

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

RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO. (USSB 503)  
NAV 115

Place: TOKYO  
Date: 9 December 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: The Naval War in the PACIFIC. Part 2

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN;

Where interviewed: Meiji Building, Room 719.

Interrogator: Rear Admiral R. A. Ofstie, USN.

Interpreters: Mr. Mizota.  
Mr. F. C. Woodrough, Jr.

Allied Officers Present: Colonel R. H. Terrill, AC



TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN).

INTERROGATION

- Q. Admiral, what are your opinions as to the primary reasons for failure to defend successfully against the invasion of LEYTE?
- A. Very briefly stated; I would say that the principal reason was inadequacy of our force plus the inability to reinforce and to send supplies. In other words, difference between the strength of your force and ours. In slightly greater detail, the Army, the 10th Division, was insufficiently strong to prevent the first landing. After that it was pushed back further.
- Q. During the period between the LEYTE landing on 20 October and the MINDORO landing on 15 December, what was the usual employment of your force?
- A. Throughout that period our Naval Air Force was employed in operations centered about LEYTE, principally against your transports, cruisers, destroyers, and Task Force whenever it made its appearance, and occasionally against land targets in which we had the support of the Army Air Force.
- Q. Were there any markedly heavy losses during that period, 15 October to 15 December, and if so from what cause?
- A. Our largest, heaviest losses were at the bases while our planes were on the ground, the losses being caused by attacks from your Task Forces, and after you constructed airfields on LEYTE, also from the LEYTE air bases. But I believe that we suffered heaviest from your carrier based planes. I do not recall any particular instance where there was an outstanding heavy loss.
- Q. Did you receive replacements during this period, or about how much had your strength decreased by the time of the landing on MINDORO in December?
- A. Up to the commencement of the MINDORO landing we probably lost over 2,000 planes, but replacement was kept up more or less steadily so that the original strength of between six and seven hundred planes was maintained. It never reached the number of 1,000 but the original number was maintained more or less throughout. But that marked the peak of the fighting in that area, and after that replacement stopped and there was a very sudden fall in our strength.
- Q. During the MINDORO operation, the Task Force maintained what we call a "blanket" over the fields on LUZON. Do you recall any marked activity of that nature during the MINDORO operation?
- A. Yes, I felt the effect of that "blanket" operation in that attacks increased in frequency, and also prevented replacements getting through.
- Q. You said that there was a sharp drop in strength after mid December. What was the primary reason for that drop in strength?
- A. The principal reason was inability to keep up, continue replacement, which in turn was traceable to the fact that replacement would be attacked on the way.
- Q. From FORMOSA, etc.?
- A. Principally south of FORMOSA, after taking off from FORMOSA, as your planes were active day and night. The other reason for inability to keep up replacement was that the source was fast drying up, both as to material and personnel. This is merely a conjecture, but it is possible that one reason for the drop in replacement was the change in policy at Headquarters toward the LEYTE operation. At first they decided to put everything they had into it, but as the prospect of final success did not appear too bright, they might have changed their minds and with-hold part of the replacement originally intended for that area. That was the impression I got regarding the situation at LEYTE.



TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN).

INTERROGATION

- Q. When did you get the first intelligence of the movement of the American Forces toward the LINGAYEN landing which was made on 9 January?
- A. We had no advance information of your movement against LINGAYEN until the fleet actually arrived there, which I believe was on 5 January, when your fleet began to move north from MINDORO. Our planes kept constant watch, and our belief was that landing would be attempted around MANILA Bay or points south; so we were taken by surprise when they appeared in LINGAYEN and started landing there.
- Q. Was there any special employment of air against that invasion force, other than special attack tactics?
- A. We put all the air force we had into that attack, not only the special attack ones, but all the others as well, and that was virtually the end of our air strength. In other words, we lost practically everything.
- Q. Do you believe that there would have been any difference in the ultimate outcome in the war if the American Force had stayed at LEYTE and not gone to MINDORO and then to LINGAYEN?
- A. I do not believe that there would have been any difference in the ultimate situation, but that the end might have been delayed somewhat. The reason for so thinking is that had your forces stopped at LEYTE instead of going on to MINDORO and the subsequent operation, the reinforcements of our forces at LEYTE as originally planned would have been gradually increased. Although in the end you would strengthen your forces in that area to such an extent that we would be overwhelmed, for a period anyway we would have been able to continue. To that extent I think it would have been delayed.
- Q. In respect to the American movement, suppose the American Forces had stopped at MINDORO and established airfields there, would there have been any difference?
- A. Yes, to about the same extent as in the case of LEYTE. The answer is very much the same, it would have delayed the end of the PHILIPPINE Operation, because the fact that you made your last advance into LINGAYEN, which was wholly unexpected on our side, speeded up your recovery of the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. It would simply have been a difference in time in the general situation. I think that it would have made no difference whether you stopped or continued as you did. It would have slowed up your subsequent operations; we would have continued resistance for a much longer period.
- Q. Would it have affected the operation at ILO ILO? Would that operation have gone off on time, without any greater resistance? Was it necessary to the conclusion of the war that we occupy the whole of the PHILIPPINES?
- A. I think we go back to the original answer. There would have been no difference in the ultimate result, because if you held the principal bases the supply would be cut off; the source of supply as well as replacement. We would have "dried up" in time, but by continuing to advance you merely speeded up the end.
- Q. You had no directive from TOKYO Headquarters indicating that they had decreased the flow of replacement aircraft, is that correct?
- A. Yes, that is correct.
- Q. Then if they supplied you with all the aircraft they could, you and the Army, would you say the PHILIPPINE Campaign practically marked the end of Japanese air strength of both the Army and Navy?
- A. As I have already suggested, I had the feeling toward the end that I was not receiving all the replacement that might have been sent down there, due probably to the fact that Central Headquarters had their mind on the next operation, just exactly where I do not know. It might have been OKINAWA, KYUSHU or even around the KANTO District, so that you would not be accurate to say the end of my stay marked the end of the Japanese Air Force. Had it been decided to send everything in the way



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN)

of reinforcement that was available from JAPAN at the time, it would probably be about 2,000 Navy planes and another 2,000 of the Army, but that would have meant discontinuance of training altogether.

- Q. Were there any particular features of that whole PHILIPPINE Campaign that worked either for or against the success or efficient employment of the Japanese Naval Air Force?
- A. The principal cause of the serious handicap that the Navy Air Force constantly faced was the fact that, owing to the low training level of our air personnel, there were various accidents before the planes ever got to the PHILIPPINES accidents on the way. The difficulty was increased by the fact that we were always facing bad weather, and since your fighters were facing the same weather conditions, it boils down to difference in training level. We were all agreed on that point, and I cannot remember any particular difficulty having arisen from location of airfields or failure of parts to come through. I might mention one additional feature, namely, that because of the very rapid depletion of our fighting force, the replacement had to be put into combat as soon as they arrived. In other words, we had no opportunity to receive training under local geographical and weather conditions.
- Q. Was the cooperation with the Army air and ground forces generally satisfactory over the whole period of the PHILIPPINE Campaign, or were there any particularly important points of friction or personalities that had any appreciable influence on the efficiency of the overall air operation?
- A. No, I do not think that there was any particular friction between the Army and Navy Air Forces. The two services were supposed to have the same number of planes in the PHILIPPINES, but as a matter of fact, the Navy constantly had more than the Army and were operating more actively than the Army planes, with the result that the Army Air Force took the attitude of thanking the Navy for taking more than its share of the burden. That was one of the reasons for the absence of friction. The other was that the PHILIPPINES Operation ended before the land forces had a chance to get into action. If land operation took place in any extensive scale, there might have been friction, but the operation ended before there was such a chance.
- Q. If the operation were to be done over again, what different method of operation would you have adopted?
- A. If you left the matter to me, I would have made a serious stand against your landing at LUZON. I might have employed a few planes earlier, but I would have saved the mass of my forces to counter-attack your landing on LUZON ISLAND proper, for a last counter-attack. Because we divided up our forces to meet each landing, as you so heavily outnumbered us, we were bound to lose heavily.
- Q. In the discussions of the battles of LEYTE Gulf with Admiral OZAMA and Admiral KURITA, it appeared that neither of them had good information as to the location of the principal American Forces. They stated that they were working in the dark as to where the American Task Forces were, and of what strength. Admiral KURITA, specifically, on coming through SA BERNADINO STRAIT, and did not know what forces he was going to meet outside. He then had an engagement with a force the composition of which he did not know. Why was there not a better search made to let these officers know where the American Task Forces were and what they were doing?
- A. That is to be explained first by the fact that the 23rd, 24th and 25th, those three days the weather conditions were particularly bad, and second, it so happened that the Navy's scouting force was at its lowest level at that time. We did not have suitable scouting planes and principally had to rely on the Army. Also, because of the inadequate number, I was unable to send out these planes except once a day or at most twice a day for reconnaissance. Even then they returned without covering the whole area but only small sections.



## TRANSCRIPT OF Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUMIZU, IJN).

What Admiral KURITA wanted was a complete report on enemy movements, but the best I was able to do was to give the approximate position of the enemy Task Force once a day or twice a day. As far as Admiral OZAWA'S force was concerned, he was way up north beyond the area under my command, and consequently I was not able to give him any information at all.

- Q. Admiral KURITA stated that one reason for his turning north rather than entering LEYTE Gulf was because of his lack of knowledge of where the American Task Forces were. What is your view of Admiral KURITA'S decision to turn north instead of entering LEYTE Gulf as was the original instruction?
- A. My contention has always been that a fleet or task force to operate effectively must have its own carrier-based air force, because land-based air force such as we had, insufficient in number and especially lacking in sufficient training, could not give efficient assistance, especially in the way of reconnaissance. In that particular case, Admiral KURITA started out with his fleet with the intention of making a thrust into LEYTE Gulf, but turned back, as you say, because of his not knowing what was waiting for him in the Gulf, nor what was the strength or position of the enemy in his vicinity. That might have been the correct thing to do under the circumstances, but if I had been in Admiral KURITA'S place I do not say this by way of criticism of Admiral KURITA, but had I been in his place, since he started out with the purpose of engaging the enemy whatever it might be, I would have continued and made a thrust into the Gulf and undertaken the engagement.

Singapore 1945

- Q. Will you briefly recount your movement out from MANILA to SINGAPORE, where you got your aircraft and your route?
- A. During the day time of the 8th, I had made up my mind to take the remaining 30 planes and move to ICHIGI, near APARRI. But I received my orders transferring me, so on the night of the 8th I moved to CAVITE. Usually this trip takes about two hours, from CLARK to CAVITE. During the night of the 9th a flying boat was supposed to be sent to CAVITE from FORCOSA, but because of bad weather it arrived on the morning of the 11th. At about 3 A. M. I departed CAVITE, arriving at CAMRANH Bay, in French INDO CHINA at 9 A. M. This was in a float reconnaissance plane single engine, two place. During the afternoon of the same day I moved to SAIGON. I was supposed to have moved on from SAIGON to SINGAPORE, but there was a U. S. Task Force attack on the 12th, so my reconnaissance plane could not get through and actually didn't get away until the 15th. I relieved my predecessor from his post - Commander-in-Chief of the Tenth Area Fleet on the 16th.
- Q. What damages did you observe or learn of from the Task Force attack on SAIGON?
- A. As I recall it, the attack came in four waves. The main targets seemed to be boats along the rivers, fuel tanks and airfields. On the airfields about 20 Army fighters which had just come back from BURMA for training purposes were either damaged or destroyed, and about 20 to 30 Navy planes were either damaged or destroyed by machine gun fire. Several ships were damaged and sunk and about two or three oil tanks burned. But since I was just a traveller, I had no official knowledge of the extent of damages.
- Q. At SINGAPORE was there any Army command corresponding to your command?
- A. The Seventh Area Army was in SINGAPORE.
- Q. What naval and air forces did you have under your command there?
- A. Although I said I assumed the position as Commander-in-Chief of the Tenth Area Fleet, actually I was Commander-in-Chief of the Thirteenth Air Fleet, also of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet. Under the Tenth Area Fleet I had four heavy cruisers: TAKAO, YOKO, ASHIGARA and HAGURO. The TAKAO was badly damaged and the YOKO was non-operational, and a number of smaller vessels, mine sweeps and so on.



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN).

The Thirteenth Air Fleet was mainly a training unit, the reason being because of the fuel situation at home; here fuel could be obtained and the SINGAPORE Area was considered behind the lines. The only actual combat strength we had was about 50 fighters for the defense of BALIKPAPAN and TAKAKAN oil areas, and about 60 or 70 seaplanes for anti-submarine operations. We had three training units, about 400 planes mostly trainers. The First Expeditionary Fleet had some small vessels.

- Q. What was the area of your responsibility, roughly?  
 A. BORNEO, western half of NEW GUINEA, FRENCH INDO CHINA, NICOBAR and ANDAMAN; in short, all the southern occupied areas.
- Q. What was your relationship to fleet units which would come into your area?  
 A. Prior to the PHILIPPINE Operation the KURITA Fleet occasionally came to SINGAPORE Area for training, but since I came to SINGAPORE, not a single fleet vessel came except submarines of the Sixth Fleet. I had practically no opportunity to have any connection with fleet units.
- Q. You had the responsibility for handling convoys and shipping generally in the area? Was it your direct responsibility or how was it handled?  
 A. Escort duties came under the CinC of the Seventh Fleet who was in JAPAN. Regardless of where convoys go, the CinC Seventh Fleet is mainly responsible for planning such convoys. But since the CinC Tenth Fleet is responsible for the safe conduct of anything that may come into his territory, he acts in actual cooperation with the agent for the Seventh Fleet who is in SINGAPORE.
- Q. What effect, if any, did the January Task Force attack that we just spoke of; have on convyls or the shipping in the southern areas?  
 A. These Task Force raids had much effect. The recovery by the UNITED STATES of the PHILIPPINES practically cut the entire transportation route from the south; and added to this were the Task Force raids in FRENCH INDO CHINA. So from the middle of January to the middle of February, outside of a few planes which made communication between the Homeland and the southern areas, no ships whatsoever got through. The situation could not be allowed to continue. Even if we lost 4 to 5 tankers, we thought it was worthwhile if we got one through. From the middle of February to the latter part of March, we carried out ship transportation operations. At that time there were a dozen or more tankers in the southern areas. Only a third of these were successful, and two-thirds were sunk en route. As I recall, 5 or 6 arrived with 40,000 tons of gasoline, and this was the gasoline used until the end of the war. These ships movements were known as the "Nan" Operations. There was no more traffic after that.
- Q. What was the rprincipal cause of the loss of those tankers and what stopped it entirely?  
 A. They were sunk by submarines and b aircraft. I believe, that more were sunk by aircraft.
- Q. Were those generally single plane attacks of the 4-motor land planes?  
 A. I recall on one occasion they were sunk by a formation of 5 or 6 planes which we thought came from MINDORO. In all other cases they were single planes, like Liberators.
- Q. What was the system of reporting the losses of ships in your area? To what agency did you report and when?  
 A. The commander of the convoy directly reported to the CinC of the Seventh Fleet in every instance. If such an instance occurred in the Tenth area, then the CinC of the Tenth Fleet was notified simultaneously. I recall once where all five escorts were sunk and there was nobody around to make the report.
- Q. Were there other inportant effects from the Task Force Attack in January?  
 A. In addition to the effect on shipping, the principal effect of the Task Force air raids in January was the moral or spiritual effect.



TRANSCRIPT of Interruption (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDA, IJN).

That is not to say that our forces as a result of those raids thought that all was over. The moral effect I refer to affected the southwestern areas where I was in charge - MALAY, SUMATRA and BORNEO which served principally as a sort of logistic base. After those raids became intensive, they realized that the front line was moving up as evidenced when I arrived in SINGAPORE, after nearly three years of fighting going on, very little defensive preparations had been made. Once this new feeling was established, they got busy on defensive works.

Q. What naval operations did you conduct in your area, and for what purposes?

A. The general situation changed greatly as a result of the loss of the PHILIPPINES. The opinion was gaining strength that in the end the Navy would have to join in with the ground operation. In February, in respect of land operations, I was brought under General TERAUCHI. As for sea operations, the principal work of SINGAPORE Headquarters was in supplying the front areas, doing very much the same work as naval stations of JAPAN proper. There was shortage of rice, shortage of oil close to enemy positions. The result was that I was using naval vessels as transports. It was while engaged in such operations that we lost the ASHIGARA and HAGURO, in conveying supplies to the Army divisions down south.

Q. What were the details of the loss of the HAGURO and ASHIGARA?

A. The HAGURO was lost about 30 miles southwest of PENANG on 16 May. She was on her way to the ANDAMAN and NICOBAR Islands, going with the destroyer KAMIKAZE, both loaded with food supplies. Both of those islands were running badly short of food, and two earlier attempts had been made to get food through by using small ships, but in both cases they were lost as a result of attacks by planes, probably British. It was therefore decided that use of small slow speed ships would be of no use, and therefore the HAGURO and KAMIKAZE were assigned to this duty. They had just gotten through MOLUCCA Strait on the night of 16 May when they got information that there was a British Task Force ahead, so they turned back. On the way back they encountered a flotilla of five British destroyers which came through the narrow passage there near the north tip of SUMATRA, and a naval engagement took place at this point. It was reported by KAMIKAZE that three shots from the HAGURO sank one of the British destroyers, but I myself later met the commander of that destroyer and learned that while damaged, it was not sunk. The KAMIKAZE itself received one shot but managed to get into PENANG. This naval engagement was fought by our side under a very serious handicap as both ships were loaded to the deck to such an extent that only half of the guns could be used against the British destroyers, the intention from the beginning having been to avoid encounter with any enemy ships.

Q. What happened to the HAGURO, sunk by gun-fire?

A. The HAGURO was sunk by a torpedo from the destroyers. The next morning, namely the 17th the KAMIKAZE went out to the South where the HAGURO was sunk and rescued 150 to 160 survivors: and according to the report of the survivors, the Commander of the 5th Cruiser Division, Vice Admiral HASHIMOTO, and the captain of the ship were on the bridge as the HAGURO went down, so they were not killed as a result of actual firing. The ASHIGARA was sunk by a torpedo from a submarine while transporting Army personnel as a result of the change in the general situation. As a result of the loss of the PHILIPPINES, it had been decided to move our forces from the Celebes and the islands near by further westward, particularly to around SINGAPORE and FRENCH INDO-CHINA. The ASHIGARA at that time was carrying about 1,200 Army personnel from BATAVIA to SINGAPORE, and received the torpedo hit while passing through the Banka Strait in June, the British say however she sank possibly from a magnetic mine dropped by air.

Q. Were there any other naval losses besides these?

A. The only other one, not a very serious one, was the damage to the cruiser TAKAO, as a result of a sudden explosion which took place about 9 p.m. on 31 July. We were at a loss at first to account for the cause of the explosion, and divers were sent down to investigate and discovered attached to the hull two magnetic mines, each containing about 30



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDO, IAN).

kilograms of powder, in addition to one large ship-shaped mine of perhaps one ton. How these mines became attached, they were at a complete loss to explain. It was only recently that this riddle was solved when an officer of a British submarine came to me with the story that he had gone there on his submarine and done that work probably on that day or the previous day. There were no other naval losses of importance.

Q. What activities occurred in your area in connection with German submarines?

A. At present there are two German submarines at SINGAPORE and one each in BATAVIA and SOERABAJA, which we took over from the Germans and turned over to the British. The Germans had established a liaison group for their submarines at PENANG, SINGAPORE and BATAVIA. In addition they had two seaplanes in BATAVIA, I had received orders from Headquarters to cooperate with German submarines in the matter of supplies and maintenance, but had nothing to do with the operation. There was co-operation between TOKYO and BERLIN with regard to the operations of German and Japanese submarines in the INDIAN OCEAN. Liaison was affected through these liaison groups in order to avoid collision between the two groups of submarines while operating in the INDIAN OCEAN. The operation of our submarines was under the control of the Sixth Fleet, so I had absolutely no connection with the operation of the German submarines. My service was purely logistic.

Q. Why were the German submarines based at BATAVIA, and what did they do with their seaplanes over there?

A. Formerly the Germans had their base at PENANG, but as the number of mines in the SUNDRA Strait increased, and the patrol and defense against submarines in the northern section was strengthened by the British, it was felt safer for the German submarines to use SUNDRA because of the change of route. The two seaplanes were to protect their submarines as they went through SUNDRA Strait. Both of these planes were supplied by the Japanese Navy but the personnel was German.

Q. Did you have any friction or any difficulties in working with the German liaison group?

A. None at all. The liaison was placed in the hands of our Naval Attache in SINGAPORE, and the question of liaison of German submarines was never brought to the commanding officer.

Q. Did your forces at any time that you were there make a positive identified sinking of any U. S. submarine?

A. None at all.

Q. How serious were the effects of minefields laid by the U.S. and British which you encountered in your area, and where were those most serious?

A. The effect of the mines was very serious, particularly the damage suffered by ships entering and leaving SINGAPORE. Among the larger ships damaged during the time that I was there were the ISE, HYUGA and the hospital ship HIKAWA MARU. At least 10 and perhaps as many as 15 or 16 ships and two or three small ships were sunk. Other areas heavily mined were around BANKA Strait and the entrance to BATAVIA. The larger of these mines were probably magnetic mine laid by planes. There might have been some which were laid by submarines also.

Q. Somewhat earlier, you commented on the lack of defense work which you noticed immediately on arrival in the southern area. Did you inspect your whole area, did you find it to be common in the southern areas that were not directly in contact with the enemy?

A. Yes, I covered my territory very shortly after taking over, and found the situation much the same in all parts. The possible explanation of that situation is probably the fact that when the southern area



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUSHIMA, IJN).

- reached the extreme stage, there was a feeling that this marked the end of the offensive operation. Especially in Army circles, there was an opinion thereafter that the work of the Army would be military administration, so that they should withdraw all except 200,000 men to other regions. When I went to SINGAPORE and saw what the situation was, I ordered that an effort should be made at once to strengthen the defense there, but I did not make much headway. By the end of the war, the situation was so bad that when the British came, they were surprised at the lack of preparation there.
- Q. What was your position at the end of the war, and what did you then do?
- A. I was CinC Tenth Area Fleet until the termination of the war. Then I became prisoner of war under the control of the British, and have since been in charge of the operation of Japanese ships engaged in repatriation of Japanese nationals under CinC MALAY British Naval Force.
- Q. After receipt of the Imperial Rescript concluding the war, did you have any difficulty keeping naval personnel in check or getting them to accept the Rescript?
- A. No. Generally speaking, I have been able to maintain control of my center from the very moment of the termination of the war, the only exception being that about 300 naval personnel, mostly sailor and a sprinkling of warrant officers, fled immediately after they heard of the outcome. However, most of them have come back. Some, apparently trying to turn pirate, were themselves killed by native pirates. Some were killed by bandits but most of the survivors have returned to SINGAPORE.
- Q. What was the situation in respect of the Army on that same question in that area.
- A. Very much the same as in the case of the Navy. The Army too had some who fled, some deserters.
- Q. You have any comment to make on your relationship with the Army in the SINGAPORE Area?
- A. Since the war came to an end before there was any serious heavy fighting in SINGAPORE Area, there was no occasion for friction between the Army and Navy, especially as I had been instructed to work under the command of the CinC Southern Area. In so far as land operations were concerned, I tried to give positive cooperation to all activities on land. For that reason there was no difficulty with the Army, and no occasion in which I was criticised by the CinC Southern Army.
- Q. Do you have any comment on the Army command in the south?
- A. I have no criticism to make of the Army in the southern areas aside from the reference I made to the sentiment that prevailed in the upper levels of the Army in the early stage of the southern operation; that marked the completion of the campaign and they were ready to neglect all defensive work. The situation actually was that I made reference to the decision of the Army to withdraw all but 200,000 of the Army force in the south; and it was actually while this withdrawal was being made that counter-offensive at GUADALCANAL was made, so that the troops were shifted and used at GUADALCANAL against your counter-offensive there.
- (During this portion of the interrogation Allied Officers present included Col. R. H. Terrill, AC; Col. J. F. Rodenhauser, AC.)
- Q. Will you describe briefly for us the air attacks of importance that were made in the SINGAPORE Area while you were there?
- A. From the time that I arrived there on 15th January until the end of the war there were six raids, the number of planes, all B-29's, varying from 30 to about 120.



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru YOKUDOME, IJN)

In the case of the heaviest raids the planes came in small formation in sort of waves, so it is possible that the same planes might have been counted two or more times. The last of these six raids took place early in March. The six raids took place while the Army Air Force was based in CALCUTTA. Aside from those heavy raids there were reconnaissance flights over the area, and also mine laying from planes coming in small numbers. The principal targets were the naval and merchant shipping ports, shipyards and the waterfront. In general, in the naval port the dock was seriously damaged, while in the merchant shipping port, wharves and warehouses were practically wiped out. The missiles dropped were principally bombs, but in two or three of the raids incendiary bombs were used to a considerable number, especially against the warehouses. Human casualties were very low. The most serious loss to the Navy was in damage to the dock, while the Army felt most the destruction of the wharves and warehouses. The net result of these six raids did not very seriously affect our total fighting strength there, but it might have been quite serious had the raids been continued for ten or more times thereafter.

- Q. Were the mine laying raids easily identified and could you then take immediate measures to sweep?
- A. Altogether, mine laying raids were carried out perhaps a dozen or more times during the period of my stay there and always on moonlit nights, taking advantage of the moon. On the first two or three occasions we were caught more or less unawares. After that we increased our observation and we could always detect their coming by means of radar; so we were able to tell fairly accurately where the mines were laid, but could not always take the necessary counter-measures because of insufficient mine-sweeping facilities. We could go to the areas in which we thought the mines had been laid, and sweep the region as best we could; after which we would try to put a ship through thinking it was all clear, but on several occasions the ships hit remaining mines. As stated yesterday the principal places where mines were laid were the east and west entrances to the SINGAPORE Harbor, the JOHORE strait, and the channel leading toward BATAVIA.
- Q. What was the approximate number of vessels sunk and seriously damaged by aerial mining in areas under your control?
- A. I think this was mentioned in passing yesterday. The total damage from mines in the SINGAPORE Area was 14 or 15 ships of which three or four small ones sank. The remaining ones were slightly damaged, and were able to get back into operation with little repair. There was also a few mine laying raids near PENANG and SOERABAJA. The total losses at those two points were probably 5 or 6, of which one or two sank. Hence, the total loss from mines laid by planes in the area for which I was responsible was around 20, and while that is not a very large number we felt the loss quite heavily because the total number of ships that we had was small. Twenty out of a relatively small number was quite a big proportion.
- Q. Did you attempt interception with your fighters of any of the air raids; if so, with what results?
- A. As I stated yesterday, the Naval air force in SINGAPORE was primarily a training unit with the exception of 50 or 60 planes that were assigned to protection of the oil areas in BALIKPAPAN and TARAKAN. Also, there were training units scattered through JAVA, PENANG, and FRENCH INDO CHINA; but because they were primarily training planes, they were not much practical value in actual operation. Therefore the basic policy was to reserve the Navy's planes for use to support sea operations, such as in the case of the appearance of TASK FORCE, etc. consequently in the numerous raids, including mine laying raids against SINGAPORE, the interception was left to Army planes belonging to the Third Air Army with headquarters in SINGAPORE, under the command of Lieutenant General KINOSHITA. This Army had approximately 1000 planes which were deployed in supporting land operations as far apart as BURMA AND NEW GUINEA; and in the raids of the B-29's against SINGAPORE, these army planes were used for interception.



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In addition the Army had quite a number of planes for the protection of PALEMBANG. During my stay there, most of the good Navy planes were ordered back to JAPAN, only those of little actual value being left in SINGAPORE, which situation was natural enough since the primary purpose of the Naval Air Force there was training. As soon as the pilots reached a certain stage they were taken back to JAPAN, but I felt that the recall to JAPAN was going a little faster than I considered practical or wise.

- Q. Do you recall what success the Army had in interceptions?
- A. During the time that I was there, the only result that I heard of was when the Army planes intercepted a British Task Force which approached the PALEMBANG Area two or three times, either late in January or early February. Just what the figures were I do not know, but I think that Army losses on our side were considerable. What results were obtained in BURMA I do not know either. I also heard that a few Army planes had been sent out against the American Task Force off FRENCH INDO CHINA but I have no knowledge of the results. The general policy as already stated was that the Navy should use its planes to support sea operations, as well trained pilots and practically all serviceable planes were consistently being sent back to JAPAN. I was forced to pick up wrecks and scraps and repair them, and use them for training purposes. I was able to recover 30 or 40 planes in that way and save them for the last stand there, when your landing should be undertaken. The policy was much the same with the army. In other words, they too were saving up their planes for the last stand. Consequently, the Army planes which went up to intercept B-29's were in relatively small numbers. That may explain in part the small results obtained in the air combats in which the Army planes engaged. Toward the end the Army planes too were being brought back to JAPAN in large numbers, so that the number of those remaining in SINGAPORE from the Army as well as the Navy had gotten very small. One other raid which I should have mentioned took place near the end of July, raiders composed of 1 B-24 and 8 P-38's, probably American craft, coming from BORNEO region principally for reconnaissance purposes. Two or three of our Army planes took to the air and engaged in air combat. While I received no formal report from the Army I heard that we lost two planes and that the enemy suffered no loss.
- Q. Admiral, was there any particular reason why you were assigned as Chief of Staff Combined Fleet on Admiral KOGA'S Staff, for example, the peculiarities of the strategic situation at that time with which you were especially familiar?
- A. My predecessor was Vice Admiral UGAKI who was injured over BOUGAINVILLE at the time that Admiral YAMAMOTO was shot down. That was 18 April 1943. They were in separate planes but both were shot down. As the injury was serious and as Adm. UGAKI was confined to bed, it was necessary for the Chief of Staff as well as Commander in Chief to have a successor. So when Admiral KOGA was appointed Commander in Chief and left TOKYO for TRUK, he left word with the Chief of the Navy General Staff, Admiral NAGANO, that if upon arrival at TRUK he should find Admiral UGAKI in too serious condition to continue as Chief of Staff I should be sent down to replace him. Admiral KOGA discovered at TRUK that Admiral UGAKI'S injuries were very serious, and I was ordered to proceed there at once.
- Q. Will you give us briefly the movements of the Commander in Chief during the ensuing year, during the time you were Chief of Staff?
- A. Admiral KOGA arrived at TRUK and took over the post 23 April; his flagship was the MUSASHI. On 23 May he came on the flagship to TOKYO for discussion with headquarters, proceeding from there to KURE and the INLAND SEA in June for repairs and some training. He returned in TRUK aboard his flagship in August and remained there until some time in October, anticipating the arrival of an American Task Force in the MARSHALLS Area, he went to BROM (ENIWEATOK).



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUDOME, IJN).

But as the American Task Forces did not make appearance he returned once more to TRUK. He was in BROWN about a week, so the entire trip was between 10 and 20 October. On 11 February 1944 he once more came to TOKYO for further consultation with headquarters, and this time he went to PALAU. This was February 25th, and it was on 31 March when he was proceeding from PALAU to DAVAO by plane that he was killed in an air accident resulting from bad weather conditions.

- Q. At the time of the visit to TOKYO for the conference in May 1943, what was the estimate of American intention, and what new dispositions or orders were issued consequent to that conference?
- A. Admiral KOGA'S purpose in coming to TOKYO in May 1943 was two-fold: first, since at that time our operations in ATTU and KISKA Areas up north were just beginning, he wanted to guide those operations from as close a point as possible and consequently preferred to be in TOKYO at the time rather than so far south; second, he did not wish to feel bound to his predecessor's policy and wanted to let the Imperial General Headquarters know his feelings in the matter. Admiral KOGA'S basic policy in regard to Naval operations as told to me was that the one chance of success lay in a decisive naval engagement. We had just completed what might be called the first stage operations and were just entering the second stage operations, and it was Admiral KOGA'S belief that it would not do at this stage to rely upon passive defensive planes that we must take the offensive. There were those who told him that this point must be defended and that that point must be defended, etc.; but it was his conviction that we must concentrate in one big decisive fleet engagement, which he felt had at least a fifty percent chance of success if such engagement could be made to take place during 1943.
- Q. His plan then was dependent on his being able to get the U.S. Fleet into such an engagement, to draw it into such an engagement?
- A. I wish to add before answering your last question that during the period that Admiral KOGA was in TOKYO, between May and August, there was a strong opinion in the Imperial General Headquarters that, as in the case of the American Fleet, it would be wise for the Commander in Chief Combined Fleet to have his quarters on land in TOKYO, principally in order to attain the closest possible coordination between the Fleet and the Imperial Japanese Headquarters. Admiral KOGA opposed this opinion, however, on the ground that circumstances of the American Fleet and the Japanese Fleet were different, and that in his case he must personally assume the leadership of the Fleet; and hence, insisted upon proceeding again to TRUK. He felt that the operations around GUADALCANAL and vicinity were against us, and that the American Naval Forces were bound to push farther and farther north. Just against what point their thrust would be made, of course, could not be guessed; but KOGA felt that if he only waited at TRUK that would give him a chance for a decisive engagement against the American Fleet when they should proceed north, irrespective of what particular point they might strike. He therefore concentrated the full fleet strength at TRUK instead of sending a part of it further west as some advised. In other words, it was not a plan of any positive action to draw the American Fleet into a decisive action, but rather to wait until the American Fleet came up; and he felt they were bound to come up if he only waited. Two attempts were made at such decisive engagements; one, already mentioned, being in October when it was anticipated that the American Task Force was proceeding north. That is when Admiral KOGA went to BROWN Atoll. Before that, near the end of September, information was received that American Task Forces were approaching MARSHALLS Area. Admiral KOGA himself waited at TRUK with the main force of the fleet held in readiness, also Admiral OZAWA'S Air Fleet and the Second Fleet under Admiral KURITA. But on this occasion also the Task Forces failed to make an appearance and nothing came of it. In the latter case mentioned, namely the end of September, Admiral OZAWA'S Air Fleet and Admiral KURITA'S Second Fleet remained at BROWN Atoll for approximately a week, and then returned to TRUK: KOGA himself remained at TRUK all the time.



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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FUKUYAMA, IJN).

These were the two occasions when KOGA undertook to engage the enemy in a decisive naval engagement.

- Q. What was the reason behind movement of the striking forces from TRUK to BROWN on both occasions?
- A. The information transmitted through TOKYO was that the American Task Force would make its appearance somewhere north of the MARSHALLS, in which case BROWN would be most advantageous base for our striking force. Just what the source of that information was, I don't know.
- Q. Admiral you mentioned earlier the ALEUTIANS operations at KISKA; what was the decision with respect to the ALEUTIANS, and the reason for it?
- A. There appears to have been considerable difference of opinion between the Army and Navy as regards future policy for the ALEUTIANS, the Navy favoring fighting to the last man while the Army felt that this would be a waste of manpower if there was no prospect of ultimate success of the Northern Operations. The final decision as rendered by the Imperial General Headquarters was that it would serve no useful purpose to fight on, and hence it was decided to withdraw. When Admiral KOGA came to TOKYO it was his hope that with KISKA and the rest of the ALEUTIANS as a base he might get a chance for a decisive engagement with your naval forces somewhere in the northern waters; but by the time he reached TOKYO the situation had already gone too far for him to undertake execution of any such plan.
- Q. What had been the object of the Northern Operational? Was it to obtain a base for the purpose just mentioned?
- A. My memory on this point is somewhat hazy, but I believe that our object in occupying the area of natural resources in the south was not a strategic one. The purpose was to get the materials necessary for existence and our war effort. But the Navy felt that in order to hold this very expansive area it would be necessary to get far outlying lookout points; and while we might not be able to hold on to such outlying points, we must at least get them once even if we were to lose them, to the enemy again later. It was in pursuance of that policy that we occupied or tried to occupy such distant bases as the ALEUTIANS, RABAU, and MIDWAY.
- Q. Was this particular objective, that is the Western ALEUTIANS, included in the plan over the objections of the Army? That is was it primarily sponsored by the Navy?
- A. No, it was not against Army opposition that the ALEUTIANS Bases were included in this plan. The idea originated with YAMAMOTO who, when laying down a plan of Naval operations, felt that the holding of such outlying bases was essential to an overall success of the Navy's plans. When that idea was transferred to Imperial General Headquarters, the Army took the view that if the Navy feels that such a policy is essential then we give it support. They fell in readily with the Navy's proposal, the difference of opinion arose only when the time came for the withdrawal from KISKA. The reason for the Navy favoring defense to the last man was that since they had gone there in the first place with the expectation of having at some future time to lose it, why not fight it out to the last man? Against that, there was considerable Army objection.
- Q. The Imperial General Headquarters finally making the decision to evacuate KISKA?
- A. Yes, that decision was made by the Imperial General Headquarters.
- Q. At the time of the conferences in TOKYO Area in summer 1943, did KOGA'S staff make an estimate, or did headquarters present and estimate which set forth the major threat or danger to the perimeter at that time; if so, what was the danger considered to be?
- A. During the summer of 1943, there was a difference of opinion between the central authorities and the fleet. The central authorities were of the belief that the attack or threat would be more from the west rather from the east, and that the east attack would come later. That was due to the fact that ITALY fell about this time. The central



authorities felt that the U. S. Fleet together with the British Fleet would attack from the west after crossing the INDIAN OCEAN. KOGA, however, felt that as long as the U.S. Fleet was in the east, the main fleet force should be kept out east as a threat. The central authorities agreed with KOGA finally and decided to let the fleet keep its own air strength without diminishing it, and just strengthen defenses of the west. To strengthen defense of the west, central authorities felt it best to send planes from JAPAN. The strengthening of the west was to be taken care of by central authorities, the fleet did not bother with it. That was the policy attempted, but actually it was not carried out; western defenses were not actually strengthened. Probably central authorities were not able actually to carry out that step.

Q. Was it the estimate then of central authorities that Allied forces would perhaps land in MALAYA, and otherwise make an effort down towards SINGAPORE?

A. That was their estimate.

Q. In speaking of the threat from the east, how did the staff locate that threat; was it directly from the east geographically, or from the RABAUL Area?

A. They made only very rough estimates, and as to detailed estimates as to when what forces would arrive where, they were always wrong. Those forecasts were worse than weather forecasts. Roughly, however, they believed that the attacks would come to the Eastern CAROLINES Area, MARSHALLS or from the north through the ALEUTIANS, HOKKAIDO; but the biggest probability in their view was straight east through HAWAII, MIDWAY. That was the biggest threat in that they felt there was bound to be fleet action and that was the strongest fleet action route, because at that stage of the war the Japanese Navy felt that the U.S. Navy was still playing the main part as contrasted with the Army. Consequently, while there might be small landings on small islands sufficient to support Naval operations, no major landing would be undertaken; hence the view that the principal threat would be from the east and to the CAROLINES Area. Of the three possibilities, the one from the north was considered the least likely.

Q. At this same time, what was the staff estimate of the situation in the RABAUL, SOLOMONS, general South PACIFIC Area, and were major decisions made relative to strengthening that region or attempting new strategy there?

A. As far as the SOLOMONS Area was concerned they assumed that the situation had been settled. In the RABAUL Area the operation was very difficult, but the fleet was not in favor of increasing its strength, and insisted on using only their existing strength because at that time KOGA was still in favor of that decisive battle without spreading his strength. By August and September in the RABAUL Area, air strength was considerably diminished. The Commander there had asked for air support time and time again but the Commander in Chief could not send any of his planes. Then after the failure of the decisive surface engagement planned from BROWN, Admiral KOGA finally decided to send a small number of carrier-based planes to be used for a short time at RABAUL. The actual strength that was sent to RABAUL was most of the planes of OZAWA'S Air Fleet. They were to be used for a very short time, about a ten day period, and then returned to the fleet so as to maintain the strength of the fleet as a whole. Looking back on it now this was a bad mistake because having sent the carrier planes to RABAUL for a period of about ten days, on about the very day they were supposed to return, the occupation of BOUGAINVILLE they were supposed to return, the occupation of BOUGAINVILLE and SHORTLAND took place; and in spite of the fact they didn't intend to use these planes for such operations, they just couldn't stand by and not employ them. They were finally employed against these U.S. landing operations and the majority were lost. With the loss of these planes the fleet as a whole lost considerable efficiency.



## TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Vice Admiral Shigeru FURUKOME, IJN).

- Q. What was the exact date again? How many planes from how many carriers went down there?
- A. As I recall it was the very end of October that they were sent to RABAU. There was a total of about 250 planes from I think, four or five carriers: all the fighters from Admiral OZAWA'S fleet. On about the 10th of November, when they were saying we will return tomorrow, the BOUGAINVILLE Operation started and these planes were employed against that operation. They did attain some results on the 11th. Shortly after the BOUGAINVILLE landing operation started, KOGA ordered the Second Fleet to RABAU to carry out counter-attacks. OZAWA, having led those planes originally to RABAU, was already there with his land-based air force. The plan was to carry out heavy counter-attacks. Unfortunately the very day after KURITA'S Second Fleet arrived, the fleet was subjected to heavy bombing raids and suffered heavy casualties; no ships sunk but heavily damaged.
- Q. What dates were they damaged, and what was the attack from?
- A. I do not remember exactly what day, it was shortly after the BOUGAINVILLE Operation started. I believe it was somewhere between 15 and 20 November and I believe that the raids were carried out by carrier-based planes from U.S. Task Forces. As I recall, it was not the attacks of the 5th or 11th of November. Admiral KURITA had not arrived until after that so it was neither one of those strikes. OZAWA'S planes did participate in the raids you mentioned but KURITA'S fleet had not yet arrived. (This statement is corrected below)
- Q. What results did you have reported from the Naval Air Force based ashore of their attacks on the American Task Force?
- A. I do not remember exactly OZAWA'S reports but I recall that they did attack a Task Force to the north of BOUGAINVILLE, at which time one carrier was badly damaged; I do not recall the exact date. There was another Task Force to the south of BOUGAINVILLE, as I recall. Three carriers, including an escort carrier probably, were claimed sunk and 7 or 8 transports sunk or badly damaged. Later it was found that the reported carriers turned out to be special type landing vessels.
- Q. A little earlier in that same area, the Allied Forces had occupied SALAMAU, and FINSCHAFEN, that was in September and October. How much did that effect the status of RABAU or the naval plans; how much concern, in other words, was that to the Commander in Chief?
- A. Earlier, RABAU SOLOMONS area was looked upon with much importance. As a matter of fact YAMAMOTO had himself gone to RABAU to direct operations at one time. But by the time KOGA took over, he considered the situation fairly well settled, and did not feel that it was necessary at that time to risk interfering with the strength of his fleet. It wasn't that he did nothing, but that he sent only enough strength to be of nuisance value.
- Q. What was his re-estimate from the loss of SALAMAU, LAE and FINSCHAFEN? How did it effect the RABAU situation; did it change at all?
- A. I do not remember exactly what effect loss of SALAMAU, LAE and FINSCHAFEN had upon RABAU, but as I said earlier RABAU carried on with limited air strength only. At this time JAPAN'S air power was at its lowest. When KOGA took over, the entire air outlook was the poorest; after this it was again built up. KOGA, having been asked time and time again for air reinforcement, finally sent planes from the carriers down there to reinforce RABAU.
- Q. In other words, you did not consider the loss of those three places of particular concern?
- A. We didn't consider it important enough to make any changes in plans.