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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 602)
NAV. NO. 117

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 28 Nov. 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Japanese Naval Air Force Training.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

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

Where interviewed: Naval War Staff College.

Interrogator : Lt. Cmdr. R. P. AIKEN, USNR.

Interpreter : Lt. (jg) R. P. BROWN, USNR.

Other Allied Officers present: None.

SUMMARY

Commander TERAJ explained the various phases of the Japanese Naval Air Force training program before the war and the changes which were made subsequently. Elimination of the advanced combat training phase by certain candidates during the summer and fall of 1943 has heretofore been erroneously attributed to an anticipated shortage of aviation gasoline by the High Command. No shortage of avgas then existed or was immediately expected according to Commander TERAJ who stated that when First Air Fleet was being organized in the early summer of 1943, the CinC preferred to give his air personnel combat training under his own supervision. Therefore those assigned to First Air Fleet (about 20% of the candidates completing elementary/intermediate training) skipped advanced combat training and were assigned directly to operational units of First Air Fleet. This policy was abandoned early the following year principally because operational losses were excessive, and the advanced combat training phase restored.

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TRANSCRIPT

Until December 1940, the Japanese Naval Air Force training program consisted of the following phases:

1. Elementary or basic training for 30 hours in Type-3 trainers or Type-90 seaplane trainers. Following completion, candidates went to:
2. Intermediate training using Type 90 land trainers and Type 93 (WILLOW). After 40 hours, trainees moved to:
3. Advanced combat training where combat and obsolete combat type aircraft were employed. 30 hours flight time in ZEKES, CLAUDES, KATES, VALS, ALFS, PETES, and NELLS was required before candidates were assigned to:
4. Operational units. If selected for shipborne air groups, personnel had another 50 hours training before leaving operational units.

In December 1940, elementary and intermediate training were combined but total flight time of the two reduced by 10 hours.

When First Air Fleet was being organized during the last half of 1943, approximately 20% of those completing elementary/intermediate training were transferred directly to operational units under that command, skipping the advanced combat training phase. Those selected were the most promising candidates. CinC First Air Fleet preferred to have those assigned to his command trained in combat type aircraft directly under his supervision, believing that this would result ultimately in a better trained and integrated organization. Frequently crews "got into bad habits" during advanced combat training and the CinC First Air Fleet wanted to avoid this.

In the spring of 1944 the "skipping" of advanced combat training was stopped by the Naval General Staff and restored for all trainees because, (1) operational losses were excessive, (2) the longer period of training in the newer combat type planes consumed more aviation gasoline than training in the less modern aircraft assigned to advanced combat training units and (3) tactical units were then beginning to employ new plane types such as GEORGE, JILL, JUDY, MYRT, and FRANCES which were "too hot" for any but experienced pilots to fly.

Until the conclusion of the MARIANAS Campaign, training commands used aviation gasoline without restriction as to quantity. Subsequently, in anticipation of future shortages, Naval General Staff allocated aviation gasoline for training purposes to Combined Fleet which in turn distributed it among the training commands. Monthly allocations were in gradually diminishing amounts. Commander TERAJ described the aviation gasoline position with respect to training as "acute" by late autumn 1944. At the end of the war the critical shortage of aviation gasoline had reduced training time to 15 hours monthly.

Commander TERAJ was of the opinion that the Japanese Army Air Force commenced reducing aviation gasoline for training purposes earlier than the Navy, probably during the spring of 1944. The JAAF began to accumulate aviation gasoline stocks in CHINA, MANCHUKIA and JAPAN at that time.

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