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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 466)
SERIAL NO. 108

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 22 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Japanese Submarine Operations.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Commander FUJIMORI, Yasuo, I.J.N., served 17 years as a permanent officer. During the early part of the war he commanded two submarines. He was assigned to the Naval General Staff from June, 1943 to August 1945.

Where Interviewed: Navy Staff College.

Interrogator: Captain Steadman TELLER, U.S.N.

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. Seymour MILLSTEIN, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

Commander FUJIMORI commanded the submarine RO-60 at the outbreak of war and was engaged for a short time in defensive patrol east of the MARSHALLS. He then took command of the minelaying submarine I-121. The I-121 was scheduled to fuel Japanese patrol planes at FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS prior to the attack on MIDWAY 4 June 1942 but was prevented by the presence of our patrol planes and a seaplane tender in that area.

In August 1942 the I-121 received minor damage from attack by two carrier type aircraft north of the SOLOMONS and next day missed two opportunities to attack a carrier thought to have been the SARATOGA.

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TRANSCRIPT

Q. In what operations did the RO-60 engage while you were her commanding officer?

A. The RO-60 was in a submarine squadron operating from the MARSHALL ISLANDS in defense of that area at the outbreak of war. A total of 6 submarines were employed in patrolling three areas a distance of 400 to 600 miles to the eastward of the MARSHALLS. One area was located across the line between the HAWAIIAN ISLANDS and the MARSHALLS, a second was located to the south of this, and the third area was located to the north. All areas were 200 miles wide and located on a rough circle 500 miles from KWAJALEIN. One and sometimes two submarines were assigned to each area depending upon their availability. There was also a patrol established between BAKER and HOWLAND Islands. My submarine took part in both patrols from early December until I left her for JAPAN on 26 December, 1941. We had no sightings or other experiences of note.

Q. What was your operational experience as commanding officer of the submarine I-121?

A. The I-121 was a 1400 ton minelaying submarine built shortly after World War I according to a German design. I took command of her on 15 January 1942 and shortly afterward proceeded to DAVAO in the PHILIPPINES. We operated between DAVAO and KENDARI to protect ships making passage along that route. We would usually patrol about 300 miles northeast of MOROTAI for the purpose of intercepting American submarines. We had no radar nor any means of detecting underwater sound signals from your submarines so we depended on our lookouts. At times we would intercept radio-telephone transmissions from your submarines. We communicated with our tender by medium wave radio.

Shortly after arriving at DAVAO we experienced trouble with our minelaying equipment so returned to JAPAN for repairs. After repair we left JAPAN on 2 April 1942 with a load of 40 tons of aviation gasoline and 12 tons of oil for servicing our flying boats at FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS in connection with their scouting operations scheduled for the attack on MIDWAY. We proceeded via the MARSHALLS and arrived off FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS on 26 May (TOKYO date). Our flying boats were scheduled to rendezvous with us between 25 May and 1 June for fueling. When I arrived I sighted a small seaplane tender in the anchorage and observed your patrol seaplanes in the area most of the day. We had to remain submerged during the day but at night I surfaced and reported the situation to our base at KWAJALEIN. We had no direct radio communication with our planes but since they did not appear during the time we spent in vicinity of the shoals I presume that the base instructed them to cancel the fueling operation. About 1 June we left that area and proceeded in a general westerly direction sighting your patrol planes daily and just after sunset on 6 June we sighted an American submarine. That submarine was southwest of LISIANSKI Island and on a course northeast. I had no torpedoes so could do nothing about it. We had no further experience during the Battle of MIDWAY and returned to JAPAN.

Q. What events occurred during the remainder of your cruise in the I-121?

A. We left JAPAN and went to the SOLOMON ISLANDS where I cruised around quite a bit but had no particular experience except to bombard your airfield at GUADALCANAL three times and an encounter with a carrier which I believe was the SARATOGA. At sunrise about 24 August 1942 I was in position about 175 miles bearing 040° from SAN CRISTOBAL Island. The I-121 was on the surface when I saw two carrier type airplanes. We were rather slow in diving and the hull was only 20 feet under the surface when the planes dove and dropped depth bombs or charges making two near hits on the after portion of the hull. We took quite a bit of water in and the submarine was forced down stern

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Commander FUJIMORI, Yasuo, I.J.N.) - -

first. We were able to trim the ship however and proceeded toward GUADALCANAL. The next morning at 0600 in position about 150 miles northeast of SAN CRISTOBAL Island we observed a carrier, which I believed to be the SARATOGA, in the act of launching aircraft. She was 8,000 meters due north of me, and heading east screened by four destroyers. Shortly afterward the carrier made a wide sweep to port and steadied on a southerly course passing 10,000 meters to the west of the I-121, about 0900. I was not able to get a shot at her from either position and returned to GUADALCANAL Area.

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U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

Washington, D. C.
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(Nav. No. 108)

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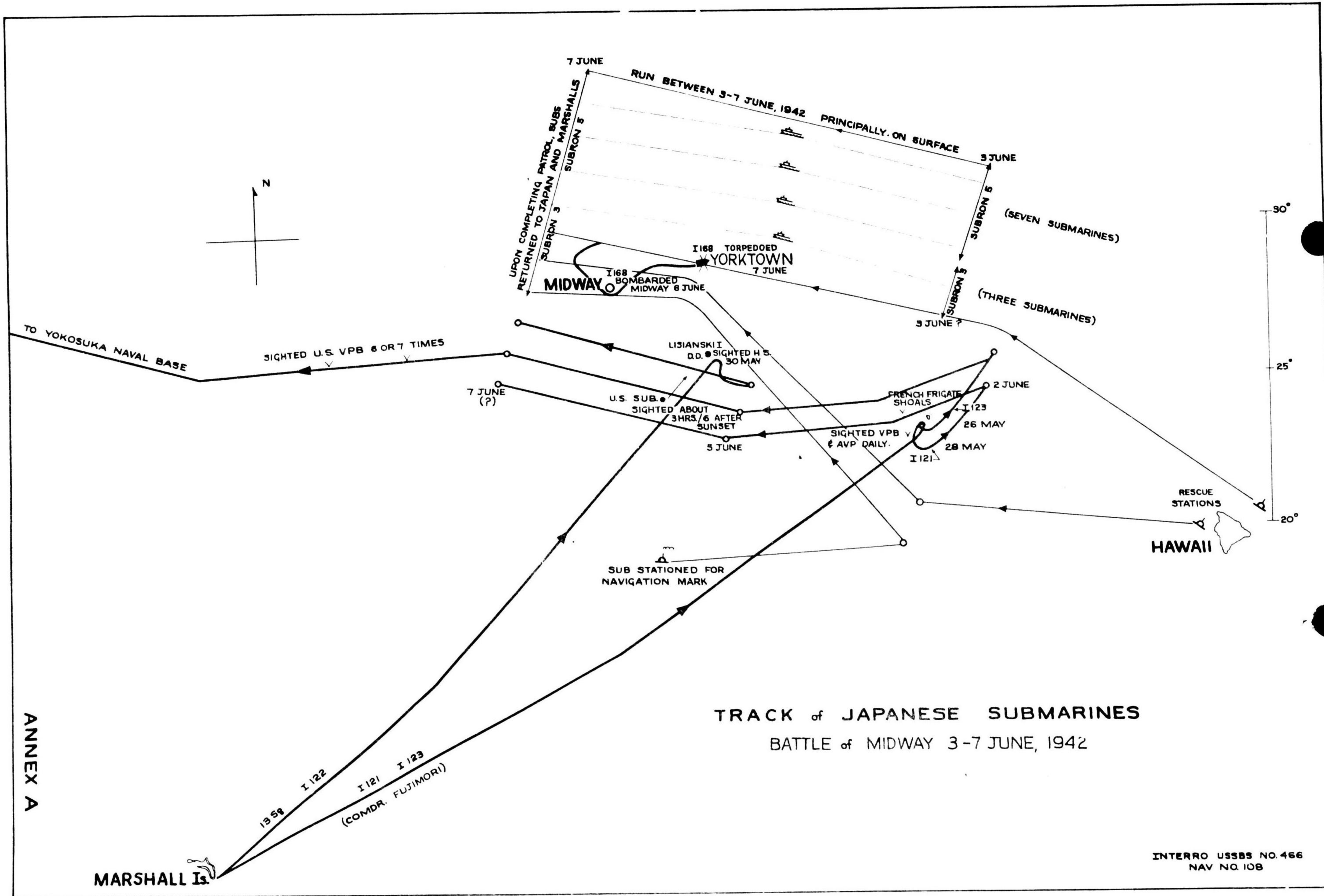
Interrogation of: Commander FUJIMORI, Yasuo, I.J.N.

Interrogation by: Captain Steadman Teller, USN.

The attached chart(s) supplement Interrogation No. USSBS
466 (Nav No. 108).

Enclosure: Annex "A"





TRACK of JAPANESE SUBMARINES
BATTLE of MIDWAY 3-7 JUNE, 1942