

RESTRICTED

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 462)
NAV.NO 104

Place: Tokyo
Date: 26 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division

Subject: The KON Operation for the Reinforcement of BIAK.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain SHIMANOUCI, Momochio, has served in the I. J. Navy for 22 years. He was a member of the Personnel Office of Navy Department in TOKYO from December 1941 to March 1943; served on Staff 16th Cruiser Division from March 1943 to October 1944; served as Instructor Naval Academy at EDUJIMA from October 1944 to October 1945.

Where interviewed: MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Commander T. H. Moorer, U.S.N.

Interpreter: Lieut.(jg) R. P. Brown, U.S.N.R. and Mr. SHIMA, I.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

Captain SHIMANOUCI describes in accurate and complete detail the three phases of the KON Operation, devised for the purpose of reinforcing BIAK.

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (SHIMANOUCI, Momochio, IJN) -----

The KON Operation

- Q. Who devised the plans for the KON Operation?
 A. The plans were devised by the Staff of the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet on about 29 May 1944.
- Q. Explain the inception and objective of the KON Operation.
 A. With the progress of the Allied advance along the North Coast of NEW GUINEA it became extremely important for the defense of the HALMAHERAS and PHILIPPINES that we hold BIAK Island. Finally in the latter part of May the Allies began the invasion of BIAK. Although our defense forces put up a very brave and skillful fight we realized that unless fresh forces were thrown in regularly it would be impossible in the long run to hold the island. Herein arose the necessity of the KON Operation. This operation had as its main objective the transportation to BIAK by Navy combat ships and small craft of the No. 2 Amphibious Brigade (about 2500 troops), which was at that time in ZAMBOANGA. The secondary objective was a Naval bombardment of enemy land positions if the situation permitted.
- Q. Describe the command organization for the operation and list the ships assigned each unit.
 A. Because of the rapidly changing situation there were three consecutive organizations set up for the execution of the plan. Only the second organization was actually used. The three organizations were as follows:

Organization No. 1 (1 June to 6 June)

Transport Division

Sixteenth Cruiser Squadron	AOBA (FF))
	KINU)
Nineteenth Destroyer Group	SHIKINAMI)
	URANAMI)
	SHIGURE)

Screening Units

No. 1	Fifth Cruiser Squadron	MYOKO (F))
		HAGURO)
	27th Destroyer Group	HARASAME)
		SHIRATSUYU)
		SAMIDARE)
No. 2	10th Destroyer Group	FUSO (F))
		ASAGUMO)
		KAZAGUMO)

Detached Force

ITSUKUSHIMA (F)
 TSUGARU
 36th Sub Chaser Squadron
 37th Sub Chaser Squadron
 30th Picket Boat Group
 127th Special Transport Group

NOTE: At 2025, 3 June, the 5th Cruiser Squadron, FUSO and 10th Destroyer Group detached from above force and returned to DAVOA. (See track chart)

Organization No. 2 (7 June to 9 June)

Transport Division

19th Destroyer Group	SHIKINAMI (FF))
	URANAMI)
	SHIGURE)

Screening Unit

27th Destroyer Group	HARUSAME (F))
	SHIRAKUYU)
	SAMIDARE)

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Transport Division and the 5th Cruiser Squadron were bombed by large type planes. Bombing inaccurate, no damage.

Q. Who made the decision to halt the first operation and what factors prompted him to do so?

A. The decision was made by Commander in Chief Combined Fleet, in view of the submarine and aircraft contacts mentioned above and also the fact that a strong Allied force was reported east of BIAK, it was decided to alter the operation.

Q. Please continue.

A. The Transport Division arrived SORONG on 4 June and unloaded troops. The 19th and 25th Destroyer Groups proceeded to AMBON for fuel and the AOBA and KINU anchor vicinity of WAIGEO Island. At this time orders were received reestablishing the KON plan according to Organization No. 2 and preparations were made on 5 June. At 1715, 6 June, the AOBA was heavily attacked in KOBUI BAY, WAIGEO Island by 20 B-24s. Although the attack lasted 2 hours the AOBA received no damage.

On the morning of 7 June the two cruisers and six destroyers rendezvoused north of MISOOL Island. Since according to Organization No. 2, only destroyers were to be used for run to BIAK, Rear Admiral SHIMOUNOUCHI shifted his flag to the SHIKINAMI. The Transport Division and Screening Unit composed of 3 destroyers each then proceeded to SORONG where each ship of the Transport Division loaded 200 soldiers and necessary equipment. The AOBA and KINU sailed for AMBON for supplies with orders to return as quickly as possible and standby in the vicinity of SALAWATI. No. 2 Detached Force was held in readiness in vicinity of HALMAHERAS. At 0000 8 June the Transport Division and Screening Unit headed for BIAK. After sunrise air cover provided by fighters of 23rd Air Flotilla. At 1245 a score of B-24s and 30 P-38s made low level strafing and bombing attacks; bearing 320° distance 80 miles from MANOKAWARI. As the result of a near miss the HARUSAME sank in about 5 minutes. Some flooding of SHIRATSUYU from hole caused by bomb fragment but navigation not impeded. Also some damage to SHIKINAMI and SAMIDARE from strafing. After rescue of HARUSAME crew, we proceeded again towards BIAK. At 1800 an aircraft report was received stating that an Allied Surface Force composed of 1 battleship, four cruisers and eight destroyers was east of BIAK, proceeding west at high speed. Nevertheless the operation was continued despite the fact that we were behind schedule. At 2230 we arrived off the North Coast of BIAK and prepared to enter KORIMU BAY and unload troops. However at 2240 one of the screening destroyers sighted the Allied force approaching and we quickly withdrew to the northwest. By 0040 9 June the Allied force had closed to within range and we were subjected to a terrific shelling which we opposed with gunfire and torpedoes. SHIRATSUYU received hits but no serious damage. At 0345 contact was severed in vicinity of MAPIA Islands. During the melee the 19th and 27th Destroyer Groups became separated. Because of rain no air attacks were received on 9 June. The 27th destroyer group, less HARASUME (sunk) proceeded direct to BATJAN while the 19th destroyer group proceeded to SORONG, disembarked troops, proceeded to SALAWATI arriving 1500 9 June, rendezvoused with AOBA and KINU, shifted flag back to AOBA, and then proceeded to BATJAN, arriving 10 June.

Q. When was the plan involving ORGANIZATION No. 3 put into effect?

A. Immediately after the above battle experience the KON units were organized into powerful forces as shown in ORGANIZATION No. 3. The YAMATO and MUSASHI plus the 2nd and 4th Destroyer Groups arrived in BATJAN from TAWI TAWI on 11 June. The 5th Cruiser Squadron and 10th Destroyer Group arrived from DAVAO about 9 June. By 11 June all forces were in BATJAN ready for operations, but on 13 June everything was cancelled in favor of the AGO Operation for the defense of the MARIANAS. The YAMATO and MUSASHI accompanied by the 5th Cruiser Division, the Second Destroyer Squadron, the 4th and 10th Destroyer Groups departed BATJAN for rendezvous with the Main Fleet in preparation for battle west of SAIPAN.

Q. Why didn't the AOBA and KINU accompany the battleships?

A. They were too slow, they were to join later.

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (SHIMANOUCI, Momochio, IJN)

- Q. Why were operations similiar to the KON operation not planned and executed previously, in order to stop Allied advance up the NEW GUINEA coast?
- A. Two reasons: The AGO Operation was most important because we thought you would attack PALAU so all ships must be trained for that operation. This training was not completed until about June. Also prior to your arrival in BIAK we did not have proper bases for support of attacks on, say HOLLANDIA. If the KON Operation had been successful they were to be continued. We planned to use AMBON, BOBO, SORONG, MAU KAWARI, BATJAN as advance bases and support them from the PHILIPPINES and PALAU. Since the Allies would be forced to advance along single line up NEW GUINEA Coast we would have advantage. However after AGO Operation began, we had to abandon NEW GUINEA. We did not have enough ships for both operations.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

Washington, D. C.
January 1946.

Interrogation No. USSBS 462 - Sup.
(Nav. No. 104)

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: The KON Operation for the Reinforcement of BIAK.

Interrogation of: Captain SHIMANOUGHI, Momochio.

Interrogation by: Commander T. H. Moorer, USN.

The attached chart(s) supplement Interrogation No.
USSBS 462 (Nav. No. 104).

Enclosure: Annex "A"



115°

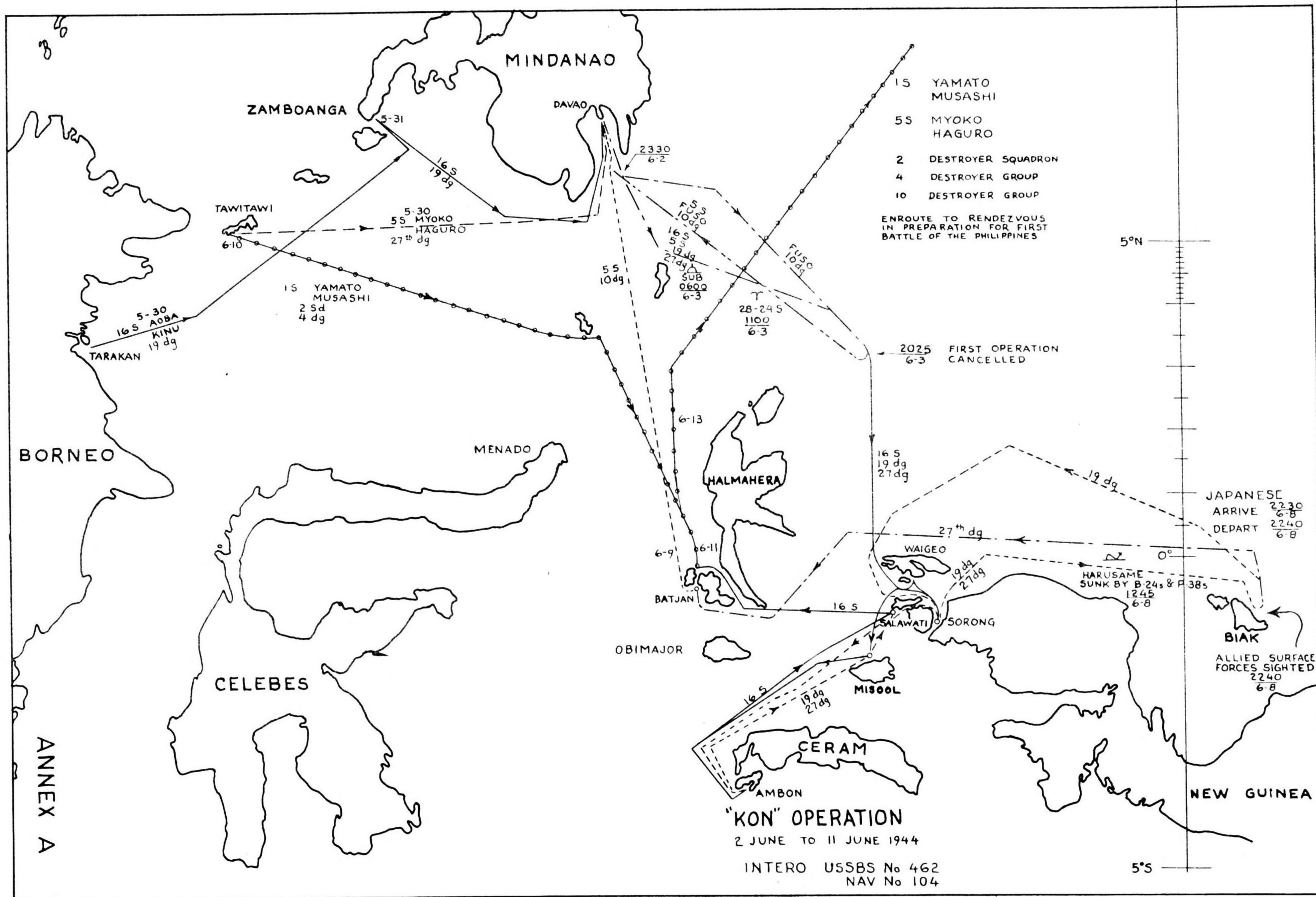
120°

125°

130°

10°N

PLATE 104-1



BORNEO

CELEBES

ANNEX A

MINDANAO

ZAMBOANGA

DAVAO

TAWITAWI

TARAKAN

MENADO

HALMAHERA

BATJAN

OBIMAJOR

MISOOL

AMBON

CERAM

SALAWATI

SORONG

WAIGEO

BIAK

NEW GUINEA

JAPANESE
ARRIVE 2230
DEPART 2240
6-8

HARUSAME
SUNK BY B-24s & P-38s
1245
6-8

ALLIED SURFACE
FORCES SIGHTED
2240
6-8

2025
6-3
FIRST OPERATION
CANCELLED

28-245
1100
6-3

55
10dg

5-30
55
MYOKO
HAGURO
27th dg

15
YAMATO
MUSASHI
25d
4 dg

5-30
16S
AOBA
KINU
19 dg

2330
6-2

15
YAMATO
MUSASHI

55
MYOKO
HAGURO

2 DESTROYER SQUADRON

4 DESTROYER GROUP

10 DESTROYER GROUP

ENROUTE TO RENDEZVOUS
IN PREPARATION FOR FIRST
BATTLE OF THE PHILIPPINES

5°N

0°

5°S