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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 464)
NAV. NO. 106

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 27 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: KIJIMA: Cape ESPERANCE and CORAL SEA Battles.
KOMURA: SANTA CRUZ and MIDWAY Battles.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain KIJUMA, Kikunori, I.J.N., Chief of Staff, CruDiv 6(AOBA) 1941-42. Present at Battle of CAPE ESPERANCE and escort for SHOHO at CORAL SEA.

Where interviewed: MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Captain C. SHANDS, USN.

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. MILLSTIEN.
Mr. H. COLTON

Officers Present: Rear Admiral KOMURA, Keizo, I.J.N., Commanding Officer CHIKUMA (CA) at MIDWAY and SANTA CRUZ.

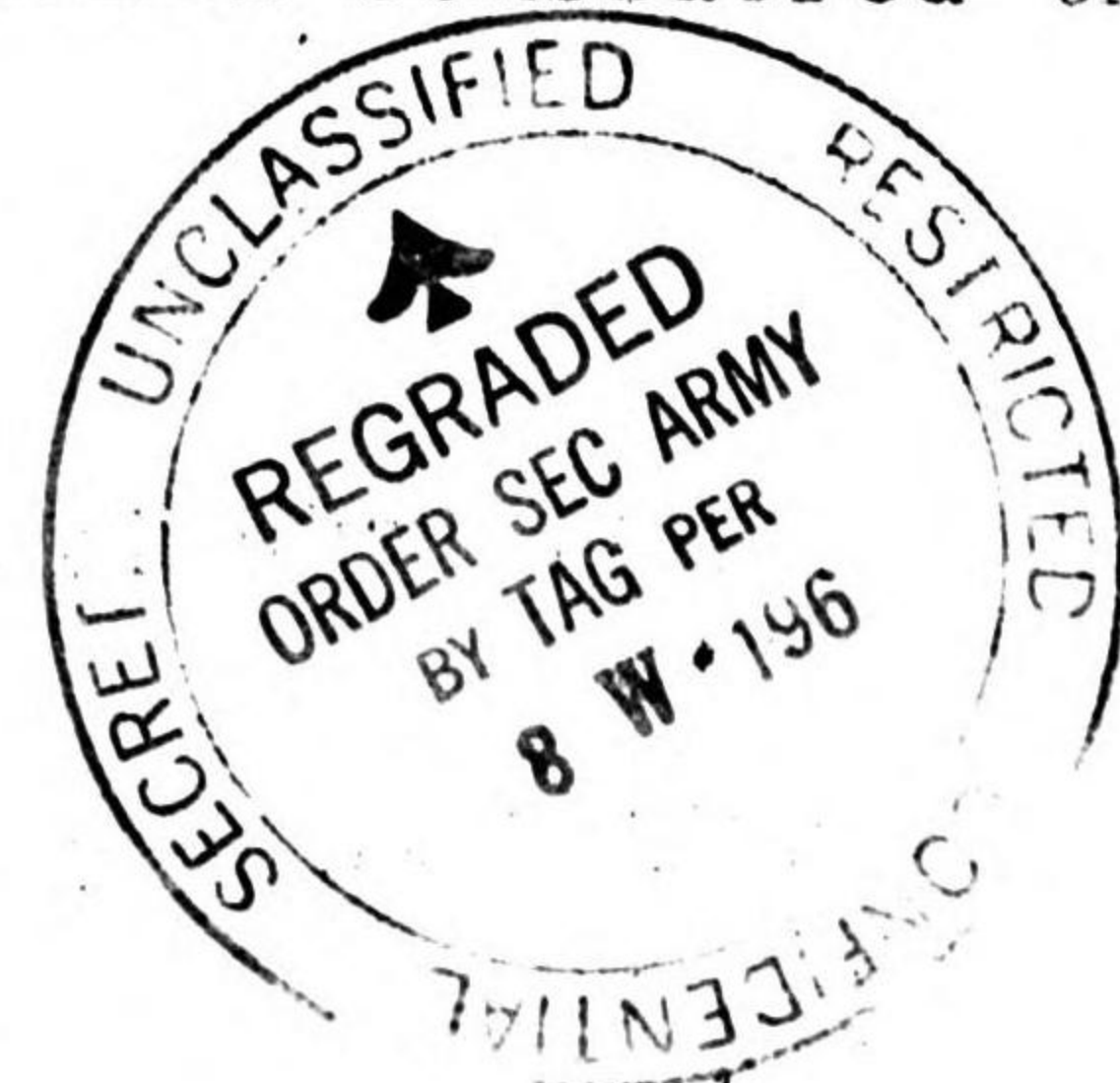
SUMMARY

CAPE ESPERANCE: CruDiv 6 (3 CA) plus 2DD, intercepted by United States cruisers off CAPE ESPERANCE night of 11 October 1942. FURATAKA (CA) and FUBUKI (DD) sunk, AOBA (CA) badly damaged. Japanese mission to bombard GUADALCANAL thwarted.

CORAL SEA: CruDiv 6 escorting SHOHO to PORT MORESBY when SHOHO was sunk by dive bombers 7 May 1942.

MIDWAY: CHIKUMA and TONE (CruDiv 8) cruiser escort for aircraft carriers at MIDWAY received minor air attack late afternoon 5 June (-9) from B-17's and dive bombers. No hits. CHIKUMA participated in rescue of survivors from HIRYU and SORYU. Rescue destroyer bombed afternoon day after battle. No hits.

SANTA CRUZ: CruDiv 8 (TONE, CHIKUMA) escorting ZUIKAKU and SHOKAKU. CHIKUMA received three hits from dive bombers about 0900 26 October 1942 (-9). Received second bombing attack late same afternoon from about 3 horizontal bombers. Three near misses at 50 meters. TONE not hit during battle. SHOKAKU and ZUIHO damaged by bombs. Failure of the general land and sea assault upon GUADALCANAL considered the turning point of the SOLOMON Campaign.



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TRANSCRIPT

Q. What ships were present in your force?

A. CruDiv 6;
AOBA (F) Rear Admiral GOTO.
FURUTAKA
KINUGASA
FUBUKI
MIRAKUMO

Q. Describe the action of your force in this battle.

A. We were proceeding to bombard your airfield on GUADALCANAL. We were also covering a landing of troops and supplies from a tender and two destroyers at TASSAFARONGA. This supply group was supposed to complete landing operations at 2200 and retire at about the same time that we were to commence our operations.

We were in a "T" formation when attacked by your ships. The AOBA was leading with the FURUTAKA and KINUGASA astern. The FUBUKI was on the port beam of the AOBA and the MURAKUMO on the starboard beam.

While we were approaching about 2000 we saw a flare or search light from the southeast. We thought that it might be our supply unit so we answered it. When there was no answer we thought that it might have been some of your forces so we used the searchlight signal again to try to draw your attention away from the supply force. A blue and white signal was to be used between the supply force and the forces on the beach.

At about 2145 we were fired upon by your ships. At first we thought the fire was from our own supply group. It was a surprise attack. All ships but the KINUGASA immediately reversed course to the right. Due to the shell fire and the congestion during the turn the KINUGASA turned left. As a result of this turn the KINUGASA only received minor damage from three hits. The AOBA was hit about 40 times and was badly damaged. The FURUTAKA and FUBUKI were sunk. The FUBUKI sank before it completed the turn, although it only received four hits. Due to the smoke from the AOBA, the MURAKUMO was not hit. The KINUGASA did most of the fighting from our force.

Soon after the action started Admiral GOTO was mortally wounded. While he was dying I told him that he could die with easy mind because we had sunk two of your heavy cruisers.

Following this action we retired to the northwest. The MURAKUMO turned back and rescued about 400 survivors. When your forces reappeared it departed the area trying to make you chase it within range of our aircraft.

Q. Did you have any three stack cruisers or auxiliaries in your force?
A. No.

Q. Were any of your supply group damaged?
A. I don't know.

Q. Could the NATSUGUMO and AKATSUKI have been the destroyers with the supply group?
A. I don't know.

Q. The official Japanese Navy Department report of losses, indicates that the MURAKUMO, NATSUGUMO and AKATSUKI were all sunk near SAVO Island on 11-12 October 1942, in addition to the FURUTAKA and FUBUKI. How do you account for their loss?

A. I don't know. I failed in this task and was relieved as soon as we arrived at RABOUL.

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain KIJUMA, Kikunor, I.J.N). -

CORAL SEA - Captain KIJIMA

Q. Were you on the AOBA 7 May when the SHOHO was sunk in the CORAL SEA?

A. Yes. The KINUGUSA, FURATAKA, ATAGO and the SAMANAMI plus one other destroyer, were also there. We were on our way to PORT MORESBY.

Q. Were any other ships hit?

A. No. There were a lot of near misses but no hits on any ship but the SHOHO. It received about 30 hits and sank straight down. The SAMANAMI picked up the survivors. About 0600 3 B-17s attacked the transports but no damages.

Q. Did you receive any other attacks in this battle?

A. The day before the SHOHO was sunk we received a horizontal bombing attack when we were about 150 miles southwest of BUIN. It was about 0900. There were about 5 B-17s in the flight 3-4000 meters high. The bombs landed about 100 meters away. No damage. This was the AOBA's baptism under fire.

Q. Did you intend to return to PORT MORESBY?

A. Not by sea. You were too strong in that area so later plans called for landing at BUNA-GONA Area and marching over the OWEN STANLEY Mountains.

Q. Were you in RABAU or TRUK during any of the carrier raids?

A. No.

See Annex A for track of Japanese ships at CAPE ESPERANCE.

Note: It was very difficult to derive any information from this officer. Subsequent information from other Japanese officers indicates that he has been contemplating Hari-Kari because he feels that his failure, and death of Admiral GOTO during the Battle of CAPE ESPERANCE, contributed to the defeat of Japan.

MIDWAY: Rear Admiral KOMURA, Keizo, I.J.N.

Q. Describe the operations of the CHIKUMA during the Battle of MIDWAY.
A. Cruiser Division 8 consisting of the TONE and CHIKUMA, provided escort for the aircraft carriers under Admiral NAGUMO. We thought that we would be attacked earlier than we were because we had sighted one of your search planes the day before the main battle. Our seaplanes were searching for your forces but due to bad weather were unable to make proper observations.

Early in the morning of 5 June (-9), the formation received a torpedo attack from aircraft but no hits were received by our ships. One member of my crew reported a torpedo wake astern of the CHIKUMA but I did not see it.

The torpedo planes came in low and were shot down by our fighters.

Q. Did any of the torpedo planes dive into your ships?

A. I did not see any. I don't think that any of them were able to get near enough.

Soon after the torpedo attack the dive bombing attacks started. At first they concentrated upon the carriers although a few bombs were dropped near the CHIKUMA about 0730 (-9). No hits.

About 1100 the SORYU was torpedoed. We attacked the submarine then lowered a boat to pick up survivors. The boat and survivors were later recovered by destroyers. Following the torpedoing of the

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain KIJUMA, Kikunori, I.J.N.).
----- (Rear Admiral KOMURA, Keizo, I.J.N.).

SORYU we went over to join the HIRYU. At about 1400 we were about 5,000 meters from the HIRYU when it was attacked by about 50 dive bombers. It was hit several times.

The TONE and CHIKUMA were also attacked about this time but no hits. The attack lasted about 30 minutes. We were attacked by B-17s at the same time but no hits. Some time later when we were about 10,000 meters from the HIRYU we were attacked again by horizontal bombers. Not many. Some were about 2-3,000 meters, others were lower. There were also some carrier borne aircraft at low altitudes but we were not hit. Some were close.

Q. Were any other ships damaged in these attacks?

A. Neither the TONE and CHIKUMA were hit. No hits reported from any other ships. All bombers concentrated upon the aircraft carriers. We learned that we needed many more anti-aircraft guns protection but we were too far apart.

Q. Were any of your battleships or destroyers attacked?

A. The KIRISHIMA and HARUNA were attacked about the same time that we were but they did not report any hits. Most of the destroyers were busy picking up survivors from the carriers which were sinking astern of us. Late the next day one reported a horizontal bombing attack but no damage. It had picked up the pilots from the HIRYU's planes. I think that there may have been a dive bombing attack too but am not sure. All destroyers returned. Our seaplanes were searching for your carriers at the time.

Q. Did you receive any more attacks during retirement?

A. No, only on the 5th while with the carriers. We expected attacks all day the 6th but none came. The MIKUMA and MOGAMI were attacked to the south of us that day, but I think that that was all. The next day (7th) there was a heavy fog. After that we returned to Japan.

EASTERN SOLOMONS: 25 August 1942.

Q. Did you receive any damage in the Battle of the Eastern SOLOMONS?

A. No, we were not attacked. We were with the heavy forces (11S, HIEI, KIRISHIMA, 7S, SUZUYA, KUMANO and 10S, NAGARA dx10) detached from the carrier force. We saw your planes going to attack and sink the RUYJO but we were not attacked. The TONE, Admiral HARA, Chuichi was the flagship with the RUYJO. In the evening after the air battle our force searched for your ships, but did not find them. We received orders from the Admiral to turn back. He said that if we had gone on one more hour we would have received much damage.

Battle of SANTA CRUZ, 26 October, 1942. Rear Admiral KOMURA.

Q. What ships were in your force?

A. 11S : HIEI (F), KIRISHIMA, Rear Admiral ABE.
8S : TONE (F), CHIKUMA.
7S : SUZUYA (F)
10S : NAGARA (F)
10dg : dx3
17dg : dx4

Q. What was your mission?

A. We were a supporting force for the Third Fleet which was made up of the First Flying Squadron (SHOKAKU, ZUIKAKU, ZUIHO and destroyers. Vice Admiral NAGUMO commanded this force. Ships of the Second Fleet under Vice Admiral KONDO were also in the area. The JUNYO

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain KIJUMA, Kikunori, I.J.N.).
----- (Rear Admiral KOMURA, Keizo, I.J.N.).

(2fs) was with that group. I don't remember the other ships. We were widely separated. Sometimes a hundred miles apart. Our fleet was supporting a general attack upon your base at GUADALCANAL.

Q. When did you receive the first information of the location of the UNITED STATES forces?

A. We had been receiving very good reports of your ships in the area from our submarines and search planes from the RUSSELL and RENNEL Islands. These reports were plentiful during October, particularly of your battleship forces south of GUADALCANAL. On 23 October, one of your patrol planes was sighted by my ship (CHIKUMA) while we were in advance of our carrier force. I think that we were near the STEWART Islands at that time. We saw patrol planes every day after that. One of our scout planes definitely located your carrier force the morning of the 26th although we knew that they must be someplace in the area because we had seen so many of your search planes.

Q. When did you receive your attacks?

A. During the afternoon of the 25th about 1300, six B-17s attacked without inflicting damage. Early the next morning (0540, 26 October) the ZUIHO was attacked by dive bombers. Two hits reported. 0800 SHOKAKU reported six hits from dive bombers.

At 0745 (-9) the CHIKUMA was attacked by about 12 dive bombers. Two bombs hit the bridge. All but 12 men in this area killed. I was badly wounded. One bomb hit behind the bridge and entered the engineering spaces killing some men and reducing our speed. Two other bombs landed very close on the starboard side amidships. I thought that they were hits at first. Did some damage from shrapnel. It was a skillful attack because we were maneuvering at high speed and firing all guns. Unfortunately we were not close enough to the other ships for protection and we did not have air cover. Late that same afternoon while retiring we were again attacked by 3 horizontal bombers. They were about 3,000 meters high. The nearest bomb landed about 50 meters off the port bow.

Q. Were any of your battleships or other cruisers damaged in this action?

A. The TONE was not hit. I don't think that any battleships were hit. No damage reports were made.

Q. What effect did this battle have upon your plans?

A. In my opinion it was more important than the November action in GUADALCANAL. Our naval losses were not as important, but the general assault to recapture GUADALCANAL failed at a time when our forces were much stronger than yours. Following that attack you were able to reinforce GUADALCANAL and increase your sea strength in that area while the naval strength available to us in the November action was reduced by this battle. We also lost some of our most experienced pilots in this action. The damage to the carrier and loss of pilots prevented proper air coverage during the November battle. After this action we were never able to reinforce our garrison on GUADALCANAL with sufficient strength to recapture it. You were able to use GUADALCANAL as a base to capture the remainder of the islands. I think that this was the turning point of the war in that area.

Q. To what reasons do you attribute the loss of this battle?

A. Although we retired and my ship was badly damaged I don't feel that we lost the naval battle because we sank some of your ships. I feel that the general attack was a failure because the Army

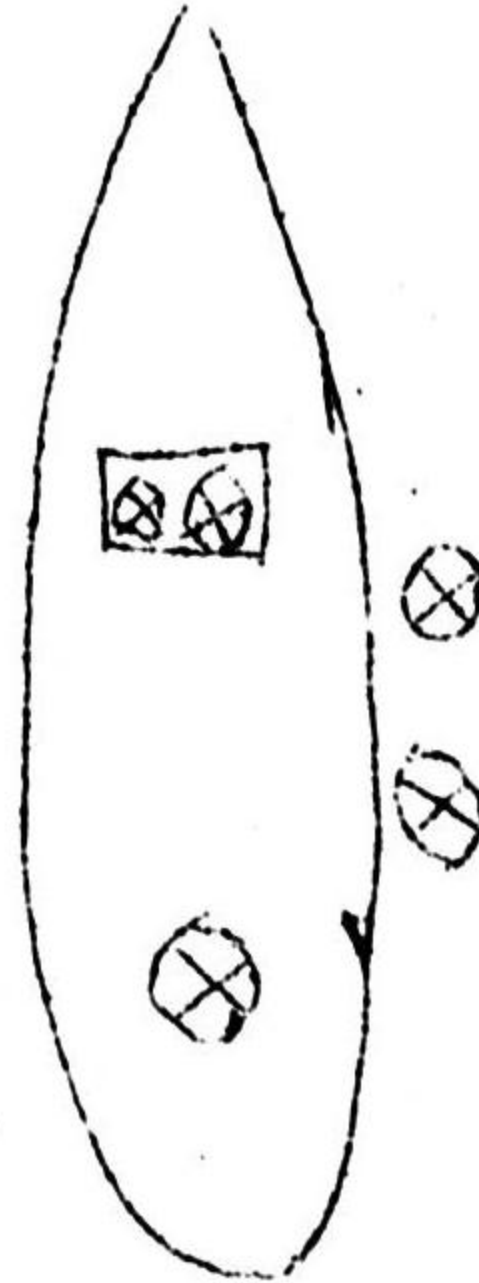
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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain KIJUMA, Kikunori, I.J.N.).
----- (Rear Admiral KOMURA, Keizo, I.J.N.).

failed to carry out its schedule in recapturing GUADALCANAL. That forced us to remain in one area under observation of your search planes. When the battle finally occurred our fuel supply was very low. Unfortunately our ships were damaged at a critical time.

Bomb hits on CHIKUMA. 26 October 1942.



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R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

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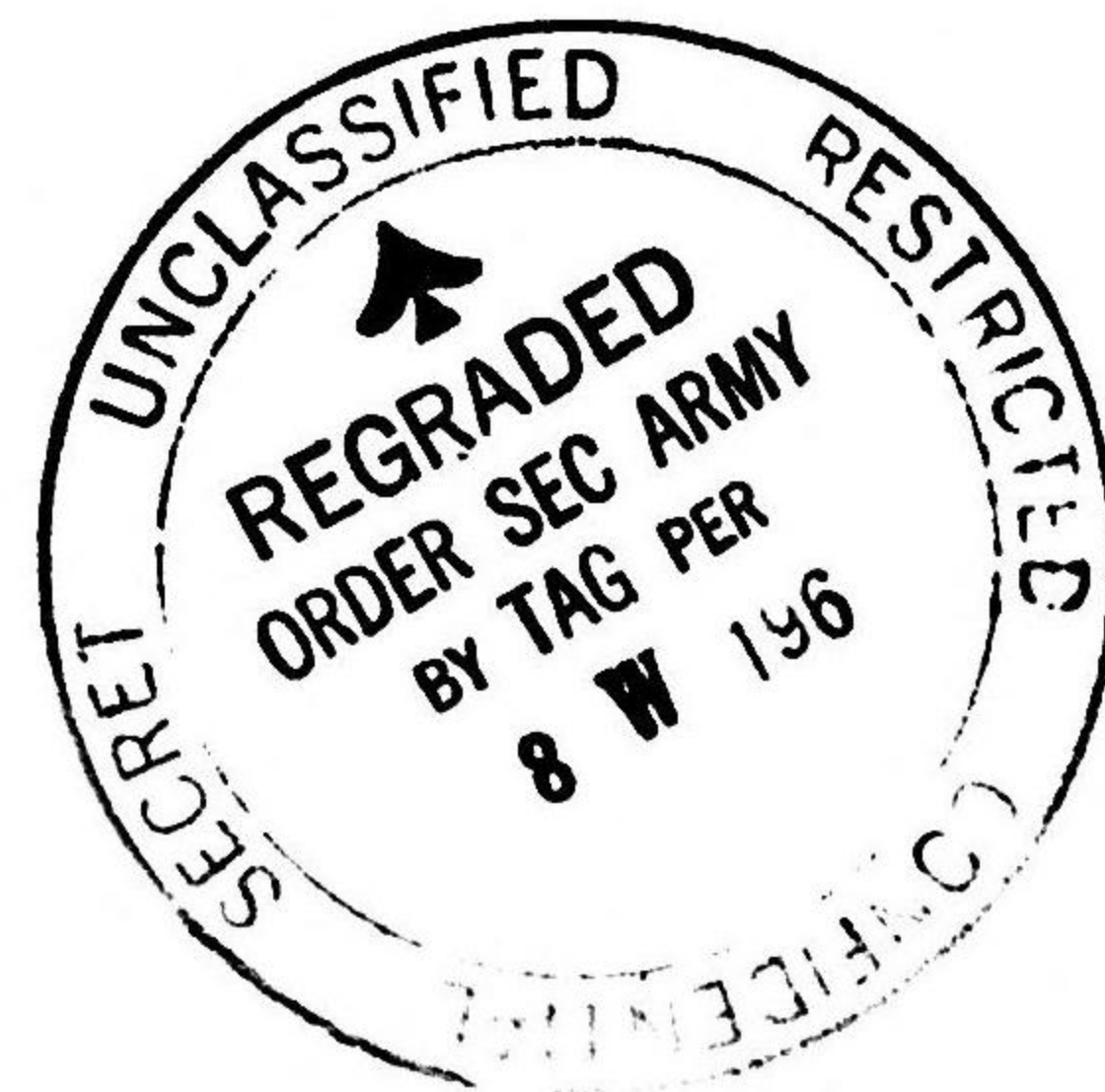
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Interrogation of: Captain KIJUMA, Kikunori, I.J.N.

Interrogation by: Captain C. Shands, USN.

The attached chart(s) supplement Interrogation No.
USSBS 464 (Nav No. 106).

Enclosure: Annex "A"



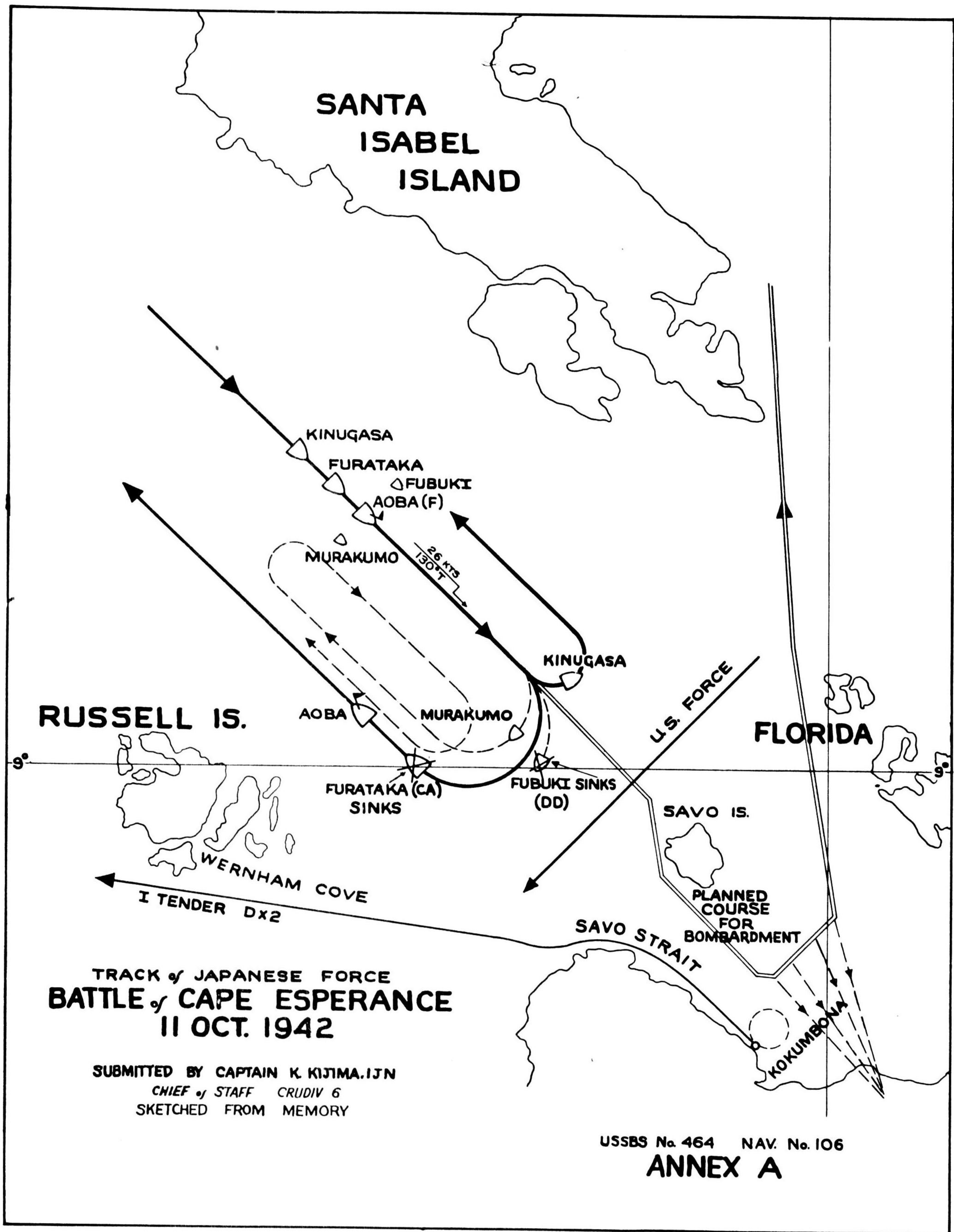
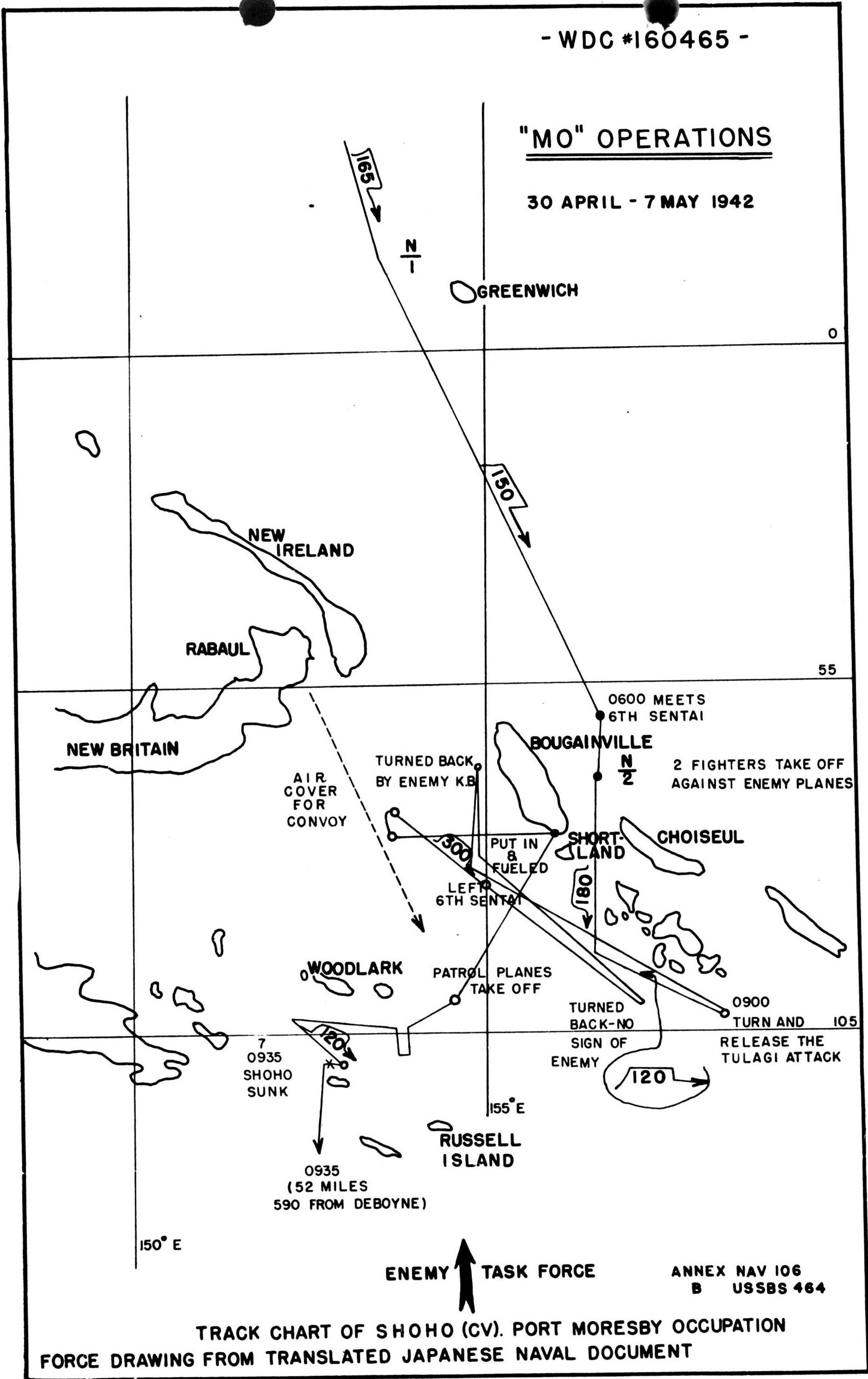


PLATE 106-1

- WDC #160465 -

"MO" OPERATIONS

30 APRIL - 7 MAY 1942



TRACK CHART OF SHOHO (CV). PORT MORESBY OCCUPATION
FORCE DRAWING FROM TRANSLATED JAPANESE NAVAL DOCUMENT

