I heard that the U. S. had special reconnaissance squadrons and thought it was a good idea. We could not put this into practice because of shortage of planes. I made some recommendations, but no attention was paid to them.
- Q.10. Who was in charge of photo interpretation in the navy?
- A. There was no person in charge of this in Headquarters. There was a school for photo interpreters at YOKOSUKA, but it was concerned with technical aspects largely.
- Q.11. Did your work in technical intelligence include recognition of U. S. planes? What sources did you have?
- A. Three main sources of identification material were photos in U. S. magazines, photos taken by our forces from the air or on the ground, and photos of captured planes. These photos were sent to the field in the form of composite sheets showing many types. These were distributed in large numbers.
- Q.12. Was your Section in charge of this recognition program?
- A. Yes.
- Q.13. Was any special training system on recognition set up?
- A. There was no special training. I had heard of some U. S. devices on the radio and thought it was a good idea to have them.
- Q.15. Did your section make any study of anti-aircraft defenses?
- A. No study was made in my section or in the field. I knew your pilots were sent out with complete flak maps which we found in smashed planes, but we did not do this.
- Q.15. How much data on performance, engines, and characteristics of U. S. planes were you able to obtain?
- A. Sources were mainly shot-down aircraft plus labels, tags, and so forth in the planes; magazines and radio reports, also. We tried to get all planes brought back to YOKOSUKA for study, but we did not get as many as we wanted. We generally knew a lot about older types, but there was time lag in our information. By the end of the war, we knew your 1943 airplane performance well.
- Q.16. How much help did you get from the Germans?
- A. We received technical and tactical reports from the German General Staff. They all came by radio.
- Q.17. Didn't you receive drawings, etc., which could not be sent by radio?
- A. We received practically no detailed written reports. Army Headquarters and technical depots may have received more information.

Q.18. Did you send similar information to Germany?

A. We did send radio reports at scattered intervals to Germany, usually about the number and type of planes in the Pacific.

Q.19. What did you consider your best source of information?

A. None could be considered very good. My work was mainly statistical, and I got little information.

Q.20. What would you consider an ideal source of information?

A. Reconnaissance, both visual and photographic.

Q.21. When you had compiled your statistics, could you arrive at an air order of battles?

A. That was my function. My only source was from shot down planes. Prisoners sometimes told the number of their own squadrons. Most of them gave nothing on any other squadrons and you could not compile an adequate picture. Carrier air groups had markings on their tails which helped a lot.

Q.22. Was the order of battles you worked out coordinated with the Fleet order of battle which Comdr. IMAI worked on? (NB: Comdr. IMAI was "C" member of 5th Section; see interrogation No. 236, Japanese Intell. No. 5).

A. Yes, there was some liaison. If we got a plane from a certain carrier, I would call Comdr. IMAI and tell him that this carrier was still around.

Q.23. After tabulations were made, how were these disseminated to lower echelons?

A. We published printed reports and radio reports which went to KOKU TAI (air group). Printed reports were not issued at regular intervals, and there was no regular distribution. We sent them to units concerned.

Q.24. What did these reports contain?

A. They contained information of numbers and types of planes in the Pacific, usually put on maps. I put down only what I was sure of; I did not try to guess what I did not know. Technical information was not sent in these reports, but was the subject of special reports.

Q.25. Can you give us copies of these reports?

A. We have none left. All were burned.

Q.26. Were any copies moved elsewhere for safe keeping?

A. To the best of my knowledge, no. None were sent to other agencies for safe keeping.

Q.27. Were any aeronautical reports made by either Navy officers or units?

A. The only other office which issued reports was the 1st Technical Depot at YOKOSUKA. These were technical papers.

Transcript of Interrogation Comdr. YOKURA, Sashizo, IJN.  
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Q.28. Were any instructions issued to lower echelons for obtaining technical intelligence?

A. There were many times when I wanted to issue orders along this line, and tried to do this. Our doctrine was always attack, attack, attack, and no one was too much interested in intelligence, as evidenced by the fact that I was the only officer in Headquarters dealing with aeronautical intelligence matters.

Q.29. What do you consider the effectiveness of your organization as a whole?

A. The efforts for the most part ended in failure. I could not set up an organization so I resigned. The main reason for failure was lack of realization, both in Headquarters and in the field, of the importance of intelligence.

Q.30. Are you familiar with the U. S. intelligence system?

A. I studied it, but I am not too familiar with it.

Q.31. Toward the end of the war, 37 young officers were assigned to the 5th Section of the General Staff. Did this help alleviate your lack of organization?

A. They were assigned to various functions, but they were untrained, just out of the Academy, and helped very little. It was too late.

Q.32. Was the lack of realization of the importance of intelligence, to which you attribute the failure of your organization, evident on the part of your own department, the General Staff, or still higher up?

A. It was not the fault of any one person, but rather of the system which concentrated on attack and on operations. The viewpoint was not broad enough. If we had had a very broad intelligence, an organization as good as the American one, we might not have lost the war.

Q.33. Did you keep a file on U. S. military commanders, and how far down did this list go?

A. I tried to keep a list of this type from radio reports, but could only keep a list of the top men.

Q.34. Did you try to direct prisoner of war interrogations in order to obtain the information you wanted?

A. I sat in on some of them, at the OFUNA Interrogation Center.

Q.35. How accurate did you consider prisoner of war information?

A. Very little was of value. Very few said anything except about conditions at home. Anything else was said to be a military secret.

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