

Ship + Rail Transp

RESTRICTED

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 446)
NAV. NO. 97

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 19 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division

Subject: Air Operations by Japanese Naval Air Forces based at
RABAU, including NEW GUINEA and SOLOMONS.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain MIYAZAKI, Takashi, I.J.N., was a regular officer of 21 years service. He served as a member of KASUNUGAURA Air Force at KASUNUGAURA from December 1941 to September 1942; served as Commanding Officer of the Fourth Air Squadron at RABAU from September 1942 to April 1943; senior staff officer of the 25th Air Flotilla at RABAU from April 1943 to April 1944; served in the YOKOSUKA Technical Department at YOKOSUKA from April 1944 to February 1945; served on the 5th Air Fleet Staff at KANOYA from February 1945 to October 1945; served at SASEBO Navy Base at SASEBO from October 1945 until present.

Where interviewed: Room 710, MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Captain C. SHANDS, USN.
Commander T. H. MOORER, USN.

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. S. MILSTEIN, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

This interrogation covers in general Japanese Naval Air Operations in the RABAU Area from the beginning of the war until 18 February 1944. At that time all air strength was withdrawn from RABAU.



RESTRICTED

446-1-

TRANSCRIPT

- Q. Describe the organization of the Japanese Naval Air Force in RABAU
- A. From February to April 1942 the FOURTH Air Group had 36 bombers and 36 fighters attached to it. Also at RABAU was the YOKOHAMA Air Group which had a strength of 18 flying boats. In April 1942 the the FOURTH Air Group was reduced in size and lost its 36 fighters to the TINIAN Air Group. These three forces, the FOURTH Air Group, the YOKOHAMA Flying Group and the TINIAN Flying Group were organized into the 25th Air Flotilla.

In November (?) 1942 the names of the above forces were changed as follows: FOURTH Air Group became the 702 Group; the YOKOHAMA Air Group became the 801 Air Group and the TINIAN Air Group became the 251 Air Group. The mission of the 25th Air Flotilla was to attack NEW GUINEA as far west as MADANG and southwest to MORESEY as well as the entire SOLOMON ISLAND Area.

It was customary for air units in the Japanese Air Force to have one-third of their strength additional in reserve, but the units at RABAU did not get reinforcements to this extent.

In November 1942, the 25th Air Flotilla returned to JAPAN for training, rest and replacement. The 801 Air Unit did not return from JAPAN to RABAU, but remained at YOKOHAMA while the 251st and 702nd units did return.

In July 1943, the 251st was attached to the 26th Air Flotilla and was replaced by the 704th Air Unit which came from the NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES. In November 1943, the 25th Air Flotilla consisted of the 751st Air Unit which had come from NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES, the 253rd which had come from JAPAN and the 251st which was transferred back from the 26th Air Flotilla; by November 1943, the 702nd and 704th Air Units had completely lost all their planes.

- Q. What was the most western point to which the planes in RABAU operated?
- A. To HORN Island south of NEW GUINEA in 1942, and MADANG, along the north coast in 1943.
- Q. Were there any Army aircraft in RABAU which cooperated with the Navy in NEW GUINEA operations?
- A. Up until November 1942, no Army aircraft had gone to RABAU. Later the FOURTH Air Army was organized in RABAU and then moved to WEWAK.
- Q. At what places in NEW GUINEA did the 25th Air Flotilla have bases?
- A. The three bases we had in NEW GUINEA were LAE, SALAMAUA and BUNA. The LAE Field was used from August after the start of the SOLOMONS Operation. We had 20 fighters there. The SALAMAUA Field was too small and never used. The BUNA Field was used after July or August 1942 for the SOLOMONS Operations and also as a staging field for the planes from LAE enroute for MORESBY attacks. No planes were based at BUNA.
- Q. What time were these fields abandoned?
- A. By the time I returned from JAPAN in April 1943, due to the inability to supply the bases at LAE, it was no longer usable. SALAMAUA was the same, and BUNA was rendered unusable by the Allied advance up the coast by December 1942 and January 1943.
- Q. After the loss of the bases in NEW GUINEA what operations over the NEW GUINEA area were conducted by the 25th Air Flotilla?
- A. We conducted night bombing operations over MORESBY, BUNA and MILNE Bay.
- Q. At what time during the war were the forces at RABAU at maximum strength?

RESTRICTED

(Transcript of interrogation of Captain MIYAZAKI, Takashi, I.J.N.)

-
- A. (See graph attached herewith for general information regarding strength).
- Q. After the commencement of the GUADALCANAL Operations, from what source were reinforcements supplied?
- A. From TRUK, the MARSHALLS, and the CELEBES. Although some reinforcements were new planes from JAPAN, most were from the 24th Air Flotilla at TRUK, SAIPAN and the MARSHALLS and the 23rd Flotilla at KENDARI. This transfer to RABAUl reduced the strength of the above bases.
- Q. At what time did the Army have aircraft based at RABAUl?
- A. I do not know for sure. Most of the Army was in NEW GUINEA. When I returned from JAPAN in April, there were about 60 planes in the MUNDA Area. After the MUNDA Operation those remaining were all withdrawn from the SOLOMONS and sent back to JAPAN. Only a few Army reconnaissance planes were left in RABAUl.
- Q. At what time were the last reinforcements received in the RABAUl Area?
- A. A few came, only 10 planes, in December 1943. None after that date.
- Q. Was it after or before the loss of the ADMIRALTY ISLANDS that it was decided to move planes to TRUK?
- A. Almost immediately after TRUK was attacked (17 February) we withdrew our planes to TRUK. I think the movement was 18, 19, or 20 February.
- Q. Did any planes operate from RABAUl in opposition to the ADMIRALTY ISLANDS Invasion?
- A. There were only about 10 planes available at the time of the ADMIRALTY landing. They made one or two attacks.
- Q. There was a rapid decline in air strength from October 1943 until the first of February 1944; is that correct?
- A. Yes, that is correct.
- Q. Why were the planes sent to TRUK?
- A. After TRUK had been attacked it was necessary to replace losses and if possible so as to stop your advance, to make counter-attack.
- Q. At what strength were the RABAUl Air Forces when TRUK was attacked?
- A. We sent 120 planes to TRUK, leaving about ten in RABAUl.
- Q. What effect did the American carrier attacks on LAE and SALAMAUA on 10 March 1941 have on the operations of the 25th Air Flotilla?
- A. In that attack six fighters from the FOURTH Air Group came from RABAUl, staged at GASMATA and attempted to land at the LAE Field; but due to the bad weather only one or two were able to land. The rest returned to GASMATA. The idea was to stage at GASMATA, go to LAE and engage in defense of the field and the transports in that area.
- Q. What action was taken by the Japanese aircraft in RABAUl during the occupation of MILNE Bay by the Allies?
- A. Attacks were made against coast-wise shipping and U.S. landings. We did not make any day attacks on MILNE, but made a couple of night attacks. In middle of May 1943, the Japanese attacked your base at BUNA, using about 50 fighters and about 20 BETTYS.

RESTRICTED

Transcript of interrogation of (Captain MIYAZAKI, Takashi, I.J.N.)

Q. What was the purpose of that attack?

A. The mission was to destroy American land forces at BUNA and prevent their advance.

Q. Where did you discover the Allied Task Force; when did you realize that the invasion of LAE and SALAMAUA was to take place?

A. We realized that an operation was pending due to the heavy concentrations of shipping in BUNA and MILNE Bay; and also, due to the fact that we were using a great part of RABAU strength in the SOLOMONS Operations, we assumed you would take advantage of this fact to advance up the NEW GUINEA Coast. In August the Japanese attacked a convoy with the object of sinking as many ships as possible. The convoy was attacked while heading for the landing point for the attack on LAE. The invasion force was sighted by a patrol plane, and planes were sent to attack it. According to my information we registered bomb and torpedo hits on one or two cruisers and two destroyers, with no certainty as to whether or not sinkings resulted. The participating aircraft were from the 25th and 26th Air Flotillas and consisted of 58 fighters and 18 light bombers.

Q. During the month of September, when the LAE-SALAMAUA Area was particularly active, were continuous strikes scheduled for that area?

A. During this period we planned to patrol every day, but were able to make only one or two daylight attacks each week due to heavy requirements for the BUIN Operation. Therefore we planned to make night attacks when weather permitted. However, the total attack scheduled was not very heavy until the end of November when the issue in the SOLOMONS was decided. At that time we thought we would be able to increase attacks on FINSCHAFEN and LAE Area during December, but in actuality attacks were no more frequent than during preceding three months due to the heavy losses in RABAU.

Q. I would like to know what effect the American carrier raids of 5 to 11 November had on the RABAU Air Force.

A. During October as a result of low level B-25 attacks, our force lost 40 or 50 planes on the ground; but as a result of the carrier attacks in November, our force was not particularly affected except for some losses due to aerial combat. Your carrier attacks seemed to direct more attention to shipping in the harbor than to attempts to destroy planes on the airfields.

Q. What efforts were made to launch counter-attacks against American carriers?

A. There were constant plans for a Japanese Surface Task Force to attack American Carrier Task Force, but in spite of sending BETTYS out to patrol, they were not able to discover the location of the carrier force; or if they did discover it, they never were able to get information back to the base; so those plans were not realized. Actually we had insufficient fighter strength to furnish proper air cover necessary to attack your carrier force with out surface ships.

RESTRICTED

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain, IJN -----

- Q. Was there any special plan in effect which would provide for attack by land based planes against American Fleet units?
- A. We conducted daily searches of three or four planes which had orders to immediately inform the base of carrier task force sightings, in which case a group of BETTYS were always held in readiness for an attack. We were losing on the average of five planes each week, particularly in the searches of the SOLOMON SEA. North of NEW IRELAND, in January of 1944, we discovered an American carrier force and attacked it with undetermined results. The plan of battle was to send out BETTYS at noon with the prospect of sighting the American Force after sunset in order to carry out a night torpedo attack.
- Q. Were these planes sent out singly or in groups?
- A. In groups of three or four.
- Q. During what period were these search tactics employed?
- A. September 1943 to about January 1944. Before September, according to the plan, if searches resulted in enemy sightings during the daytime we attacked immediately.
- Q. Describe Japanese Naval Air Force action during the occupation of ARAWE and Cape GLOUCESTER.
- A. Against these landings we planned to render continuous attacks which lasted three or four days from the time of landing. The plan was to have two daylight attacks and one night attack. Fighters would engage in diving and strafing and the light bombers in bombing during the day while the BETTYS would make torpedo attacks at night. Each attack of the fighters, bombers or BETTYS would consist of between 20 and 30 planes.
- Q. Were the operations conducted as planned?
- A. This was not merely a plan but was actually carried out. The standard plan at this time was immediately upon sighting a landing force to send out all available planes.
- Q. At what time was the Cape GLOUCESTER landing force first located?
- A. The above air attack tactics were carried on the greatest extent against the landings at ARAWE, very little carried out against the Cape GLOUCESTER landing, ARAWE landing was discovered the morning of the landing by accident by a patrol plane. Information regarding the Cape GLOUCESTER landing was sent to us by Japanese ground forces at GLOUCESTER. Upon receipt of the information from Cape GLOUCESTER, the 25th Air Flotilla sent out about 8 BETTYS to carry out night attacks only; no day attacks were made. These night attacks were continued until January when American occupation of GLOUCESTER was accomplished.
- Q. Describe Japanese air action during the ADMIRALTY Occupation?
- A. There was very little air action taken against the ADMIRALTY Occupation. It was limited to patrol and possibly only two attacks. At that time all aircraft had been withdrawn to the TRUK Area leaving only 10 planes, so these two attacks were carried out by two or three planes at a time. The little effort available was exerted against the GREEN Islands which were given high priority by Senior Headquarters due to proximity of GREEN Island to RABAU. However, those of us on the spot felt that unwise, and that the ADMIRALTIES were more important strategically. The withdrawal from RABAU was commenced the day after the UNITED STATES carrier attack on TRUK, and extended for a period of three days (18-19-20 February).
- Q. During the time that the RABAU Air Force was active, were daily searches always conducted in the SOLOMON SEA as well as the area to the east of RABAU; was this routine?

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain, IJN)

- A. Yes, the area to the south of RABAUl was searched by BETTYS for a distance of 650 miles until November 1942. The SOLOMONS SEA Area was covered by BETTYS from May 1943 to September 1943. Beginning with the occupation of LAE and SALAMAUUA, night searches were carried on to January 1944, covering the entire north coast of NEW GUINEA from Cape WARD HUNT to MADANG.
- Q. What effort was made to pass the information obtained from the searches to the Army Air Forces at WEWAK?
- A. We informed the Eighth Area Army at RABAUl. They informed the Fourth Air Army at WEWAK.
- Q. Was the Army air force conducting air searches in this area at the same time?
- A. Due to shortage of planes, the Army conducted only occasional one or two plane day searches no night searches conducted.
- Q. Was the Army air force in NEW GUINEA of any assistance in the attacks on the LAE, SALAMAUUA, Cape GLOUCESTER convoys?
- A. The Army conducted occasional independent attacks on the LAE convoy but did not attack at GLOUCESTER, to best of my knowledge.
- Q. Did the Army air force based in RABAUl and MUNDA participate in any action in the NEW GUINEA Area?
- A. I am fairly certain that no NEW GUINEA attacks were made by Army air force in RABAUl. About 60 Army aircraft were based in the RABAUl - MUNDA Area in January 1943 and remained until the Allied capture of MUNDA when all aircraft which had not been destroyed were withdrawn. Most aircraft were destroyed; only a few reconnaissance planes were left in the RABAUl Area.
- Q. What liaison existed between Army and Navy Air Forces; was there any cooperation at all in attacks and searches?
- A. The Army assisted with limited daylight patrols; they could not patrol at night. There was occasional cooperation and on three attacks the Army and Navy went out to attack MUNDA; but cooperation was in low level, not by senior officers.
- Q. In your opinion why was the majority of the RABAUl effort placed in the SOLOMONS Area rather than the NEW GUINEA Area?
- A. Originally it was thought that the Army would take care of the NEW GUINEA Area and the Navy was anxious to take over the SOLOMONS Area, because we felt, from a Navy point of view, it was more important. As it turned out, the Army wasn't able to send enough planes to NEW GUINEA for its defense and the Navy was forced to contribute as much defense as possible.
- Q. What effect did the drain of naval effort toward the NEW GUINEA Area have on the success of the operations in the SOLOMONS?
- A. Up until the loss of TOROKINA, if we had been able to use all the aircraft we had, I think we would have been able to hold back your forces in the SOLOMONS because the Navy's job was to insure arrival of supplies to Army troops. This we were unable to do because of ship losses which might have been prevented with sufficient aircraft. After TOROKINA Operations I think the SOLOMONS Campaign was lost and NEW GUINEA Operations had no effect.
- Q. If the SOLOMONS Operations had not been going on, do you feel that the force in RABAUl was sufficient to stop the movement up the NEW GUINEA coast?
- A. I think that before you established 4 or 5 airfields at BUNA and had as many as 200 planes there, we would have been able to push back Americans with what air strength we had at RABAUl; but once Americans were firmly established at BUNA, it was impossible.
- Q. What effect do you think this constant drain of reinforcements down from the MARSHALLS and GILBERT Islands and from TRUK Area to RABAUl had on the success of your defense against our drive across the CENTRAL PACIFIC?

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain, IJN) -----

- A. I think the result of constant reinforcement from the MARSHALLS - GILBERTS greatly weakened that area. We didn't get many from the MARIANAS, mostly from the MARSHALLS - GILBERTS which was greatly weakened. Although we were getting newly manufactured planes from JAPAN, we also were getting many reinforcements from NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES and MARSHALLS - GILBERTS which weakened them in those two areas.
- Q. At what time did the officer in command of the Japanese Naval Air Force at RABAUl feel that the SOLOMONS Area was lost?
- A. In October 1943 when the 26th Air Flotilla withdrew their planes from BUIN.
- Q. What was the biggest source of your aircraft losses?
- A. Our greatest fighter losses were caused in aerial campaign against American fighters. Regarding bombers, first cause of loss was by ship anti-aircraft fire; second, by base anti-aircraft fire; third, by American fighters; fourth, planes lost on the ground; fifth, by weather.
- Q. What percent of your aircraft were destroyed on the ground by bombing and strafing attacks?
- A. At the beginning of the war there weren't many lost by strafing but after TOROKINA (EMPRESS AUGUSTA BAY) was taken, the Americans used that field, and the percentage of planes lost by ground strafing was considerable, although not so much in actual quantity because we didn't have many planes left.
- Q. Was the availability of aircraft affected by lack of supplies or the skill of the maintenance personnel?
- A. In the beginning of the war during 1942, if 100% of the planes were available for an attack one day, the next day 80% would be available, on the third day 50%. In 1943 at any one time, only 50% of the planes were ever available and on the next day following an all out operation only 30% would be available. By the end of 1943 only 40% at any one time would be serviceable. In 1942 the low availability was due to lack of supply; from 1943 on it was due to lack of skill on the part of maintenance personnel and faulty manufacturing methods. Inspection of the aircraft and spare parts prior to their delivery to RABAUl was inadequate, and there were many poorly constructed and weak parts discovered. The Japanese tried to increase production figures so fast that proper examination was impossible.
- Q. During the BISMARCK SEA Battle, 2 March 1943, did the RABAUl naval air force make any attempt to give the Japanese convoys air cover?
- A. The 21st and 26th Air Flotillas were sent out but due to insufficiency of numbers they suffered severe losses and were unable to stop your attacks.
- Q. At what time did the Army air forces in NEW GUINEA commence operations to the eastward so as to be of assistance to the naval air force in the NEW GUINEA Operations?
- A. They commenced patrolling during early 1943, mainly weather flights.
- Q. What time did Army aircraft participate in large scale operations?
- A. The first operations of any scale conducted by the Japanese Army air force in NEW GUINEA were against Allied landings in SALAMAUA and LAE.
- Q. Was any effort made at RABAUl to counter the American flying boat night attacks on Japanese shipping?
- A. We didn't attempt any countermeasures against flying boat night attacks on convoys, but in May 1943 did train some night fighters for protection of RABAUl.
- Q. Was there any special effort made by the Japanese to destroy the tenders and bases from which American flying boats operated?
- A. After our attacks on MORESBY in 1942, we never attacked flying boat bases nor did we ever attempt to attack seaplane tenders.

RESTRICTED

Transcript of Interrogation of (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain, IJN)

CORAL SEA

- Q. What operations did you carry out during the Battle of the CORAL Sea 4 - 8 May, 1942?
- A. We conducted air searches from RABAU with both seaplanes and land planes. Sometimes we operated from seaplane tenders at SHORTLAND, RUSSELL, LAE or TULAGI. The searches covered a triangular sector to the south of the bases. Three sectors were searched with a 650 mile radius.

The first knowledge that we had of the presence of your carriers in the CORAL Sea was following your attack upon TULAGI, 4 May. In that attack we lost 3 or 4 float type fighters. Two old type destroyers were damaged. The KIKIZUKI (ODD) was beached and later sunk, the other returned to RABAU. One supply ship may have been hit but not sunk. Three or four small landing boats which had taken men and supplies to GAVUTU were also lost.

We also had twelve planes operating from LAE when you attacked TULAGI. We did not know the position of your carriers at that time so after your attack we sent all but two, which were out of order, on a search to the east. It was fortunate because LAE was attacked by Australian planes just after they had left. We did not have any planes operating from SALAMAUA. These search planes returned to SHORTLAND where they operated for about a week then went to RABAU.

On the following day (5th) one of our seaplanes from the RUSSELL Islands located your force about 200 miles south of RENNELL Island. I think that we lost contact the next day but on the 7th received a report from a carrier search plane that your carrier force had been located. This report was an error because the carrier planes attacked your supply ships.

Early the same morning (7th) our search planes located some of your cruisers and destroyers about 500 miles south of RABAU. These were seaplanes from SHORTLAND. As soon as we could load torpedoes we sent twelve (12) twin engine attack planes (Bettys) accompanied by 20 fighters from RABAU. These planes made a torpedo attack upon your cruiser force. We received incomplete reports because only two torpedo planes returned. We did not lose any fighters however. I think that two of your ships were damaged and one sunk. One ship was identified as one of your heavy cruisers. There were also several British cruisers and destroyers.

- Q. Did you have any bombing planes in this attack?
- A. No. All planes carried only one torpedo each. That was the only attack made by the shore based planes of the South-eastern Area Fleet. After that day our searches were made by groups of four planes loaded with torpedoes but we did not locate any of your ships. I think that all other attacks were made by our carrier planes because your ships were out of range of our shore based planes.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Transcript of Interrogation of (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain IJN)

GUADALCANAL

- Q. What was your air strength in the TULAGI-GUADALCANAL Area on 7 August, 1942?
- A. We had eight (8) float fighters (Zeros) permanently based there. We also had 18 four-engine flying boats (KAWANISHI 97) of the YOKAHAMA Group which were operating in this general area. We did not have any landplanes on GUADALCANAL although we had made one or two trial landings there with light planes. There were no seaplanes on GUADALCANAL.

On the day of your attack we lost all eight of the fighters and 10 to 12 of the flying boats. About four were operating from SHORTLAND. Some had already been lost in operations.

Early in the day we lost communication with GAVUTU so did not know what happened. Later we did not think that our personnel had fought very well.

- Q. On 8 August you made a very determined aircraft torpedo attack upon our transport force. Do you have any information concerning your losses in this attack?
- A. We sent down 20 twin engine attack planes (Bettys) armed with torpedoes and 24 fighters as cover. I think that the fighters turned back due to weather conditions just before reaching GUADALCANAL. No fighters were lost. 12 landed at BUKA and 12 returned to RABAUL. Only 3 torpedo planes returned. Two landed at RABAUL. One landed at B/LLALE. It was reported that we sank two of your cruisers and three transports.

- Q. Did you plan any night bombing or torpedo attacks upon GUADALCANAL?
- A. No mass attacks. At first we sent one or two planes down at night if the weather was favorable just to keep the forces there disturbed. Both landplanes and seaplanes were used. We made night attacks later around MUNDA. We were forced to do it there because of losses in day attacks.

- Q. What were your plans regarding establishing bases in that area?
- A. We had no big plans for seaplanes. Just the bases at GAVUTU and HALAVO. We usually operated seaplanes from tenders. We had planned to have a large landplane base on GUADALCANAL that would give us a radius of action to the south and east about the same as we had from RABAUL.

BATTLE OF EASTERN SOLOMONS 25 August, 1942.

- Q. What operations did you carry out in the Battle of the Eastern SOLOMONS?
- A. The 25th Squadron based at RABAUL searched to 160-30 E then back to SHORTLAND. The patrol planes based in the SHORTLANDS searched out to 164-00 E. On 22 August one of our patrol planes sighted and reported your carrier force. I think it was about noon. The plane did not return. We did not make contact again after that although we had two groups searching. I think that we lost one other patrol plane late that same day. About noon the 25th, twenty attack planes (Bettys) bombed your airfield in support of our troop landings. I think that we lost 5 planes in that attack.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Transcript of Interrogation of (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain, IJN)

- Q. What damages were received at BUIN in the raid of 5 Oct., 1942?
- A. A few planes there were lost. Some holes in the landing strips which were repaired. It was being used as a staging field at that time.
- Q. What operations did you conduct in the Battle of SANTA CRUZ, 26 Oct.?
- A. Only search operations, against your ships. I do not recall any contacts. We also carried out attacks against GUADALCANAL during this period.
- Q. What were your operations at the Battle of GUADALCANAL, November 1942?
- A. I was in Japan from November 42 to April 1943 so am not familiar with those operations.
- Q. What is your estimate of your aircraft losses in the GUADALCANAL campaign?
- A. About 1,000, between August 1942 and February 1943, during the GUADALCANAL campaign. About 500 between February and June 1943 and about 1000 between June 1943 and January 1944. Most of the planes lost during 1943 were lost in the MUNDA-NEW GEORGIA -BOUGAINVILLE defense.
- Q. Here are some official Japanese figures of aircraft losses during this period. Check them with your figures.
- A. They appear correct. (See Chart).
- Q. When was your greatest loss?
- A. I think during the MUNDA campaign, although in April or May 1943 we lost about 70 out of 130 planes attacking GUADALCANAL. About half of the planes in that attack were army. The losses were about equal.
- Q. What were the effects of our carrier air strike on the BUKA-BONIS fields 1 - 2 November 1943?
- A. Damaged about 15 planes, destroyed some supplies and damaged some harbor shipping. Prevented this field from being used during your BOUGAINVILLE operations.
- Q. How successful were you in the use of night fighters?
- A. We sent up one night fighter at night which would usually shoot down one or two bombers. We averaged about five bombers a week. At first the B-17's were very easy targets because they did not take evasive action. Starting about July 1943 when they took evasive action our results were poor. It was always difficult to shoot down the Beaufighters because they were fast and maneuverable.
- Q. Did you use radar fighter direction or radar in your night fighters?
- A. No. The enemy planes were first located by land radar and then the night fighter informed by voice radio. After that the plane was spotted in a searchlight and the fighter made an individual attack.
- Q. In your opinion as Chief of Staff of air operations at RABAU during this period, what had the greatest adverse effect upon your operations?

RESTRICTED

Transcript of Interrogation of (MIYAZAKI, Takashi, Captain IJN)

- A. The loss of shipping was the most serious loss in our operations. We were dependent upon shipping for all of our supplies, except aircraft. We flew most of them into our fields. Without fuel, ammunition and replacement of technical personnel our aircraft were useless. We were able to repair the landing strips without much delay, but we were always short of aircraft fuel and ammunition. This was also true for anti-aircraft ammunition. We generally had sufficient food. We also lost most of our best naval pilots in this period. Beginning in 1943 we were unable to replace these losses with equally trained pilots. This loss became most serious in our later naval operations.
- Q. What immediate effect did our operations against your airforce have upon the defense of the SOLOMONS?
- A. There was no serious effect at first except the loss of pilots. We had sufficient aircraft at the beginning. During the campaign our aircraft and pilot losses became too great to make it practical to continue to hold the SOLOMONS. Without aircraft cover and support we were unable to supply our garrisons without a useless expenditure of surface shipping. When our attempt to hold the SOLOMONS was at its greatest in the last part of 1943, your advance through the GILBERTS made it impracticable to hold the SOLOMONS any longer. At that time our naval air force had become too weak to assist in the defense of the GILBERTS.

Ship & Rail Team

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

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

Washington, D. C.
January 1946

Interrogation No. USSBS 446 - Sup.
(Nav. No. 97)

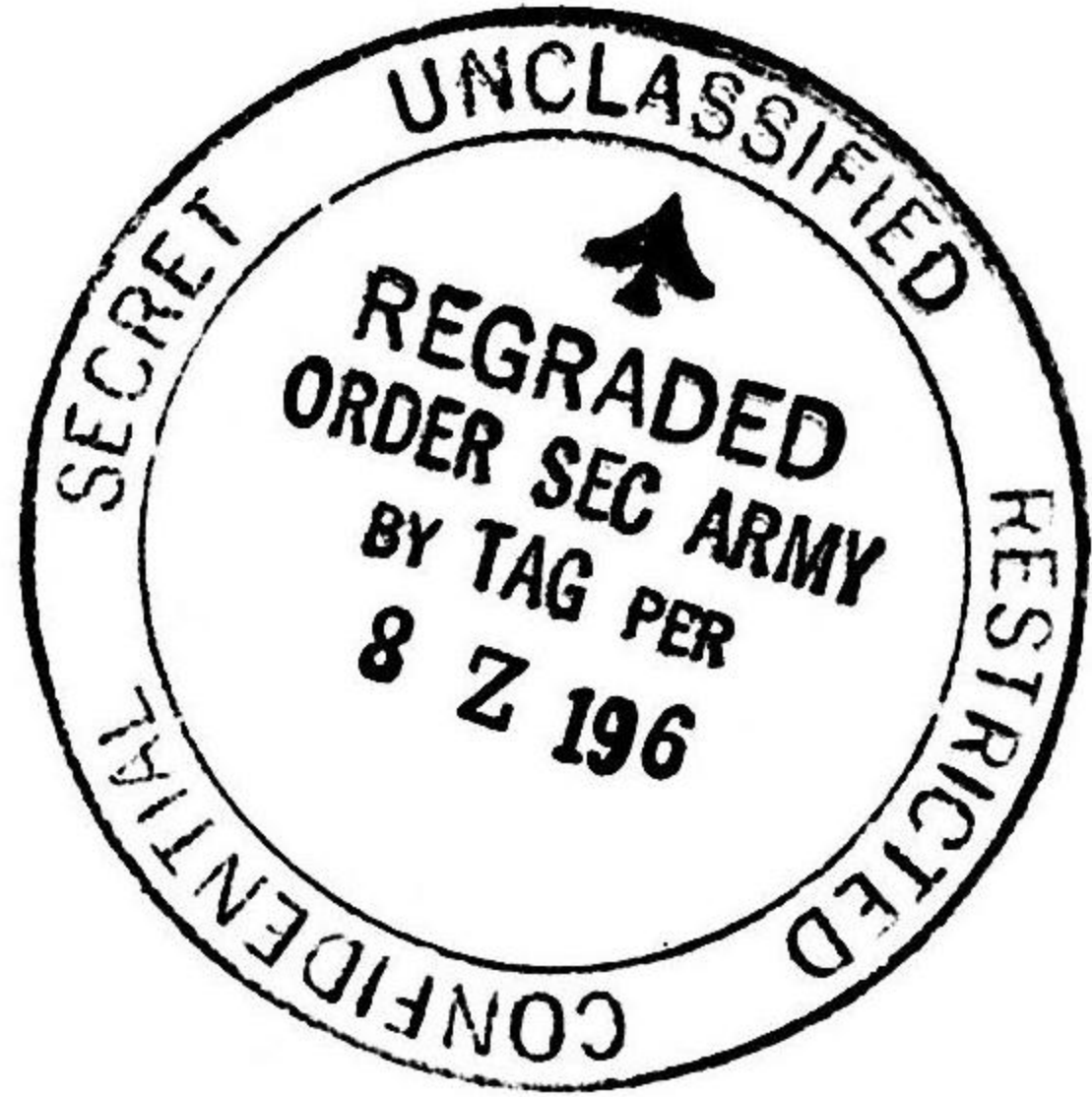
Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Air Operations by Japanese Naval Air Forces based at
RABAU, including NEW GUINEA and SOLOMONS.

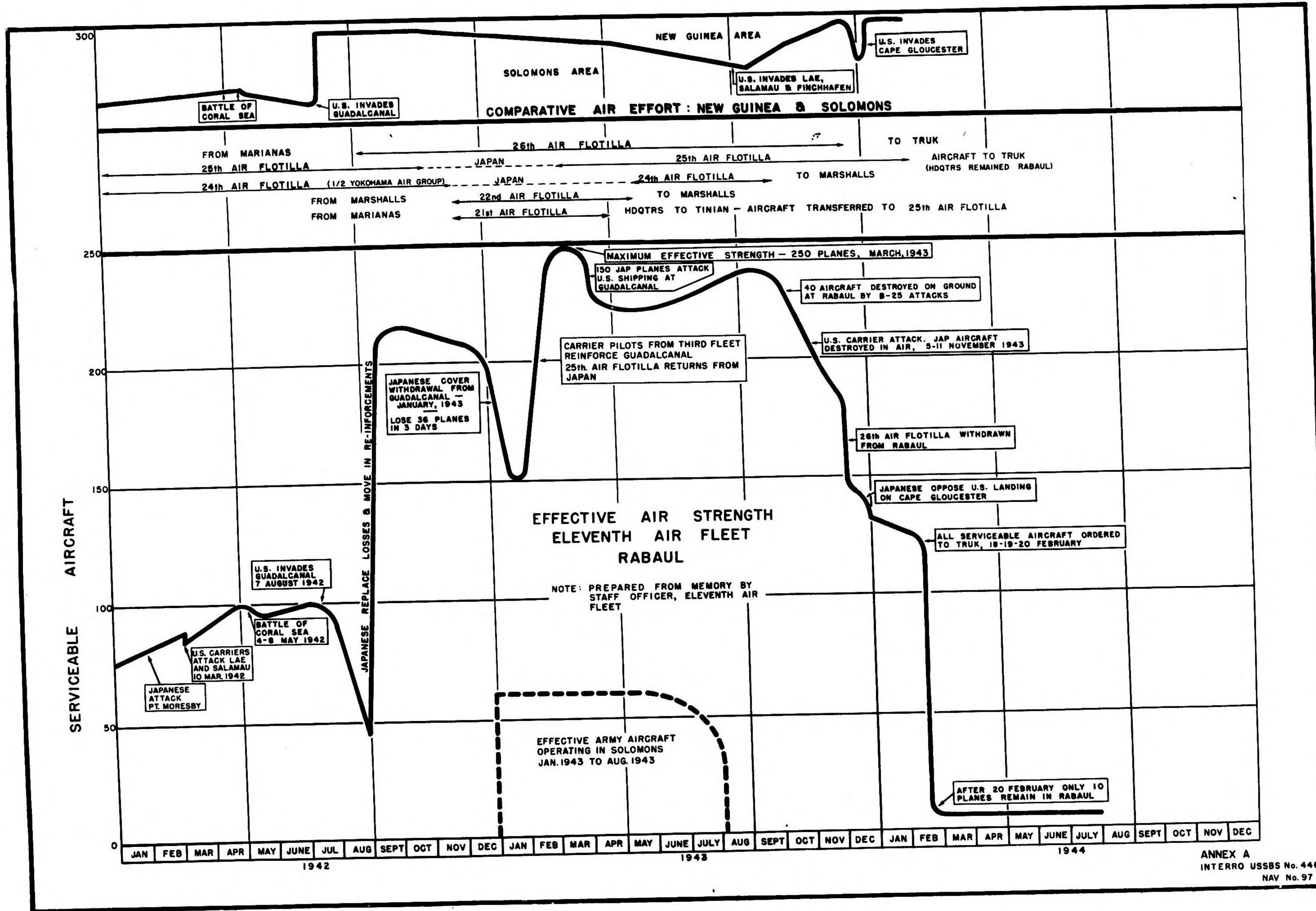
Interrogation of: Captain MIYAZAKI, Takashi, I.J.N.

Interrogation by: Captain C. Shands, USN.
Commander T. H. Moorer, USN.

The attached chart(s) supplement Interrogation No. USSBS
446 (Nav No. 97).



Enclosure: Annex "A" & "B"



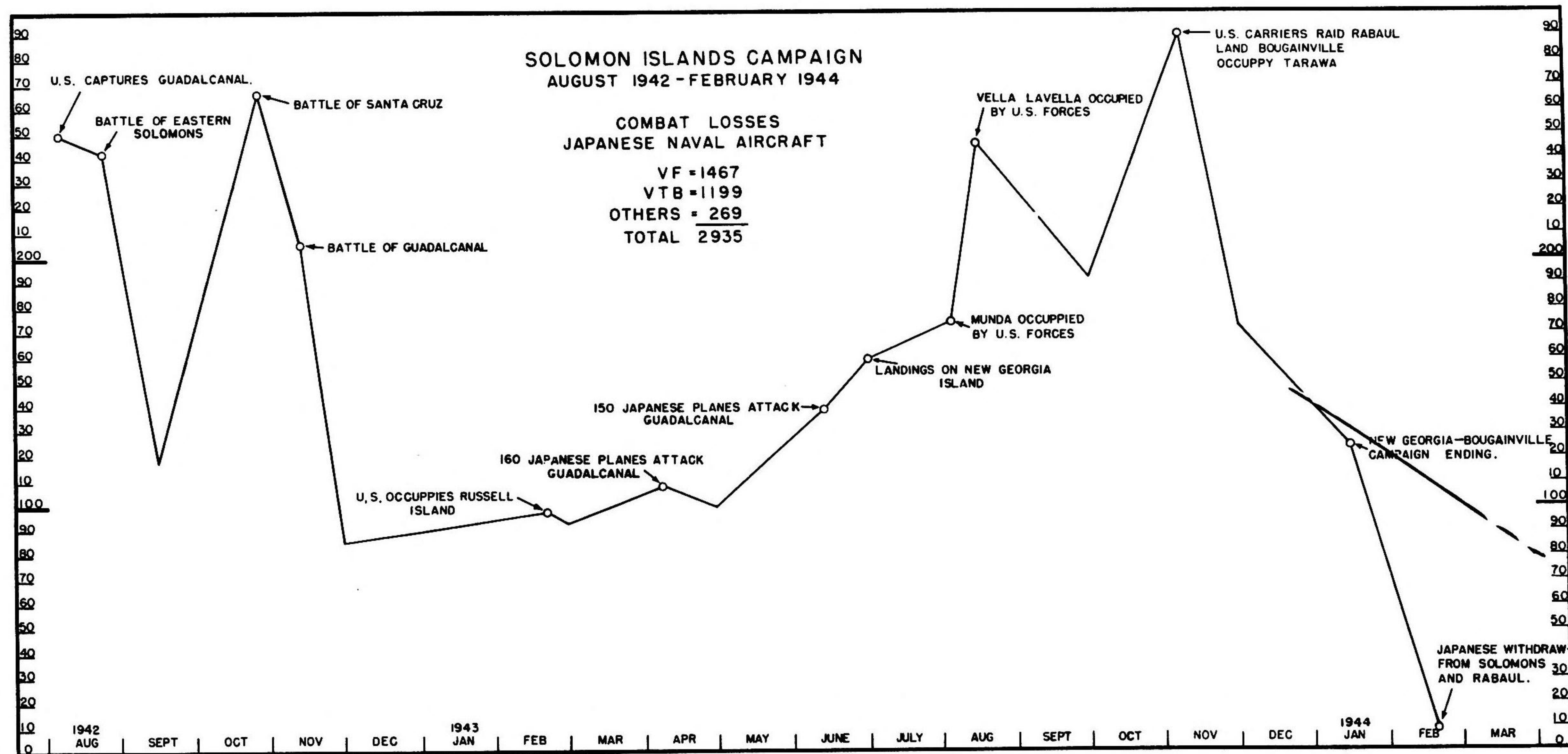
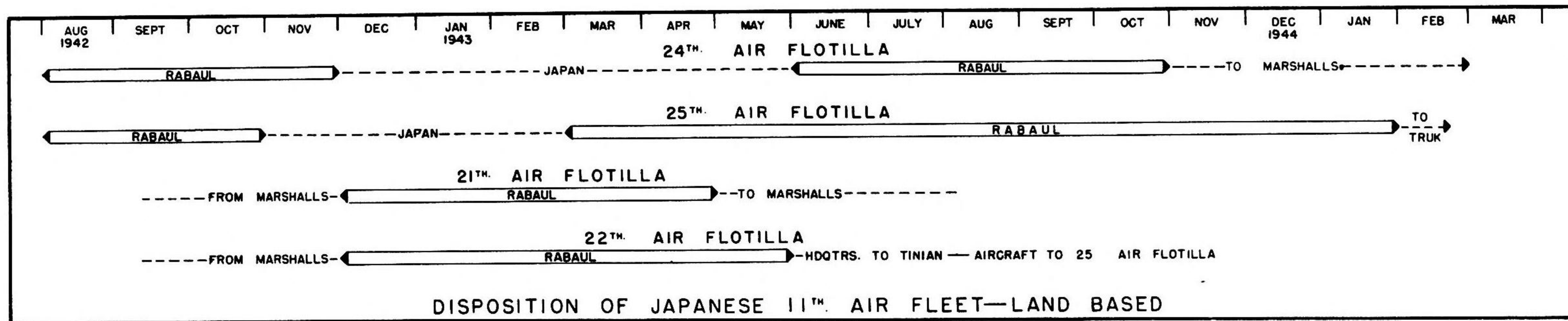


PLATE 97-2

USSBS No. 446 NAV. No. 97

ANNEX B