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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 427)
NAV NO-89

Place: Tokyo
Date: 22 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division

Subject: Carrier Aircraft Strikes on SAIGON and FORMOSA.

Personnel interrogated:

Commander TERAJ, Yoshimori, I.J.N. a permanent naval officer and naval aviator of 17 years service. On duty at Navy Department and Naval General Staff from June 1942 to end of war.

Where interviewed: Naval Staff College.

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

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. S. Millstein, U.S.N.R.

Allied Officers Present: None

SUMMARY

Commander TERAJ lists vessels known sunk or damaged by the carrier air strike at SAIGON and vicinity 12 January 1945 and at FORMOSA ports 15 January 1945.

The shortage of experienced naval aviation pilots became important toward the end of the SOLOMONS Campaign in October 1943. Japanese pilots preferred fighter assignments, were about equally divided in preference for carrier and shore-based squadrons, and particularly disliked patrol duty.

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TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Commander TERAJ, Yoshimeri)

TRANSCRIPT

Q. What information do you have regarding results of U. S. Carrier strikes in SOUTH CHINA SEA between 12 - 15 January 1945 and from what source did you obtain it?

A. The information was obtained from Japanese documents recently brought to TOKYO and turned over to U. S. Armed forces. On 12 January your carrier aircraft attacked SAIGON with the following results:

12 aircraft destroyed on the ground
 3 Ex-French transports sunk (names and tonnage unknown)
 1 oil storage tank burned

Near Cape SAN JACQUES, the same day six transports which were at anchor were burned or sunk. At the same time the following vessels were attacked and received damage but details are unknown because we have no further records of them.

Coast defense vessel # 17
 Coast defense vessel # 19
 Coast defense vessel CHIBURI
 Special naval transport # 149

To the northward of SAIGON on 12 January a north bound convoy was attacked by carrier aircraft with the following damage:

10 transports or freighters damaged or sunk
 Convoy flagship KASHII (OCL) Sunk
 and the following coast defense vessels either damaged or sunk: UKURU, DAITO, TSUSHIMA, #23, #27 and #51.

At FORMOSAN ports on 15 January carrier dive-bombers caused the following damage:

TAKAO	HATAKAZE - sunk #14 Transport - sunk	MIRI MARU - burned ENOSHIMA MARU - slight damage
BAKO	TSUGA (DD) - Sunk	
KIIRUN	YOSHUN MARU - beached	BEIJU MARU slight damage
BORYO	ENTO MARU - beached	

During these same attacks two naval training planes were destroyed on ground, one was severely damaged and one patrol plane received slight damage.

The foregoing information is not necessarily complete because all reports are not available; however, the damage listed is correct.

Q. What were your duties in the Navy Department and at Naval General Headquarters?

A. From January 1943 to January 1945 I was in charge of allocation of aircraft pilots. After the latter date I worked on basic air planning.

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Commander TERAJ, Yoshimeri)

TRANSCRIPT

- Q. At what point during the war did the shortage of naval aviation officers or pilots become an important factor in planning?
- A. We always had enough pilots in numbers but after the SOLOMONS Campaign, about October 1943, the shortage of skillful pilots became apparent. A skillful pilot was considered to be one who could operate from a carrier day or night and carry out coordinated torpedo attacks. On the average it required about 800 hours of flying to make a skillful pilot.
- Q. What was the naval pilots' principal preferences and dislikes in duty assignments during the war?
- A. All pilots, particularly the young ones, wanted to go to the active front. Carrier duty and advanced base squadrons were about equally preferred. Fighter planes were most popular, patrol and reconnaissance planes the most unpopular. Patrol plane duty was particularly disliked because it was felt that the research on design of patrol planes and their equipment was far behind what it should have been.