

File

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(Pacific)
APO 234

INTERROGATION NO. 289

PLACE: Tokyo

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Oil and Chemicals.

DATE: 9 Nov 1945

SUBJECT: Navy Oil Plans in Anticipation of War.

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND OF EACH:

Vice Admiral HOSHINA, Z. In 1935 was instructor at the Naval College. From Oct 1935 to Nov 1937 was Chief of First Department, Naval Affairs Bureau. Until May 1938 was Asst C/S of China Sea Fleet. Was Captain of MYOKO (Heavy Cruiser), part of Fifth Fleet until Nov 1938. Was Captain of CHOKAI (Cruiser) of Second Fleet until Nov 1939. Until Nov 1940 was Captain of battleship MUTSU of the First Fleet.

On 15 Nov 1940 became Chief of Supply Bureau of the Navy Dept. Remained at this position continuously until May 1945. On 15 May 1945 became Chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Navy Department, a position which he still holds.

WHERE INTERVIEWED: Room 528, Meiji Building.

INTERROGATOR: Lt Comdr G. M. WILLIAMS.

INTERPRETER: Mr. Frank BABA (Civ.).

ALLIED OFFICERS PRESENT: Dr. Chang (Civ.).

SUMMARY:

1. End of BB MUTSU.
2. Navy Oil Plan in Anticipation for War.
3. Navy had stockpile for 1½ yrs war after which southern oil necessary.
4. Available tankers.
5. Stoppage of oil imports touched off war between Japan and the United States.



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- Q: Do you know what happened to your battleship MUTSU?
- A: After I left that ship it blew up and went to the bottom.
- Q: What caused it to blow up?
- A: The cause is unknown but I believe it was due to ammunition explosion.
- Q: What caused the ammunition to explode?
- A: Probably spontaneous combustion. During the noon meal this happened and all the crew were killed except a very few on the top superstructure. Those people who survived do not know the reason for the explosion. It was anchored in Hiroshima Bay at the time.
- Q: In the War Preparations Bureau what were your duties?
- A: Ordered and controlled the construction of the shore installations, including airfields, etc. Other functions were the distribution and allocation of Navy materials. Controlled ship transportation and communication. Controlled labor affairs in the Navy Department.
- Q: When you entered the Bureau in 1940 did you start making plans immediately for the Greater East Asia War?
- A: The Military Preparations Bureau was established in November 1940. War preparation was not started at this time however. Because the Naval Affairs Bureau was so overcrowded and complicated, this new separate Military Preparations Bureau was established. Work though was concerned mostly with the China Incident.
- Q: When were preparations started for the war in 1941?
- A: We made efforts to maintain peace; however, abolition of existing treaties and freezing of Japan's assets made them start preparations just in case of an emergency. From October 1941 diplomatic relations became strained and so preparations for the war were begun.
- Q: Let's get down to the facts on these preparations.
- A: Preparations for the conclusion of the China Incident included preparations for the Greater East Asia War. However, preparations against the United States as a possible enemy were not begun until October 1941.
- Q: As soon as you joined the Three-Party Alliance in 1940 you began preparations for a war against either the United States or Russia.
- A: The reason for the Three-Party pact was an effort to avoid war with the United States. Of course, the results were entirely the opposite but that was the intentions of Foreign Minister Matsuoka.
- Q: The Japanese Navy was against this Three-Party pact because it meant fighting against the British and American navies. So you must have been against the Army signing this pact.

- A: I was Captain of the MUTSU at that time and do not know what the inner circle's intentions were; however, the efforts of Foreign Minister Matsuoka in entering the Three-Party pact were to avoid war with America. The strengthening of the China War effort was in a way further preparation for the Greater East Asia War.
- Q: When you entered the War Preparations Bureau in 1940 what preparations were you making to increase your oil stocks so that your Navy would be able to operate?
- A: As a policy we tried to increase the stock piles of oil as much as possible, anticipating the freezing of imports of oil from elsewhere.
- Q: What did you do to implement this policy?
- A: On a special mission to the Netherlands East Indies to increase the imports of oil therefrom the government sent envoy Kazuzo KABAYASHI. At the same time we tried to import as much oil as possible from the United States.
- Q: At that time did you set any quotas or goals for yourself in the way of stockpiles?
- A: To obtain as much oil as possible was our goal. However, the office of the Naval Chief of Staff had their plans. The plan was made thereat and the Navy Department did its best to fulfill the plan. Absolute maximum amount was impossible to fulfill but they tried their best to get the most possible.
- Q: What was the absolute maximum?
- A: I do not remember but I have the amount obtained through this effort. At the time of the Pearl Harbor Incident the full amount of oil in Japan was 8,400,000 kl. I can get the figures on the maximum amount at a later date.
- Q: Who in the Naval Chief of Staff's office formulated the requirements for Navy oil?
- A: Vice Admiral TAKAKI was in direct charge and he was with the Office of the Naval Chief of Staff, serving as Chief of the Second Section. However, he was killed in action.
- Q: Who are some of his assistant who may still be alive?
- A: I think the department head under him is still alive but cannot recall his name at this time. I will get his name for you later.
- Q: Did you see the plan that the Naval Chief of Staff made up for the oil requirements?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Describe as well as you can remember the nature of the contents.
- A: I do not remember exact figures. The requirement was in so much aviation gasoline but I do not remember how much.
- Q: Did the plan include certain amounts for stock piles?

A: Yes. At the beginning of the fiscal year the Office of the ~~Naval Chief of Staff~~ presents the amount required and the Navy Department does its best to fulfill it. Admiral MORIDA knows the most details. My office did overall in-between efforts.

Q: What were your plans for (1) stocks, (2) production, (3) capturing enemy stocks, and (4) consumption by the Navy, Army, and Civilians. Sometime before the war began the Chief of Staff made out a plan to tell whether he had enough oil to fight the war. In December of 1941 I understand there were plans for at least three years. I understand you are familiar with such a plan.

A: Transportation and oil production were where the most efforts were put. The Navy didn't have confidence in the proposed figures on oil and transportation until December, so that they were trying to avoid war as much as possible. They received word from the Emperor that the Cabinet should make an effort to maintain peaceful relations with America. The Navy didn't have confidence in the stockpile of oil but if they must go to war, they had enough for 1½ years. After that if the war went favorably they planned to get required oil from the Netherlands East Indies. An estimate for shipping by the Cabinet Planning Board was 3,000,000 tons.

Q: What date was this estimate?

A: This was made after Tojo's Cabinet was formed in October 1941. During their early discussions this estimate was made.

Q: Do you think that the figure of 3,000,000 tons was adequate?

A: That was the absolute minimum requirement. This was just commercial vessels for the transportation of war goods. The Army and Navy had their own ships for transportation of troops and war materials to the battlefields.

Q: What tonnage was this that the Army and Navy had?

A: They both had about 1,000,000 tons apiece. The Navy definitely was against going to war but because of diplomatic relations, etc., the attitude of the Navy was that they had to do it and that was that.

Q: Getting back to this plan for war, how much do you know about it?

A: The plan included such things as (1) amount of stock to be maintained, (2) production within the country (3) consumption, (4) stocks to be captured, particularly oil, etc. These were prepared by the Naval Affairs Bureau, Naval Supply Bureau, and Naval Preparations Bureau. However, the original plans came down from the Office of the Naval Chief of Staff. Complete figures of this overall plan I will present at a later date in writing.

Q: Was this plan for a certain number of years?

A: Only annual plans were made but just prior to the war, this plan was made for two years.

Q: Was the plan made before the war for two or three years, so that you were able to estimate whether the Navy was ready to go to war? You had to plan for several years of war. You surely didn't expect to end it in one year.

A: During the discussion for the emergency the plans were made for two years but we had confidence only for 1½ years. The rest depended upon the existence of captured oil.

Q: Is there in existence a copy of this original plan?

A: I am not sure because of the fires. The document may have been destroyed. I know a person who may have that plan.

Q: Who is that person?

A: I still do not recall his name. He was a department head under the late Vice Admiral TAKAKI. The person who took care of the plans under me was the Chief of Staff at Kure Naval Base, Rear Admiral HASHIMOTO. The head of the First Division in the Office of the Naval Chief of Staff was Rear Admiral KURICHARA. I will present plans and figures to you as soon as possible.

Q: What were your plans pertaining to the development of ship transportation for the Greater East Asia War?

A: Originally the construction of ships was in charge of the Communications Minister. However, the Navy took that duty over at the start of the war. The Navy decided to construct enough ships necessary for war. This plan was made by the Naval Affairs Bureau and Naval Preparations Bureau and executed by the Technical Bureau of the Navy.

Q: How many tons a year did you think you would have to build in order to carry out the war?

A: The original plan took into account losses by submarine warfare and the first figure from Dec 1941-42 was 450,000 tons and then increased in 1943 to 600,000 tons and in 1944 to 800,000 tons. Construction surpassed these anticipated figures but the sinkings mounted to figures never anticipated.

Q: Do you know what the figures on tankers were?

A: I do not know. I will find out and let you know.

Q: With these figures did you expect to increase your shipping or stay level.

A: Expected a maintenance of 3,000,000 tons.

Q: When the war became a reality did you have to make new plans for ship construction?

A: Detailed plans were made by the technical bureau of the Navy and we carried them out. Exact plans can be furnished.

Q: What were your principal problems in meeting your ship construction plans?

A: The main problems were material, labor, and increasing construction facilities. These plans were made over five years ago, and therefore I would like to give you honest figures and an exact picture. If you present me with questions, I will answer them as reliably as possible.

Q: You have notes on everything we want. If you can get that material it will be fine.

A: I will get them and the person who knows these figures also.

Q: How was the division of the southern territories made between the Army and Navy?

A: Originally this division of territories was made according to political necessity. The territories under the Navy were taken over by the Navy and under the Army by the Army. However, this didn't work out well. As a result the Oil Committee was established.

Q: That isn't quite the point. When and how did the Army and Navy get together to make the division of southern territories?

A: It was decided before their capture. I think the Chief of Naval Affairs Bureau will know. I will ask him.

Q: What do you think was the final thing that touched off the war between Japan and the United States?

A: The stoppage of oil imports. Without them Japan could not survive. They could not carry on the war with China or survive as a country. Also cut off were rubber and bauxite, both badly needed items. When they received the Ultimatum from the United States on November 26, 1941 Japan decided she could no longer exist as a nation.