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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 408)
NAV. NO. 84

Place: TOKYO
Date: 21 November 1945
Time: 0930-1200 1300-1800

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: ALEUTIAN Campaign, Japanese Army Garrisons on ATTU and KISKA.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Lieutenant Colonel FUJII, Kazume, IJA, a regular officer of 12 years service. He served as an air staff officer for the North Area Army, with headquarters at SAPPORO, HOKKAIDO, from January to October 1942, when he was assigned to a similar position on the staff of the KISKA Army Garrison until August 1943. In the latter position he planned airfields and air facilities in the Western ALEUTIANS.

Where interviewed: MEIJI Building, Room 618.

Interrogator: Captain J. S. RUSSELL, USN.
Interpreter: Lieut.(jg) R. P. BROWN, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

Colonel FUJII made an inspection trip to KISKA for ten days beginning the last of September 1942. While there he became familiar with the Army defences of KISKA, and flew in a Navy float plane over AMCHITKA ISLAND, making an aerial survey for an airfield. He arrived in KISKA for duty on 10 November 1942, and was on that island or on ATTU, except for two trips back to JAPAN to request additional troops and supplies, until the evacuation of KISKA on 29 July 1942 (TOKYO date). His last trip to JAPAN was for the purpose of planning the evacuation. He returned from this trip on the light cruiser KISO which was engaged in the actual evacuation. The organization of the Army forces on KISKA and ATTU is given as well as some information on losses of Army transport ships in the area. Colonel FUJII describes what he saw of the Battle of KOMANDORSKI ISLANDS from the auxiliary cruiser ASAKA MARU. The effectiveness of the United States air and sea blockade of KISKA and ATTU is evident throughout the narrative.



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NARRATIVE of Interrogation (Lieutenant Colonel FUJII, Kazumi, IJA)

NARRATIVE

Lieutenant Colonel (Then Major) FUJII was sent to KISKA from the Staff Headquarters of the North Area Army to make a survey of KISKA and the surrounding islands to determine their adaptability for defense. He was taken to KISKA in the destroyer WAKABA and returned on the same ship. The WAKABA approached to about the 100 or 200 mile circle from KISKA then made a high speed dash in, arriving in the evening. No submarine nor air contacts were made.

After looking about KISKA, he was flown on about 5 October 1942 over AMCHITKA ISLAND in a Navy float plane. At this time the United States occupation of ADAK was known to the Japanese. Colonel FUJII was rowed out to the plane, in rubber boat, from the seaplane base on the Northwest shore of KISKA Harbor. During the flight, one B-24 was sighted from a distance. The weather and visibility were good. The flat land on the eastern end of AMCHITKA ISLAND was not too suitable for airfields, Colonel FUJII thought, because of the large number of ponds which indicated marshy land.

About every other day while Colonel FUJII was at KISKA there were air attacks by 5 to 10 bombers and 10 to 15 fighters. The GERTRUDE COVE area received one attack, the remainder were directed against the KISKA Harbor area.

The organization and deployment of Japanese Army troops in the Western ALEUTIANS as of 30 September 1942 were: -

ATTU - No Army troops present, these had been removed to KISKA about August 1942.

KISKA - Army force in command of Major HOZUMI, Masatoshi 301st Independent Infantry Battalion.

4 Companies Infantry (110 x 4)	440
1 Machine Gun Company	180
1 Artillery Company (70mm howitzers)	180
2 Companies AA Artillery (180 x 2)	360
1 Company Engineers	200
1 Platoon Shipping Engineers	60

Total 1520

The Army headquarters were located about one mile inshore at the head of GERTRUDE COVE. A road connected the Army headquarters with the Navy headquarters on KISKA Harbor. This was a good road except for the section through the mountains. The Army had a defense line across the island just west of GERTRUDE COVE. Three Infantry Companies, One Artillery Company, and one Machine Gun Company were in the Cove area. Anti-aircraft artillery was emplaced on the northwest and southeast sides of the Cove. Mines were laid across the entrance to the two coves east of GERTRUDE. An infantry company was deployed in the pass west of KISKA Harbor. The engineer company and shipping platoon were encamped at the head of GERTRUDE COVE.

Subsequent reinforcements to Army troops arrived at KISKA as follows: -

10 November 1942, via one destroyer (WAKABA ?), - Part of North Seas Garrison Headquarters with Major General MIKEMI, Toichira, 80

End of November 1942, via URAGIO MARU and AWATA MARU, - 3 infantry companies of the YAMAGUCHI Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel YAMAGUCHI, Sadama, 330

Part of Rear Echelon Service Troops, North Seas Garrison Headquarters (Communication, Quartermaster, and Weather personnel. 40

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Half of Battalion Headquarters, Army Anchorage Headquarters, Lt. Col. NAGAMINE	50 60
End of December 1942, via KISO, ABUKUMA and other ships, at night,	110
1 infantry company	180
1 infantry weapons company	40
Engineer battalion headquarters	
Early January 1943, via MELBOURNE MARU and either ANATA or ASAKA MARU,	200
1 company of engineers	100
Field hospital	30
Half of Battalion Headquarters	
End of January 1943, via unidentified ships - ABUKUMA possibly included,	40
Anti-aircraft battalion	180
1 machine gun company	100
Part of North Seas Garrison Headquarters	
10 April 1943, via submarine, - First Sector Unit (Island Command) Colonel SATO, Masaji,	30
	Total troops arriving 1570
	Total troops present 1520
	Grand total 3090

These additional troops were deployed in the following manner. The main strength of the YAMAGUCHI Battalion went to the area between KISKA Harbor and KISKA Volcano, - 3 companies were in the mid area, with platoons from these covering the east and west sides of the area of lakes just south of the volcano. The HOZUMI Battalion expanded somewhat to the southwest with one company and two platoons were sent to the extreme southwest end of the island. One company of the YAMAGUCHI Battalion took over the pass west of KISKA Harbor. Some anti-aircraft went to NORTH HEAD and the remainder to GERTRUDE COVE. Two companies of engineers moved up to build the airstrip just north of KISKA Harbor.

With this deployment, Colonel YAMAGUCHI was responsible for the defense of North KISKA ISLAND; Colonel HOZUMI, for the South. One hundred men from each battalion were assigned as an airstrip guard. The Navy was responsible for the defense of the harbor and had their artillery set up in that area and on little KISKA. Navy construction personnel were also working on the airstrip. The Army had no radar but received good information from the Navy radar installation in the hills west of the Navy main camp.

The last surface ship reached KISKA late in January or early in February. Thereafter supplies were brought in by submarine only.

The Army air personnel were limited to four: Colonel FUJII, a senior technician, and two junior technicians.

The airstrip on ATTU was to be an Army strip. Because the strip on HOLTZ BAY was narrow, it was intended to base there a fighter unit of only 30 airplanes, - type Ki-43, "HAYABUSA". A second larger field, with better approaches, was planned for MASSACRE BAY. A field was also planned for SHEMYA ISLAND in the SEMICHI Group, but there was a shortage of men, materials and water transport. The lack of a harbor at SHEMYA was considered a very great disadvantage, but it was planned to discharge cargo over the beaches at the east and west ends of the island. An airstrip on AMCHITKA was also planned. An airstrip on a site at the southwest end of KISKA was considered, but no beach suitable for unloading cargo was found and building a road from GERTRUDE COVE presented extreme difficulties.

Colonel FUJII went from KISKA to ATTU by submarine, arriving on 15 February 1945. The Army garrison on ATTU at this time consisted of:-

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North CHISHIMA Coast Defense Infantry Unit, -	
Lt.Col. YONEKAWA, Hiroshi,	
Headquarters	50
3 infantry companies (150 x 3)	450
1 machine gun company	180
303rd Independent Infantry Battalion, - Major WATANABE	
Headquarters	50
2 infantry companies (150 x 2)	300
No. 2 Sector Unit Anti-Aircraft Battalion (Part only)	
1 company	180
One company of shipping engineers	150
Army Anchorage Headquarters (Part of this unit was at KISKA)	60

The Army headquarters on ATTU were located well inshore up the east valley behind HOLTZ BAY. It was moved to the CHICHAGOF HARBOR Area after the United States landings on the island.

While Colonel FUJII was on ATTU, on 19 February, a United States Naval bombardment took place. As a result of this shelling three were killed, three wounded, and three barracks destroyed. One or two United States cruiser spotting planes flew over and were mistaken for Japanese planes, and hence were not fired upon for some time. He believed that these planes dropped some small bombs in the CHICHAGOF area after they left HOLTZ BAY.

Colonel FUJII flew in a float plane over the SEMICHI ISLANDS about 1 March, surveying these islands from the air with the idea of selecting a suitable airfield site.

On 7 March a United States bombing raid was made against ATTU. As a result 5 were killed and 5 or 6 wounded, 3 barges were sunk and 2 buildings in the native village at CHICHAGOF were blown up.

About 1 March the SAKITO MARU and the ASAKA (or possibly AWATA) MARU, carrying food and airstrip material, ran in to HOLTZ BAY at night and unloaded for two hours. Because a United States submarine had been sighted, the unloading was not complete before the ships got underway and retired.

Colonel FUJII left ATTU on 15 March and went by submarine to KASIWABARA on PARAMUSHIRO ISLAND where he arrived on 18 March. He had a conference with Commander Fifth Fleet where he requested the delivery of personnel, food and ammunition for the Army forces on ATTU and KISKA. He departed PARAMUSHIRO on about 25 March embarked in the ASAKA MARU. On board the ASAKA were:-

No. 2 Sector Unit Headquarters, Colonel YAMAZAKI	30
1 Company of the 303rd Independent Infantry Battalion	110
Replacements for the YONEKAWA Unit	300
1 anti-aircraft battalion headquarters	30
Total	550

The SAKITO MARU sailed in company with the ASAKA MARU, and these two ships were escorted by the First Destroyer Squadron. The SAKITO MARU had had an epidemic of typhoid fever aboard and hence carried no troops, however she had a capacity load of cargo.

A slower ship, the Army chartered SANKO MARU, had sailed the day before. This ship carried ammunition, food and materials, but no troops.

The group of ships in company with the ASAKA MARU were joined by the cruisers of the Fifth Fleet at about noon of 26 March. At 0300 on 27 March an American force was sighted. The last two ships in column at this time were the ASAKA MARU and the SAKITO MARU. The ASAKA MARU was the first ship to identify the enemy, and passed the word up the column to the NACHI. The NACHI

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turned to the right in the direction of the enemy, while the ASAKA MARU and SAKITO MARU fled towards the KOMANDORSKI ISLANDS. Colonel FUJII saw the exchange of gunfire, hits on the NACHI, and later the United States destroyers lay a smoke screen. (He heard later that 40 had been killed on the NACHI.) The transports were tracked by American flying boats for about an hour beginning at 1400. Once, the ASAKA MARU opened fire at one of these planes.

All ships returned to PARAMUSHIRO and Colonel FUJII requested an immediate reattempt at getting the same convoy through, arguing that the American force would have left the area after the battle. The request was not granted by the Navy because of a shortage of ammunition and fuel for the warships. Instead Commander Fifth Fleet assigned 3 destroyers which could carry a total of 200 personnel. This space was assigned by the Army as follows:

YAMAZAKI Headquarters	30
Anti-aircraft battalion headquarters	30
Replacements for YONEKAWA Unit	140

Colonel FUJII heard that the destroyers IKAZUCHI, INAZUMI, and one other, were assigned, that they reached a point west of ATTU where they were reconnoitered by United States planes and that they therefore returned to PARAMUSHIRO. He also heard that Colonel YAMAZAKI finally reached ATTU by submarine on 27 April.

Meanwhile Colonel FUJII went to TOKYO to try to get something done towards defending the ALEUTIANS. A meeting was held on 8 April with the Naval General Staff. Commander Fifth Fleet was present at this meeting. A decision was made to move in reinforcements by submarine. However, because of the lack of fog in April, it was also decided that the movement must wait until May and June when it could be done under the cover of fog.

Colonel FUJII left TOKYO on 20 April, embarking on the submarine I-7 at YOKOSUKA. The I-7 carried food and ammunition, and went directly to KISKA, where it arrived on 1 May.

While on KISKA awaiting the arrival of additional supply submarines, and on about 10 May, it was learned that United States forces were attacking ATTU. A plan was made to load two submarines with food, ammunition and all possible troops and run them to ATTU. This plan was not carried out. Between 10 and 29 May the progress of the battle on ATTU was followed by radio dispatches. On 29 May word was received of preparations for the final charge by the Japanese ATTU garrison.

During the ATTU battle TOKYO and SAPPORO were requested to send Army reinforcements to KISKA because a landing there was feared also. The morale of the garrison was low because ATTU had been occupied and KISKA was surrounded. On the island, work was stopped on the airstrip and the construction personnel were used to augment the defense forces. Additional defensive positions were rushed for the entire island. At this time the total personnel strength both Army and Navy was 5400.

Three transport submarines arrived bringing food, ammunition and a few pieces of light field artillery. One of these was the I-7 which arrived between 20 and 30 June. She was taken under fire by an American picket ship off GERTRUDE COVE and her conning tower was holed. She continued into the cove, however, and unloaded her cargo. Leaving, she was again engaged by the American picket ship, and, being damaged, she was beached on the point southeast of the Cove. Forty of her personnel survived. Two or three submarines were sunk trying to make their way around the north end of KISKA ISLAND.

Every day on which the weather permitted United States air attacks were made. On foggy days United States surface ships patrolled close to the Island.

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About 7 June a senior Army staff officer, Colonel YANACKA, Takeshi, went to PARAMUSHIRO by submarine. He returned on about 20 June bringing news of the plan to evacuate KISKA. The formulation of a plan for the evacuation of the island was undertaken immediately by a joint council, - General MINAKI, Colonel YANACKA, and Major FUJII for the Army, Admiral AKIYAMA and Commander YASUNAMI for the Navy. The plan was to maintain the lines of defense up to the latest possible time, then to withdraw only the personnel to the ships. If an attack developed prior to the embarkation the garrison would fight to the last man.

On about 28 June, Commander YASUNAMI of the Navy staff and FUJII, representing the Army, went to PARAMUSHIRO on board a submarine (I-35?). There they consulted with the Staff of Commander Fifth Fleet and of Commander First Destroyer Squadron giving the plan for assembling the troops. One of the most active participants in the planning was Captain ARICHIKA, Chief of Staff, First Destroyer Squadron.

Originally it was planned to evacuate the troops at 1600 on 11 July. The KISO and ABUKUMA with destroyers of the First Destroyer Squadron were to embark the troops. The ASAKA MARU, one tanker and the KUNAJIRI were to be a reserve group. About 1000 persons were to be taken aboard each of the light cruisers, and about 500 on each destroyer. The date, time, and plan of anchoring were sent by radio to KISKA. Rear Admiral KIMURA, Masafuku, Commander First Destroyer Squadron was in charge of the operation.

The evacuation force sailed on 7 July. Commander YASUNAMI was on board ABUKUMA, -- FUJII on board KISO. The stand-by area was reached on time, but there was insufficient fog on 11 July, hence the dash to KISKA was postponed. While awaiting foggy weather, fuel ran low and the force returned to PARAMUSHIRO. They sortied again on 22 July and word was sent to KISKA to be ready to embark on 26 July. Because of the weather the dash to KISKA was delayed until 29 July. The force arrived in KISKA Harbor at about 1300 on 29 July. The troops were loaded in about 50 minutes. The evacuation group sailed in two parts, - the KISO with 4 destroyers arrived in PARAMUSHIRO on 31 July, the ABUKUMA with the remaining destroyers on 1 August.

Colonel FUJII learned from the embarked troops that the personnel had assembled several times, bringing only their small arms, and then returned to their defense positions. Booby traps were laid, trip wires were attached to bombs in air raid shelters, and various installations were blown up. Starshells and gunfire were seen to the south of KISKA on the night of 27-28 July, and the troops feared that the evacuation force had been destroyed. From the KISO, Colonel FUJII saw or heard nothing of the enemy. Their great worries aboard ship were gunfire by radar, and the lifting of the fog with air attack from AMCHITKA.

The troops were disembarked at KASHIWABARA, the location of the headquarters of the North CHISHIMA Garrison, thence they were deployed to various points in the North CHISHIMA RETTO (KURILES).

Army airfields in this area at this time were at KITANO DAI, MIYOSHINO, and a temporary landing field north of KATAOKA. At the first of these was based the 54th Air Regiment (Fighters, - KI-43) Colonel SHIMADA.

Comments on Attacks and Shipping Losses

One ship was beached at GERTRUDE COVE, it was attacked by air and damaged before Colonel FUJII's arrival.

NISSAN MARU, KANO MARU, and NOJIMA MARU were sunk or beached in KISKA Harbor before Colonel FUJII's arrival.

About 7 or 8 October - a B-26 attacked a ship in GERTRUDE COVE by torpedo, but no hit was made.

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MELBOURNE MARU was not lost at KISKA. It was under attack once, but was undamaged.

Late November 1942 - URAGIO MARU was attacked by bomb and strafing and was beached off the Main Camp at KISKA Harbor as a result of the attack.

Early December 1942 - one unidentified Army chartered ship was sunk by airplane attack 50 miles northwest of KISKA. Aboard was 1 MG. Co. and 1 Eng. Plat. which were lost.

Early December 1942 - KOTOHIRA MARU, 7000 ton, Army charter, was sunk just before entering HOLTZ BAY, ATTU, by low level B-24 attack; aboard were approximately 1 platoon of men, food and other supplies for ATTU.

Mid-December 1942 - CHERIBON MARU, 6000 ton, Army charter, was sunk while unloading in HOLTZ BAY by a B-24; 1 platoon of men had disembarked, there remained aboard part of the rest of her cargo of food and military supplies.

February 1943 - AKAGANE MARU, 5000 ton, Army charter, missing west of ATTU cause unknown; carried about 1 platoon of men and military stores including some equipment for building the airstrip; no survivors.

He also remembered an air attack against two destroyers west of KISKA in which one destroyer was sunk and the other got away.

Col. FUJII's estimate of Army casualties on KISKA due to air attacks was 45 killed, 50 seriously wounded.

United States Air Losses

September or October 1942, - a B-26 crashed into a ship in GERTRUDE COVE. This ship, whose name he did not remember, was already aground. It burned as a result of the crash. It was a 7000 ton ship with one stack and two masts.

December 1942, - a P-38 fell into the sea off KISKA Harbor. The pilot disappeared in the cold water.

January 1943, - a P-40 was shot down in GERTRUDE COVE.

Random Comment

When asked to make a general comment on the ALEUTIAN operation, Colonel FUJII stated that if the Japanese had built many airfields immediately after the occupation it would have been a success. He considered that the rapid installation of airfields on AMCHITKA ISLAND and at MASSACRE BAY, ATTU, was essential.

He said that horizontal bombing by B-24's from 500-2000 meters (1600-6500 feet) was effective because of the volume of explosives dropped. The low level attacks by B-25's and B-26's were very effective. Strafing was a fairly good form of attack, but the use of shelter reduced the Japanese personnel losses.

Radar warning from the Navy station was good. It picked up planes almost as they took off from the nearest airfield. He considered its effective range to be 120 kilometers (65 nautical miles).

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