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INTERROGATION NO. 439

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 2 Nov. 1945
1000 and 1400

Division of Origin: Military Studies. (Army & Army Air Forces)

Subject: Requirements and Supply of Japanese Ground Armies.

Personnel interrogated: and background of each:

Major General SANDA, Joichiro, Secretariate of the War Ministry.

From February 1941 to April 1942:- Chief of Military Preparations Section.

" April 1942 " December '42- Chief, Military Affairs Section.

" December 1942 " October '43- Chief, No. 2 Section, General Staff.

" October 1943 " December '44- Chief of 1st Bureau, General Staff.

" December 1944 " March 1945- Chief, Military Affairs Bureau, War Ministry.

" March 1945 " October '45- Asst. Chief of Staff, No. 2 General Army in Japan.

Where interviewed: MEIJI Building, Room 238

Interrogator: Colonel J. F. Rodenhauser.

Interpreter: Lt. Col. D. W. Swift.

Allied officers present: Captain W. M. Drozd.
Lt. Comdr. G. C. Waldo.
Lt. Comdr. McClosky.

SUMMARY:

In August of each year the various armies submitted their requirements for the next fiscal year, which ran from April 1 to March 31. These requirements were disseminated to the interested services or supply agencies of the Japanese Army. Conferences of the various interested agencies were held to screen and pass on the requirements. By December all requirements for the next fiscal year were firmed up.

Prior to September 1941, there had been no thought or preparation for a war with the United States, as far as General Sanda had personal knowledge. The war with the U. S. just started up very suddenly when relations deteriorated too far. Japan entered the war unprepared but in the spirit of "Now or Never" "Do or Die"- the feeling being that if Japan didn't fight then, she never would be able to and we would annihilate them.

The latter part of 1942, the decision was made to concentrate production on anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition at the expense of tanks, medium, light and heavy artillery. Very few tanks were produced in '43, '44 and '45. All divisions of the army suffered for lack of divisional and heavy artillery and ammunition. In 1943 divisional artillery was ordered withdrawn

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from the Manchurian area for use in the Pacific; however, this plan proceeded very slowly and very few of the weapons ever reached their destinations due to ship sinkings. Divisions in Burma were equipped principally with captured British weapons and ammunitions.

Ammunition for divisional artillery became so critical that no training ammunition was allowed to be produced, and only 5% of combat ammunition could be used for training. This latter allowance was soon removed, and artillery units went into combat without having fired a round from their artillery weapons. Supply of small arms ammunition was adequate from quantity standpoint, but lack of shipping caused some hardship in combat areas.

It was planned to use 14 infantry divisions and 7 mixed brigades to repel the Kyushu invasion. About 1½ operations of ammunition were set up for this defensive operation; however that quantity of ammunition was not physically on Kyushu at the termination of the war.

The most critical shortages from the viewpoint of the combat armies were (1) Anti-tank weapons and ammunition for same (2) Tanks. On Leyte the Japanese had only ten tanks in all, and seven of these never saw combat due to destruction by our air-planes. The main Japanese defense against tanks was in the form of "human bombs"-men carrying specially prepared "bombs" and hurled themselves against our tanks.

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MILITARY ANALYSIS DIVISION
GROUND BRANCH
U.S.S.B.S.

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2 November 1945.

INTERROGATION OF MAJOR GENERAL SANDA, Joichiro,
OF THE SECRETARIATE OF THE WAR MINISTRY, TOKYO,
BY: COLONEL J. F. RODENHAUSER.

SUBJECT: REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPLY OF JAPANESE GROUND ARMIES.

Q. What was the method used in determining requirements for the Japanese Army?

A. The various armies submitted their estimate of requirements to GHQ by August of each year. Conferences of interested agencies were held to pass on and screen requirements. By December all requirements had been formed-up for the next fiscal year which ran from 1 April until the following 31 March.

Q. Have you always computed your requirements in this cycle?

A. No, in 1937 only they were computed semi-annually.

Q. When did you set up your requirements for the war with the United States?

A. Prior to September 1941 there was never any discussion or work on this subject. The war with the U. S. just started up suddenly when the diplomatic situation had deteriorated too far. Japan entered the war on a "Now or Never" a "Do or Die" basis without definite preparation. Japan had an immediate need for 200,000 tons of steel at once when Pearl Harbor occurred, but no way of obtaining this. There were 250 "divisions of operation" of ammunition on hand at the start of the war. The oil and gasoline supply on hand for army aviation amounted to a two years supply.

Q. Do you recall any high level decisions that were made that had a serious effect on production of certain items such as tanks, weapons and ammunition?

A. Yes, in the latter part of 1942 plans were made to concentrate production on anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition at the expense of tanks, divisional, corps and army artillery. Hence, in '43, '44 and '45 very few tanks were produced. The divisions were adversely affected through the shortage of divisional artillery weapons. In the summer of 1943 a plan was put into effect to withdraw the artillery weapons from Manchuria to equip and maintain divisions fighting in the Pacific. It took quite a while to accomplish this. The bulk of these weapons were finally destined for Okinawa, Philippines, Iwo Jima and Japan. However, due to submarines and airplanes much of this equipment was lost or not delivered to proper destination. For instance, only one-fourth of that destined for Iwo Jima ever arrived--most of the balance being sunk.

Q. Which do you believe caused the greatest disruption of transport in this case--submarines or airplanes?

A. Airplanes were definitely the most effective.

Q. Where did the troops in Burma get their artillery, if there was such a shortage all over the Pacific?

A. Their equipment was principally captured British weapons and ammunitions from the Malayan campaign. Also the large number of casualties suffered by the Japanese in this area had the effect of giving more ammunition and artillery to the smaller number of troops remaining.

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Q. If ammunition for divisional artillery was cut back in order to obtain more AA artillery and ammunition, what was the status of training ammunition?

A. No training ammunition was permitted to be produced. For a time 5% of combat ammunition could be used for training, but this was stopped as well.

Q. What effect did this practice have on the efficiency of your combat troops?

A. It affected them adversely. Some organizations went into combat without having fired a round of artillery ammunition from their weapons.

Q. What was the general supply situation on small arms and small arms ammunition?

A. Both were adequate. The big problem was delivering it to the organizations. Of 20% of requirements for small arms produced, only half of that reached the troops.

Q. What was to be the strength of your defending force on Kyushu?

A. Fourteen divisions and 7 mixed brigades. There were two brigades of tanks, but their equipment was inadequate and they amounted to only one brigade in reality. The divisions were not adequately equipped with artillery and ammunition (anti-tank). Small arms weapons and ammunition with these forces were adequate.

Q. How much ammunition was set-up for this defence of Kyushu?

A. One and one-half operations of ammunition were set-up, but it wasn't actually on the island. In fact, because of the end of the war, most of it never reached there.

Q. What do you regard as your most seriously short items as far as combat troops were concerned?

A. Anti-tank ammunition and guns, first; tanks, second. In the Leyte campaign we only had a total of ten tanks on the island, and your airforces knocked out most of those before they could do much good. Your M4 tanks were very good; so in planning for the Kyushu defense we planned to try to prevent the landing of your tanks in particular. Our main defense against your tanks was "human bombs"-men who carried specially designed "bombs" and hurled themselves against your tanks.

Q. How were raw materials allocated between Army, Navy and Civilian?

A. Only two divisions were made at high level-Military and Civilian. The Army and Navy got together and divided up between them the military allocation. The final division of this quantity was then referred to the ministry for final review and approval.