

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEILLANCE
(PACIFIC)

R E S T R I C T E D

INTERROGATION No. 436

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 24 Nov. 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis Division

Subject: Japanese Aircraft; relative performance.

Person Interrogated and Background:

Major SAKAMOTO, Hideo

Major SAKAMOTO graduated from The Army Officers School, and The Army Air Academy, in 1932 and 1933 respectively. As a pilot, he received reconnaissance training at AKENO and bomber training at HAMAMATSU School. In 1934 he served in the 4th Flying Regiment in JAPAN, departing at the end of the year for MANCHURIA. There he served as a pilot in various flying units until 1940, except for a short interval in 1936 when he attended a special navigation course at TOKOROZAWA. From 1940 to 1945, he served as a test pilot in the Army Air Testing Dept (RIKUGUN KIKU SHINBU) at YOKOTA Airfield.

Where Interviewed: Meiji Building.

Interrogator: Major J. J. Driscoll

Interpreter: Lt. R. L. Sneider

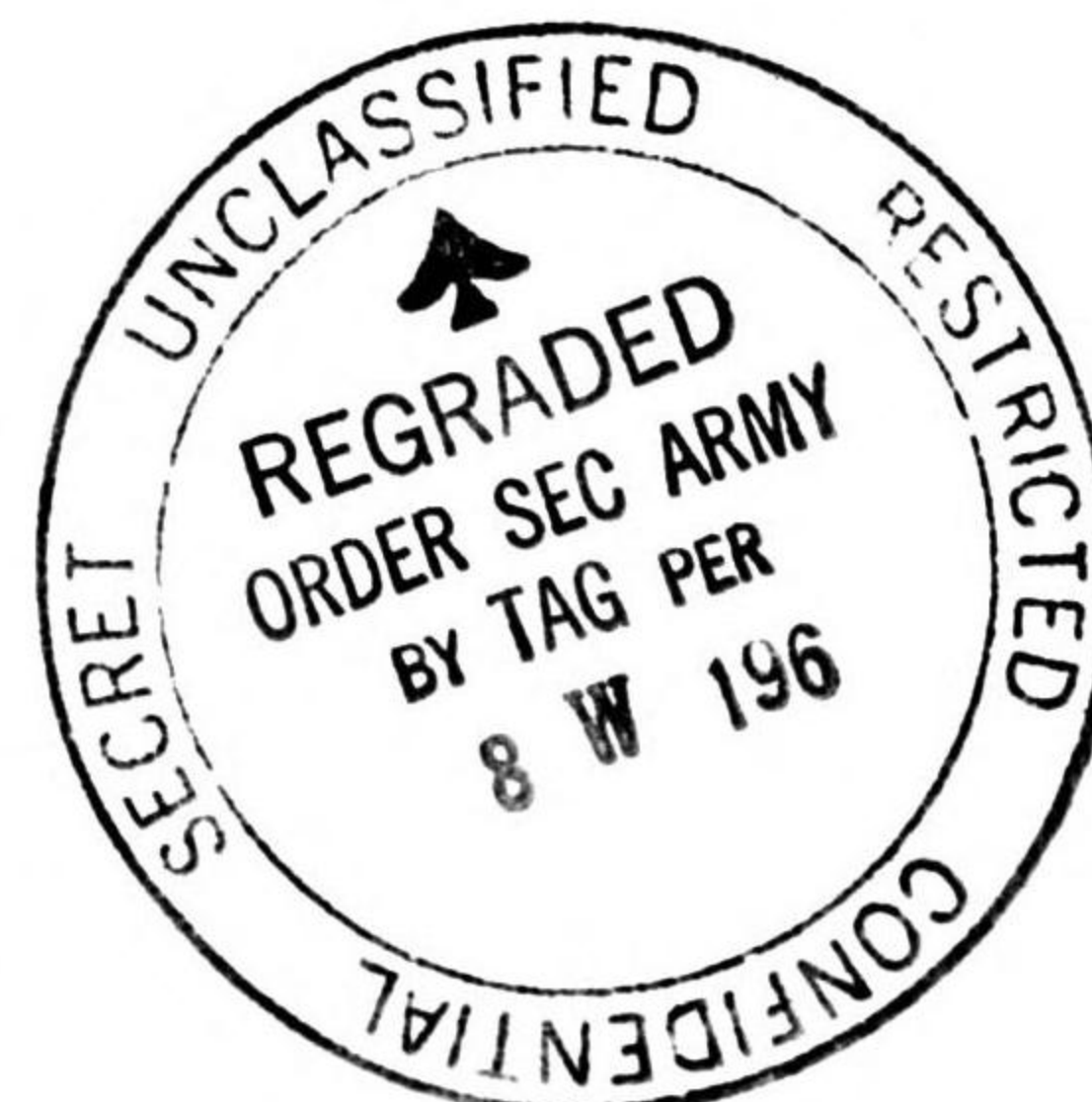
Allied Officers Present: None

SUMMARY:

Major SAKAMOTO was familiar with most Army bombers and in addition served as test pilot on the KI-67 during the trials of the radio controlled I-CO bomb. At the end of the interview he turned over to the interrogator his personal critique, which he described as containing technical reasons as to why JAPAN lost the air war (This has been microfilmed for translation). He had excellent powers of observation despite his lack of training in technical matters.

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Q. What types of aircraft did you fly as a test pilot?

A. Only bombers; both production models and experimental types.

Q. Name the models with which you are familiar.

A. KI-21 (type 97) Model 2.
KI-48 Model 2
KI-67 (type 4)
KI-109 Attack bomber
KI-46 Model 1
KI-74

Q. Describe the KI-74

A. This was our newest bomber; the first model being completed in March 1945. It was a twin-engined (2000 HP engine) aircraft with a range of 8000-10000 Kilometers. It had a maximum speed of 570 Km per hour and carried a 1000 kg load. The experiments on this plane were 60% complete at the end of the war.

Q. What was your evaluation of this model?

A. I considered it the best bomber I had tested.

Q. Describe the KI-109.

A. It was a modification of the KI-67. There were two models both having a 75 mm cannon in the nose. The final model had in addition 12.7 mm MG in the tail. There was one Squadron (CHUTAI) of 30 planes in operational use. It had turbine supercharged engines. The top and waist guns of the KI-67 were removed. They were removed because this model was designed primarily for combat against B-29s. With a maximum load the range was 5300 km.

Q. Describe the 75 mm cannon used in the KI-109.

A. It was a semi-automatic AA gun with the ground mount removed; the type 88. One man acted as gunner loading each round by hand. The empty cases were ejected into the bomb bay. The rate of fire was 10 rounds per minute. The recoil had no effect on the plane being only 1.4 meters. We carried 15 or 30 rounds of HE ammunition.

Q. Are you familiar with the American Airborne 75 mm gun?

A. Yes.

Q. How did the type 88 compare with this gun?

A. The muzzle velocity of our gun was 820 meters per second giving it a flatter trajectory with greater accuracy, and a 1500 meter range.

Q. Did you ever carry torpedoes or guided missiles?

A. I had limited experience with torpedoes and also acted as test pilot for the I-GO bomb.

Q. Did you test both the A and B model I-Gos?

A. I tested only the A model 2 or 3 times at SHIRAIISHI and MITSUISHI. However I am familiar with some of the details on the B model.

- Q. How did these models differ?
- A. A model has a 6 meter wing span while B had a 4 meter span. The warhead on the A weighed 800 kg, while the one on the B weighed only 300 kg. The speeds and range were the same, 550 km per hour and 11 km range.
- Q. What aircraft were used as the mother planes?
- A. The KI-67 carried the A and the KI-48 carried the B.
- Q. Can you sketch the two models?
- A. Yes, but just roughly.
- Q. How many were produced of each model?
- A. Approximately 40-50 "As" and more than 100 "Bs".
- Q. Were these ever used operationally?
- A. No. The army believed that the project was impractical because the mother plane was left too vulnerable to attack.
- Q. During your tests what defects arose?
- A. The gyro on the model A was not good, causing erratic flight of the bomb. On the other hand, the B model was perfect, but the bomb load of 300 kg was deemed insufficient. On the basis of experiments on B, they hoped to perfect A.
- Q. How accurate were these missiles?
- A. When the gyro worked, they would fall in an area from 30 meters short to 100 meters past the target. Most of the error was in range and not in azimuth.
- Q. Describe the tactics employed.
- A. The mother plane approached the target at 1500 meters altitude and released the bomb when 11km from the target. The bombardier controlled the bomb by manipulating a stick in the nose of the mother plane. The bomb automatically descended to an altitude of 30-100 meters, levelling off at about 5 km from the target. Just before getting over the target, the bomb was dropped by the bombardier pushing his control stick forward.
- Q. Did the bombardier have full directional and altitude control over the missile?
- A. Yes, the stick was equivalent to a control stick in an aircraft.
- Q. How far behind was the mother plane when the bomb hit the target?
- A. 3000 meters.
- Q. This is quite a distance; did you ever lose sight of the bomb?
- A. Yes, it was possible to lose sight of it but not very frequently.

- Q. Did you have any optical aid in observing the bomb?
- A. No, we used only the naked eye.
- Q. Was the exhaust flame visible?
- A. No, only the smoke.
- Q. Did you have any modifications for night use?
- A. Yes, we added a tail light.
- Q. Will you sketch the angle of approach to the target?
- A. Yes (Sketch follows)
- Q. What individual would be fully familiar with the technical details of the bomb?
- A. Lt. Col OMOI at the 1st Air Technical Research Laboratory.
- Q. To what extent did the Navy cooperate with the Army?
- A. It was almost negligible, until near the end of the war.
- Q. In which way did they cooperate?
- A. In the development of the jet propulsion aircraft SHUSEI, they worked together, but the Navy dominated the project.
- Q. How do you explain this final cooperation?
- A. Materials were short and we both had to cut down on the number of plane models. We cooperated on the low levels but not in the higher echelons.
- Q. Were you ever handicapped in combat due to the lack of cooperation?
- A. Yes. During the OKINAWA Campaign we planned torpedo attacks with the KI-67. The Navy furnished the torpedos but no personnel to assist in their adjustment.
- Q. What type torpedo was used?
- A. The 1050 kg KAI-7 torpedo.
- Q. How did this lack of cooperation affect operations?
- A. 9 Flying Regiments (HIKOSentai) were scheduled for torpedo operations, but only two were able to go into combat, the 7th and 98th. Finally the remaining units returned to normal bombing operations. Incidentally one of these units, the 14th Flying Regiment, was scheduled for conversion to KI-74 in September 1945. I was to command this unit.

R E S T R I C T E D

Sketch by Major SAKAMOTO
showing tactics used in
release of radio-controlled
I-GO "A" bomb from K1-67.

