

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

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO. 456

PLACE: Tokyo  
DATE: 24 Nov 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis.

Subject: Japanese Aircraft.

Personnel interrogated and Background:

Comdr. KOFUKUDA, Mitsugi. Age; 37 years. He graduated from Officers School in 1931, followed by two years of sea duty. In December 1933 he entered KASUMI GA HARA Navy Pilot School, graduated in July 1934. From 1934 to 36 he was assigned as a fighter pilot on both land and carrier-based planes. In 1939 he was instructor for fighter pilots at OITA. From 1939 to 40 he saw action in China with the 14th Air Group (KOKUTAI). From 1940 until the end of the war he was test pilot for the Navy Air Testing Dept (SHINSABU). He took time out from Aug 42 to March 43 for assignment as Squadron Leader in the 204th Air Group (KOKUTAI).

Where Interrogated: Meiji Building Room 238.

Interrogator: Major John J. Driscoll

Interpreter: Mr. YANO, Hero

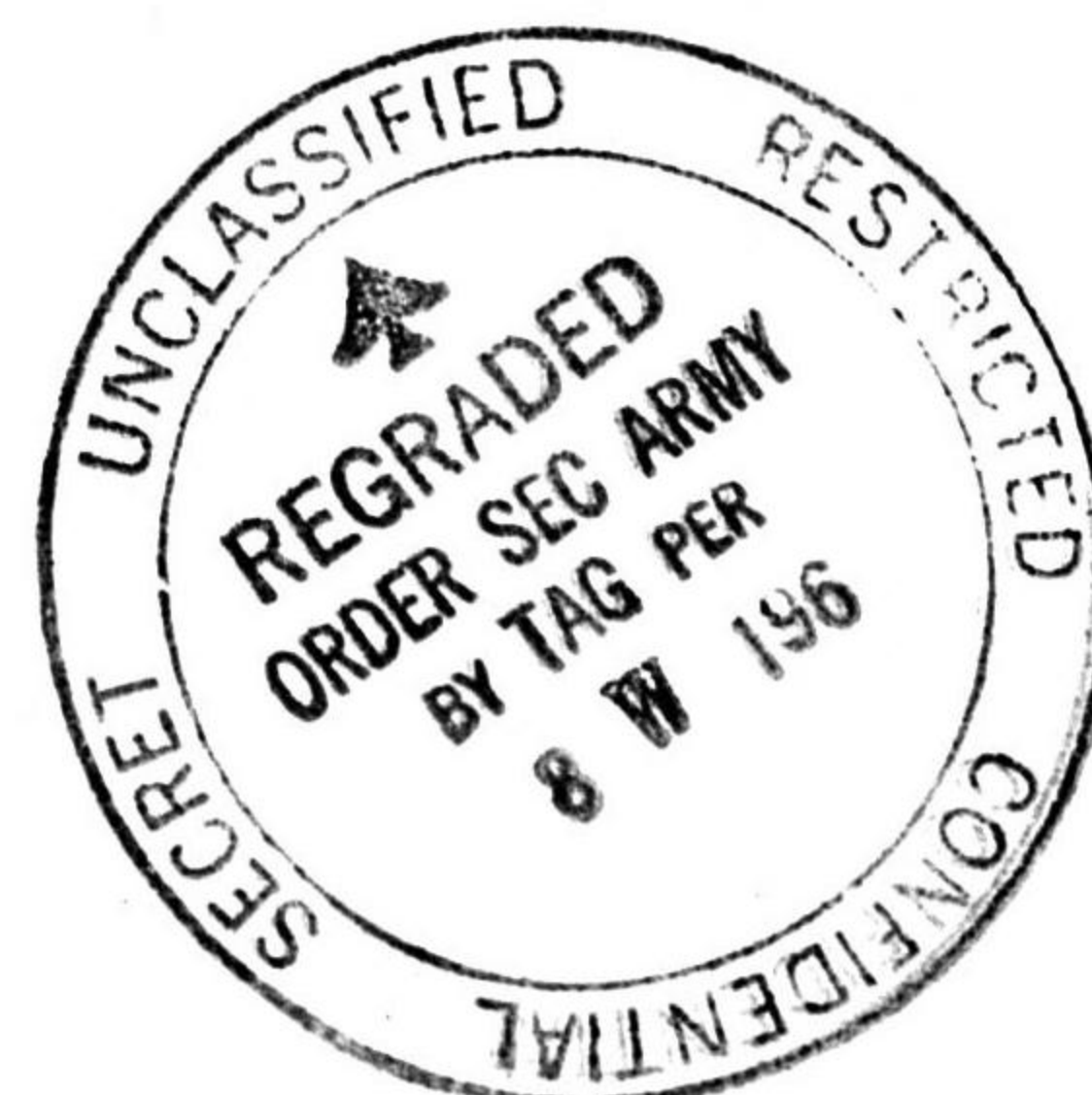
Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

Comdr KOFUKUDA presented information on new Japanese Naval aircraft; Result of encounters by his squadron against Allied aircraft in the Solomons; and some interesting remarks on Army-Navy cooperation.

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Q. Name the new model Japanese planes with which you are familiar, from your testing experience?

A. SHINDEN fighter - A single-engine pusher. Tests were completed.  
DENKO fighter - 2-engine night fighter. Tests incomplete.  
RENZAN bomber - 4-engine. Tests were completed.  
Ki-87 Single-engine Army fighter. Tests completed but results poor.

Q. What other aircraft have you tested at SHINSABU?

A. All models of the Zero fighter; the 22, 32, 52, and 62. The RAIDEN fighter. The GEKKO, The TENRAI and the REPFU.

Q. How do you explain the lack of armor plate on even some of the latest models?

A. There was a continuous debate on the pros and cons of armor plate. Some insisted on their planes being equipped with armor, and others refused to fly such aircraft. The final decision was to equip aircraft with fairly heavy armor-plate which was capable of being instantly detached at the discretion of the pilot.

Q. How do you explain the lack of self-sealing gas tanks on even some of the later models?

A. We had two types, and neither was completely satisfactory. One type, the rubber-covered aluminum style, functioned satisfactorily but was too heavy and the bulkiness made mounting in the wings difficult. The second type, the all-rubber tank, was put into use this year. Experiments began on this type almost two years ago, but technical difficulties, principally leakages, persisted.

Q. What encounters did you have with enemy aircraft?

A. Before the present war, in August 1938, I had seven combats over Hankow. These were with Soviet-made M-15's and M-16's and British-made Gladiators. I downed four and damaged one or two. During the present war I saw combat in the Solomons (mainly Guadalcanal). As Squadron Leader it was not my duty to engage the enemy unless necessary, therefore my personal claims were few. However, I will outline the activities of my squadron.

	No. of Engagements	Total Allied a/c involved	Total Jap a/c involved	Total Allied a/c destroyed
B-17	3	16	27	3
B-24	2	2	15	0
Dive Bomber				
Model ?	1	2	13	2
F4F	4	87	143	23
P-38	1	4	12	0

Q. List what you consider the best American fighters, along with Japanese aircraft which you deem equivalent or superior.

A. P-38 Best for Speed and high-altitude fighting. SHINDEN 21 equal or better; Also the SHINDEN  
P-51 Best for Range. ZERO 22, equal or better.  
F6F Best for maneuverability. ZERO 22, equal or better.

Q. How do you explain the lack of complete cooperation between the Army and Navy?

A. There were two barriers: 1. The first was mutual pride. 2. The second was the different requirements; The Navy specializing in carrier-based, and the Army in land-based planes. However, subsequent losses of aircraft carriers tended to remove this difficulty.

- Q. What was extent of their cooperation? -RESTRICTED
- A. It was limited primarily to discussions about every three months. However, at the beginning of 1945 they began to cooperate closer.
- Q. How do you explain the sudden desire for cooperation?
- A. Due to lack of materials, the Army and Navy were forced into joint design of aircraft. The AFHQ (KOKUHOMBU) realized that it was no longer possible to manufacture a large variety of planes, and that the time had come for cooperation. Discussions were commenced in the autumn of 1944, and results were expected this year.
- Q. How much was the Navy allowed to influence Army design?
- A. We were invited to criticize the original model only. After that the Army would complete the design and tests, and if successful would grant the Navy manufacturing rights. Our criticisms appeared to be sincerely considered, but were never accepted in their entirety.
- Q. Were steps taken to standardize aircraft guns?
- A. Steps were initiated, but the war ended before results could be realized.
- Q. Did you ever experience difficulties in combat due to the lack of standardization?
- A. Yes, once the Navy planes ran out of ammunition. There were piles of ammunition at a nearby Army airfield, but we could not use it as it was not interchangeable with ours. I believe also that the Army and Marines should have the same Infantry weapons.
- Q. Did you have any other combats?
- A. Yes, over the home islands from YOKOSUKA, where I was stationed as test pilot. My orders were to take off and attack enemy aircraft wherever I could without interfering with my duties. I had two encounters with B-29 formations.
- Q. What were the size of the formations and what were the results?
- A. The formations consisted of 70 and 80 B-29's. I did not succeed in doing any damage.
- Q. Did you ever receive any damage as the result of your anti-bomber attacks?
- A. Yes, I received damage to the wings of my fighter twice. Once on a nose attack on a B-17; and once on a tail attack on a B-29.
- Q. At what point of your attack were you hit?
- A. Each time the hits occurred upon the breakaway.
- Q. What is your opinion of American bomber defenses?
- A. The armament is very good. The Japanese would have suffered less if as well armed.
- Q. What were the most successful types of attacks against heavy bombers?
- A. There were two. One was a nose attack; and the other was a 90° attack from above.
- Q. Describe these more fully.
- A. The nose attack was 15° in azimuth off the nose, and 10° below the bombers line of flight. The attack from above was a half-roll which followed a collision course.
- Q. Did you ever do any air-to-air bombing?
- A. No.