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HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(Pacific)

ANSWERS TO MILITARY ANALYSIS DIVISION QUESTIONNAIRE # 5

BISMARCK AND SOLOMON ISLANDS, 7 DECEMBER 1941 to 19 FEBRUARY 1944

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I. The first Army Air Force operation came on 5 January 1943 when we intercepted a B-17 attack on Rabaul.

II. The type of aircraft, the number of aircraft, the bases and missions for units operating in the Bismarck and Solomon Islands area from 7 December 1941 to 19 February 1944 are shown on appendix # 1. The names of the senior officers are listed in appendix # 2.

III. The changes made in the operational orders, operational plans and directives issued to the Air Force units in these areas since 7 December 1941 cannot be given in detail due to the lack of data. In general, the principal missions assigned to the Air Force were as follows:

- a) (1) To maintain aerial supremacy.
- (2) To escort transport groups.
- (3) To support ground operations.

As the Allied attacks on our shipping lanes became more effective, we concentrated more strength on the job of escorting transport groups.

- b) The Chain of Command:

- (1) At first: 8th Area Army -- 6th HIKOSHIDAN
- (2) Later : (Since August 1943) 8th Area Army - 4th KOKUGUN--
6th HIKOSHIDAN.
- (3) There was always joint operations with the Navy.

IV. The major attacks are listed in Appendix # 3.

V. Losses of aircraft and aircrew personnel:

During this period the airforce units in this area lost only about 1 to 2 planes in each offensive and defensive operation due to their superior skill. The losses on the ground were about the same. The greatest number of losses in aircrew personnel was due to malaria. This in turn caused a decrease in the number of sorties flown. The detailed situation cannot be presented at present due to the lack of data.

VI. A general summary of aircraft replacements .

A. Aircraft

Since the 12th HIKODAN (1st and 11th HIKOSENTAI; fighter units) had fairly ample reserves in the beginning, it was well supplied. Although the other units made efforts to get replacements from Japan (via PHILIPPINES, FORMOSA, and NEW GUINEA), the replacement system was not too adequate (mainly because the losses en route were quite large). As a result the units did not have sufficient replacements for their losses and their operations were badly hampered. The actual number of plane replacements is not known.

B. Aircrew Personnel

The HIKODAN had as ample a reserve of personnel as it had of aircraft. The other units received replacements from JAPAN and MANCHURIA. They were sent in transport planes or they flew new planes down to these units via the PHILIPPINES and NEW GUINEA. Because the aircraft replacements were not adequate,

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there was usually a more than ample supply of personnel. When an increasingly greater number of personnel came down with malaria, the number available for combat missions was not adequate and as a result the number of combat sorties was cut down.

In general it was very difficult to find well-trained replacements for CHUAICHO and SENTAICHO.

VII. The withdrawal of Air Force units is shown in appendix # 1.

VIII. The HIKOTAI disposed in the Bismarck Islands area since 19 February 1944 are as follows:

1. CHUTAI of the 10th HIKOSENTAI with 3 to 4 type 100 HQ RCN planes and 4 to 5 aircrews. The unit was located at Rabaul, and was attached to the 8th Area Army.

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APPENDIX NO. 1

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Unit	Disposition	Type of Aircraft	1943	1944	Base	Mission
12th HIKODAN	11th HIKOSENTAI	Type 1 Fighter	(50)	(30)	West RABAUL BARARE	1. Defense of RABAUL 2. Escort convoys
	1st HIKOSENTAI	Type 1 Fighter	(50)	(30)	"	"
14th HIKODAN	68th HIKOSENTAI	Type 3 Fighter	(20)		Transferred to West RABAUL NEW GUINEA	"
	78th HIKOSENTAI	Type 3 Fighter	(20)		"	"
KYODO HIKODAN (training)	45th HIKOSENTAI	Twin-engined Light Bomber	(20)		Kokopo Munda	1. Attack enemy airfields 2. Attack enemy convoys
	208th HIKOSENTAI	Twin-engined Light Bomber	(20)		KOKOPO	"
13th HIKOSENTAI		twin-seater fighter	(20)		"	1. Night Defense of RABAUL 2. Escort convoys
14th HIKOSENTAI		Heavy Bomber	(20)		"	1. Attack enemy airfields
10th HIKOSENTAI		Heavy Recce Plane	(10)		Main Strength transferred to EAST RABAUL NEW GUINEA (4) Buin	1. Recon enemy bases 2. Recon enemy convoys
					(one element remained)	

Note: Nos. in parentheses show No. of Planes.

APPENDIX NO. 2

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CHAIN OF COMMAND and SENIOR OFFICERS

		1st HIKOSENTAI	Lt Col TAKADA (Former)
		:	Major SAWADA (Latter)
		:	
	:-----12th HIKODAN -----:		
	: (Lt Col OKAMOTO)	11th HIKOSENTAI	Major SUGIURA (Former)
	:		Major MORIMOTO (Latter)
	:		
	:	63th HIKOSENTAI	Lt Col SHIMOYAMA
	:	:	
	:	:	
	:*** 14th HIKODAN	:	
	: Col TATEYAMA)	78th HIKOSENTAI	Major TAKATSUKI
6th HIKOSHIDAN	:		
	:		
CO: Lt Gen ITABANA	:	:45th HIKOSENTAI	Lt Col HAMADA
C ofS: Col HAYABUCHI	:	:	
(Former), Maj YAMAGUCHI	:	:	
	:	:	
C of O: Lt Col SASAO	:	:	
	: KYODO HIKODAN	208th HIKOSENTAI	Col ODA
	: (training)		
	: (Maj Gen SOROGANE)	13th HIKOSENTAI	Lt Col AKITA
	:		
	:	14th HIKOSENTAI	Col ITODO (Former)
	:		Major ENDO (Latter)
	:		
	:	10th HIKOSENTAI	COL. TSUCHIDA

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APPENDIX NO. 3

MAJOR ATTACKS

DATE	TARGET	UNITS COMMITTED	BOMBS USED	RESULTS
: : About 15 Jan.	: : BUNA : Air-field	: : 12th HIKODAN : 11th HIKOSENTAI 30 planes : Elements from the Naval : Air Forces	: : 250 Kg : (Naval Bombs)	: : ?
: : About 5 March	: : LAE : Airfield	: : 12th HIKODAN : 1st HIKOSENTAI : 11th HIKOSENTAI : 14th HIKOSENTAI	: : 50 Kg : 100 Kg	: : ?
: : About 15 March	: : GUADALCANAL : Airfield	: : 12th HIKODAN : 1st HIKOSENTAI : 11th HIKOSENTAI : 14th HIKOSENTAI : 15th HIKOSENTAI	: : 50 Kg : 100 Kg : 250 Kg	: : ?
: : ?	: : RENDOVA : Shipping : Concentration	: : 12th HIKODAN : 1st HIKOSENTAI : 11th HIKOSENTAI : 14th HIKOSENTAI	: : 250 Kg	: : 4 : Transport : Ships hit.

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