

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO 234  
C/O POSTMASTER SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO: 431  
(Jap Intell No 33)

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 20 November 1945

Division of Origin: Japanese Intelligence Section, G-2, USSBS.

Subject: Operational Intelligence.

Person Interrogated and Background:

Lt. Comd. T. SATAKE was assigned to the Communications Department of the Naval General Staff in April 1941 and served there until the end of the war, except for a year (April 1943-April 1944) when he was hospitalized for tuberculosis. Listed as one of his duties was "Part of communication and intelligence concerning U.S."

Where Interviewed: Meiji Building.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. T. M. CURTIS, USNR

Interpreter: Lt. OTIS CARY, USNR

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

Lt. Comdr. SATAKE discusses methods of communications analysis which produced information useful for operations planning.

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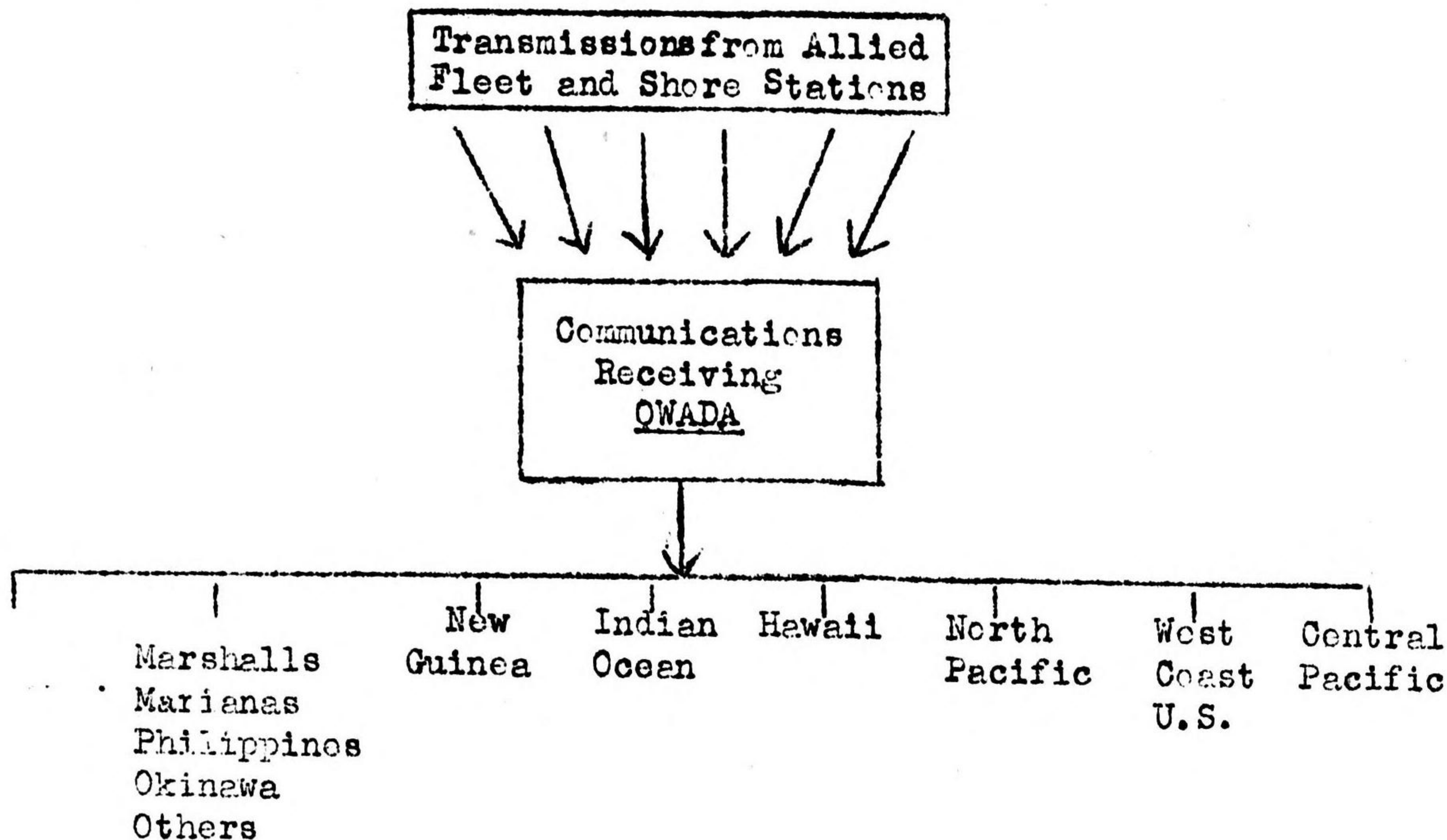
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Transcript of Interrogation of Lt. Comdr. SATAKE, F.

Q.1. Describe the method of analysis of communications volume used by the special section of the Communications Department.

A. This, I believe is the way it operates. This chart shows how we were set up:

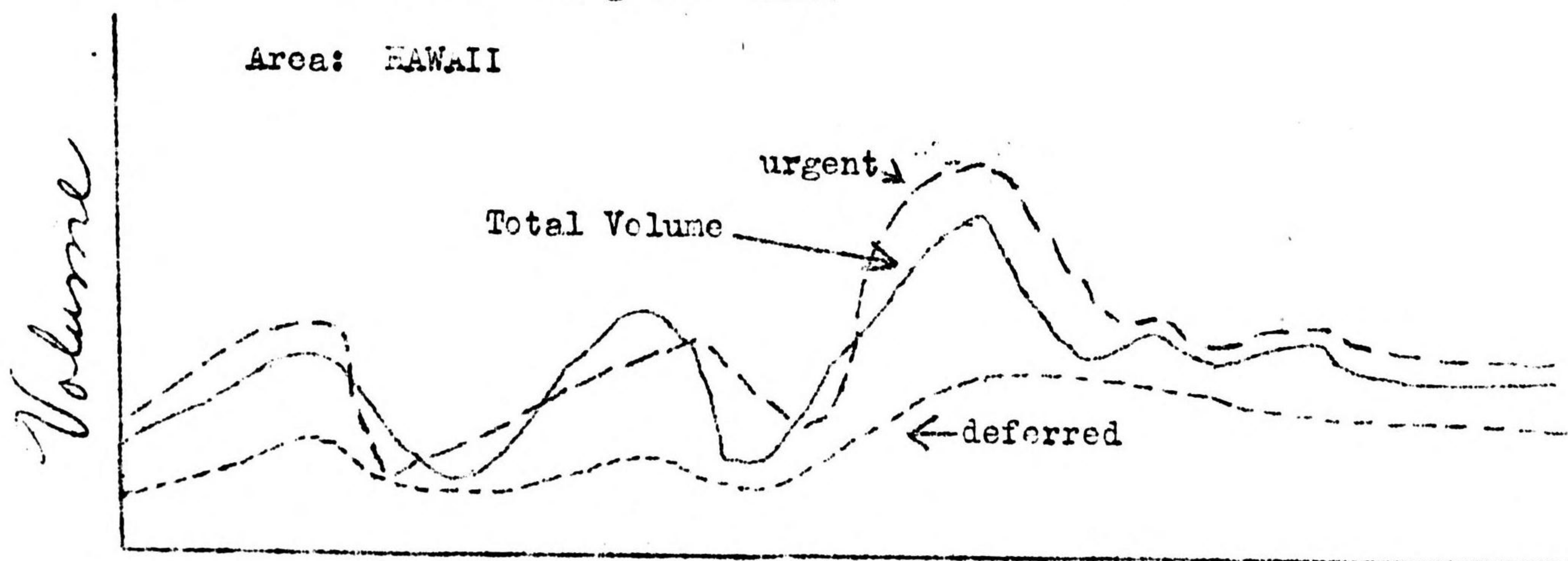


The transmissions were received at OWADA and broken down by area. One officer was responsible for making the analysis of transmissions originating in his area, but this man may have up to ten additional officers assisting him depending on the importance and volume of radio traffic originating in that area. The organization was fluid and officers were shifted from one section to another as necessary at the beginning of the war. We had an average of two officers plus some enlisted men making this analysis for each geographical section. This average was later increased to four officers.

Possible methods of analysis of radio interception were:

1. Call Signs
2. Differentiation of Codes
3. Plain Language
4. Volume of Traffic
5. "Procedure Signal"
6. Priority - "urgent", operational priority", priority", "routine", and "deferred"

Volume of traffic and priorities were plotted on a chart, one for each area, something like this:



Priorities were plotted with colored pencils and the total volume with a black one. All priorities were plotted, although only two are shown on the preceding page.

We performed the same analysis of transmissions from other countries, Russia, China, etc.

Q.2. Could you describe in greater detail the extent to which you were able to locate the exact area of transmission from a group of Allied ships?

A. Almost invariably we were unable to tell whether the transmission had come from a ship or shore station, but we could tell the general area of the transmission. When you started an operation in the MARIANAS, for instance, you would break radio silence, and we would start a new search in the MARIANAS Area. As far as determining whether transmissions came from a group of ships, we were unable to do this.

Q.3. Let us assume a group of ships is at HAWAII and is going to move to the SOLOMONS. If we assume that the ships are not maintaining radio silence, could you plot the progress of these ships to the SOLOMONS by the direction from which the broadcast is coming?

A. If we bothered to, we could tell by RDF. Also we used characteristics of your operators and other information we could put together. If for instance, the NEW JERSEY was going from one point to another, it would be likely to have a larger volume of communications than another ship. If the call sign did not change for 24 hours, we were able to follow it for 22 or 23 hours. Our operators often became familiar with your operator's idiosyncrasies and the general type of information sent. We could always pick up such information as address, date-time group, addressee, etc. A large unit will often collect or sent out weather information. Such characteristics of units make them easy to identify.

Q.4. Suppose the force is observing radio silence. Communications are directed to the force from its base in HAWAII, but the force is not answering back. Could you tell the movement of these forces by the direction and intensity of broadcasts from HAWAII to this force?

A. Four or five days after the force reached its destination we knew because of the greater volume of transmissions. It was always a question as to the extent on which we could rely on our conclusions.

Q.5. What did a peak in volume of radio transmissions mean to the people at OWADA? What was their interpretation?

A. It represented a crisis, but what type of crisis was completely dependant upon the tactical situation. We could not tell where that crisis would materialize. In addition, you "padded" communications. It was difficult to estimate where you "padded". Take OKINAWA as a specific example. A month before OKINAWA, BAMS (Broadcasting Allied Merchant Ships) had a notable increase in transmissions. Ten days before the OKINAWA operations, there was a marked increase in submarine reports. These are easy to spot because we could get good RDF fixes as they are close in. When submarines changed from routine operational communications to "Urgent", we deduced that perhaps an air strike or landing might be in the offing, depending upon the tactical situation. The BAMS call sign

Transcript of Interrogation of Lt. Comdr. SATAKE, T.

is changed only once monthly, so we could follow it. We could for instance, follow such shipping from the West Coast to HAWAII, and then to the SOLOMONS.

Q.6. Were you able to get information with regard to specific ships, or specific groups of ships, from the interpretation of the BAMS code? In other words could you learn the names of the ships from an interpretation of the BAMS code?

A. Yes, we could.

Q.7. Were you ever able to tell the position or geographic location of a group of ships to which the BAMS transmission was directed?

A. We had to wait until San Francisco stopped and HAWAII, MIDWAY, or the place of its destination started.

Q.7. What were your duties as communications officer of an air group?

A. I was a regular communications officer, mostly concerned with routine air group matters.

Q.8. Did you do any flying?

A. I am not a flyer at all.

Q.9. Where was the air group located during the time you were with it?

A. It is the SAEKI Air Group. The term "air group" is larger in Japanese terms than yours.

Q.10. How many planes were usually attached there on an average?

A. Six flying boats, 12 Kates. SAEKI was one in a series of training fields. Often 20 or 30 men in a training flight would drop into SAEKI. SAEKI was a rendezvous point for flights to the south and had good anchorage.

Q.11. Did you have any assistants in your communications Dept?

A. There was a warrant officer and 26 enlisted men assisting me.

Q.12. In April of 1941 you came to the Communications Dept. of the Naval General Staff (TOKUMU HAN). You were there from 1941 until the end of the war. When did you first learn that definite plans had been made for the attack on PEARL HARBOR?

A. The night before the attack. I was prevented from going home that night. No details were given as to what was pending.

Q.13. Were communications from the consul at HAWAII received at OWADA?

A. I do not know.

Q.14. Were you able to tell from communications which fleet commander was commanding from broadcasts that were received?

A. Admiral HALSEY would use a much greater volume of communications than Admiral SPRUANCE.

Q.15. How were you able to tell whether it was HALSEY or SPRUANCE who was broadcasting?

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A. We knew which one was at sea from announcements of your radio and press. In addition, we could tell a change in fleets by another method. For a month previous to a change, there would be a preponderance of the "Z" call sign,--consisting of the letter "Z", a numeral, and a blank. There was also a "K" call sign, consisting of "K" and three other letters. The 5th Fleet communications officer had the reputation of being a better man.

Q.16. To what department in the Naval General Staff did you distribute the information developed by the communications Dept?

A. The material that was of immediate importance was sent out from TOKUMU HAN to the Commander-in-Chief, Combined Fleet, to various other concerned agencies, and a copy always went to the 1st Dept and the 3rd Dept. Our whole analysis was based on probabilities; there was nothing of a definite nature. There was not necessarily a great deal of urgency connected with our estimates. There was wide-spread, varied opinions of the reliability of our estimates.

Q.17. Did the Army have a communications organization performing functions similar to the TOKUMU HAN?

A. At TENASHI the Army had a somewhat similar organization, but we had no liaison with them.

Q.18. Did this organization do analysis and interpretation of naval communications, or did they confine themselves entirely to the Army?

A. I believe they concentrated on air matters.

Q.19. How did the Army get the information developed by TOKUMU HAN?

A. If the Army had a request for information, it probably went to the office of Admiral OZAWA (Chief Combined Naval Force).

Q.20. With reference to the organizational section of the chart, you stated that you had two to four people in each of these divisions. Did you have enlisted men and other people working there also?

A. There were some enlisted men.

Q.21. Were you located at the Staff College throughout the war?

A. We were located at the Navy Ministry until the middle of 1943. We were then moved to the Naval War College, third floor, because it got too full at the Ministry. I was at the Naval War College until the end of the war.

Q.22. How far is it from the Naval War College to OWADA?

A. 50 minutes by car.

Q.23. Was the information brought in by an officer daily, or did you keep up with affairs at OWADA by telephone?

A. We had a direct line and three trips a day.

Q.24. Could you let us have a copy of one of these charts for our files?

A. I believe they are all burned. FUKUSHIMA may be able to obtain a copy and has just arrived from KOREA.