

HEADQUARTERS  
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO #234

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 14 Dec. 1945

INTERROGATION NO. 528

Division of Origin: Military Analysis

Subject: Stocks of Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants.

Personnel interrogated: Lt. Col. NAKANO, Matsura

Where interviewed: Meiji Building, Rm #805

Interrogator: Lt. Amos K. Smith, USNR

Interpreter: NAKABA Mizuo

Allied Officers Present: Lt. Col. D. W. Swift  
Lt. O. N. Reitz, USNR

SUMMARY

1. The Japanese Air Force had stocks of approximately 2,600,000 kilo-litres of aviation gasoline at the start of the War. This was considered to be an adequate supply for a six months period.
2. The supply of aviation gasoline became critical about the time Saipan was secured.
3. Air Headquarters attempted to alleviate the short supply by:
  - a. Reducing consumption to a minimum
  - b. Securing new sources of supply in Japan
  - c. Expediting production of synthetic fuels
  - d. Returning 100,000 kilolitres of aviation gasoline located in Manchuria.
4. It was necessary to reduce pilot training because of the shortage of av-gas. This had serious effects on air operations particularly night operations.
5. At the close of the War the Air Forces had a two year stock of aviation lubricants.

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Q. Were you in charge of fuel for the Army Air Forces?

A. Yes, from March 1944 to July 1945.

Q. Were you a member of the Army-Navy Oil Committee?

A. No, but I worked with them. However, they had nothing to say regarding allocation of fuel within the Air Force. That was my responsibility.

Q. How far did your authority go? What areas, rather, came under your jurisdiction?

A. (Here Lt. Col. Nakano took out a piece of paper and drew a map showing Japan Proper, China, Manchuria, Korea, Okinawa, Formosa, Philippines, and the Malay Peninsula). My authority included all territory except that under the command of the South Army with headquarters in Singapore.

Q. How about the oil supply for the Philippine Islands?

A. This entirely comes under the direction of the South Army. The Koku Hombu decided the amounts of fuel for Japan Proper, China, Korea, and Manchuria, but for the supplies for the Philippines, Burma, and the South Islands everything belongs to the South Army and Koku Hombu knows nothing about it.

Q. Do you know how much aviation gasoline was on hand in December 1941?

A. At that time I was in the local headquarters of the Formosa Air Corps so I cannot say definitely but I think the supply was around 2,600,000 kilolitres which we thought was enough for about six months.

Q. Do you think you had enough aviation fuel to start a war?

A. We thought this amount would be sufficient for the first six months after which we expected to bring in supplies from the South.

Q. What was the stock condition in Formosa when you were there?

A. Not large but adequate.

Q. After 1941 where were you located?

A. I was in Burma for a time.

Q. Did you have plenty of fuel in Burma?

A. Yes, the supply was quite enough at that time.

Q. When in your opinion, did the shortage of aviation gasoline become critical?

A. It was after Saipan was taken by American Forces.

Q. How did Air Headquarters attempt to alleviate the short supply?

A. Air Headquarters planned:

1. To reduce consumption to a minimum.
2. To try and find and develop a new source in Japan proper.
3. To get substitute fuel production underway--alcohol, pine root oil etc.
4. To bring back supplies in Manchuria which amounted to more than 100,000 kilolitres.

Q. Were you successful in getting the stocks out of Manchuria?

A. Yes, before Okinawa was taken over we had most of it back.

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- Q. When did this movement from Manchuria take place?  
A. It began as soon as the American Army invaded the Philippine Islands.
- Q. The next questions will be concerned with pilot training. How many hours were considered desirable at the start of the War?  
A. Thirty hours per month for fighter pilots and twenty hours for bomber pilots.
- Q. Was it necessary to reduce training hours as a result of fuel shortage?  
A. Yes, hours were gradually cut down to the point where even fighter pilots were only getting 5 hours per month.
- Q. I understand the first month of training was done in gliders, is that correct?  
A. Yes, in order to save gasoline.
- Q. Did you notice any effect on operations resulting from this reduction in training?  
A. Yes, it had a big effect on efficiency of our air force particularly in regard to night operations. Just before the end of the war pilots were getting very little night training and this had a very bad effect on our night operations.
- Q. In your opinion was the shortage of fuel or the shortage of aircraft the most important cause for the reduction in pilot training?  
A. It depended upon the unit. In one unit the reduction would be because of a shortage of aircraft and in another because of a shortage of fuel.
- Q. At the end of the war how many months supply of aviation gas did you have?  
A. We had 40,000 KL's for the invasion, 20,000KL's for training and 6,000KL's being produced monthly.
- Q. What was your stock position in regard to aviation lubricants at this time?  
A. We had about a two years supply.
- Q. Major Takahashi told me that you received only 56% of your lubricant requirements because of bombing attacks. Is that correct?  
A. Yes, production was quite low but we had some reserve stocks imported before the war and our use of castor oil from Manchuria and China helped save stocks.
- Q. Were your aviation engine oils of good quality?  
A. We had two types, "A" & "B". The "A" type was of good quality and used in new planes. The "B" type was not good quality and was used in training and transport planes.
- Q. Can you tell me anything about the effect of bombing upon lubricant production and stocks?  
A. As to the oil produced there was very little damage. About 600 kilolitres were lost. We had put the oil in drums and scattered it. About 80% was put under ground. The oil lost by air attack was "A" Type. The plant of Iwakuni was burned down and the plant at Akita was also burned but both happened just before Japan's surrender so it makes no difference for the war.

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Q. I have a report showing that the overall production of gasoline was reduced to 30% and synthetic production dropped 44%, as a result of air attack. Are those figures correct?

A. I have no exact figures on that point but I would guess they are approximately true.

Q. Will you prepare a list showing quantities and locations of all important stocks of aviation gasoline in the areas under your direction for 1944 and 1945?

A. Yes.