

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(Pacific)
APO 234

INTERROGATION NO. 210 PLACE: Tokyo
DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Oil and Chemicals. DATE: 3 Nov 1945
SUBJECT: Army-Navy Oil Committee.
PERSON INTERROGATED: Rear Admiral YAMAMOTO, YOSHIYO. *
WHERE INTERVIEWED: Room 340, Meiji Building.
INTERROGATOR: Lt Comdr G. M. WILLIAMS and Mr. BAYLES (Civ).
INTERPRETER: Ensign C. A. RACKUS, USNR.

SUMMARY:

1. Allocation of oil between Army, Navy, and Civilians.
2. Army-Navy Oil Committee.
3. Supreme War Council.
4. Stocks for invasion.
5. Allocation of tankers and actual shipments of oil.

* For background of Admiral YAMAMOTO see page 2.

Interrogation of Rear Admiral YAMAMOTO.

QUESTION: What were you doing in 1935?

ANSWER : I was in England.

QUESTION: What were you doing in England?

ANSWER : From 15 May 1935 I was language officer for one year. In 1936 I was Assistant Naval Attache.

QUESTION: What did you do in 1937?

ANSWER : I returned to Japan 16 July 1937.

QUESTION: What did you do in Japan then?

ANSWER : Became staff officer, Bureau of Military Affairs.

QUESTION: Were you a section chief?

ANSWER : I was responsible for personnel; was in charge of them. Chief job was this.

QUESTION: What was your next work?

ANSWER : I remained in the Bureau until November, 1939.

QUESTION: What was your next job?

ANSWER : Became staff officer in China Sea Fleet.

QUESTION: What was the principal base for this outfit?

ANSWER : Shanghai, China.

QUESTION: What followed next?

ANSWER : I returned to Japan 9 February 1942.

QUESTION: What was your position when you returned?

ANSWER : I remained off duty. In July of the same year I became Chief of the First Section, Bureau of Military Affairs.

QUESTION: What was the First Section charged with?

ANSWER : It takes care of the administration of general affairs.

QUESTION: How long were you in that position?

ANSWER : I remained in this position until July of this year.

QUESTION: After July what position did you hold?

ANSWER : I was ordered to be attached to the Bureau of Military Affairs, with special duty to the Chief as an adviser to him.

QUESTION: We asked for the Vice Minister of the Navy as we understood he had been chairman of the Oil Committee but they said that you knew more about it than he did. Give in your own words the operation of the Army-Navy Oil Committee?

ANSWER : The committee was set up especially for the allocation of oil between the Army and Navy. The allocation of oil for the civilians was through the General Mobilization Bureau. The officer from this bureau attended the committee meetings of the Oil Committee when it was to allocate oil. The greatest difficulty of the committee was to find the best way to bring oil from the southern areas. Then the next greatest problem was how to allocate the oil in the most feasible way to the Army and Navy.

The committee had two chiefs, one was the Vice Minister of the Navy and the other the Vice Minister of the Army. Therefore, when the two chiefs did not agree it was to be decided only by co-operation and agreement. The two chiefs had the same position in equality.

QUESTION: What happened when they didn't agree?

ANSWER : They disagreed very often. We could never have enough oil. We could not meet the requirements of both the Army and the Navy. So they didn't agree very often. After long negotiations it was eventually decided by compromise.

QUESTION: Did the ministers participate in these conferences in order to reach an agreement?

ANSWER : No, the ministers did not attend the committee meetings. The Vice Minister received the order of the Minister and then he expressed the will of the Minister.

QUESTION: Proceed with your explanation.

ANSWER : We tried to make more tankers because we didn't have enough to bring oil up from the south areas. We guessed if we had 300,000 kiloliters of oil we could meet the requirements, so we tried to build the necessary tankers to bring that amount in. We tried not only to build new tankers but we converted other vessels into tankers, but owing to your submarine attacks we could not maintain the necessary tankers. We could not expect the 300,000 kl of oil.

QUESTION: This 300,000 kl of oil, was that the amount of tanker capacity?

ANSWER : We had to bring that amount monthly. It was our needs.

QUESTION: Whom was this for?

ANSWER : Navy, Army, and civilian. It was imports from the South Seas.

QUESTION: When did you begin to feel the submarine attacks first?

ANSWER : In September, 1943 your submarine attacks became very serious. Of course, the threat of attack was here since the beginning of the war. Soon after the air attack from China was inaugurated and that menace had to be put up with. After the beginning of 1944 the air attacks became very serious so that sometimes we had no more than 90,000 kl of oil imported from the South Seas.

QUESTION: Was that per month?

ANSWER : Yes. We tried to improve radar and underwater detection to make possible escort. Then we changed the organization of convoy, adding more escorts to it.

QUESTION: What date was this?

ANSWER : We had bigger convoys so that we could supply more escorts, from the beginning of 1944. But such measures were not effective because of the US superiority of the submarine and in air attacks. It was very overwhelming. But in the first half of 1944, although we had many difficulties in the convoys, in the south the factories and oil fields were not damaged so we had no difficulty in the supply of oil.

QUESTION: Were you able to keep up the 300,000 kl per month?

ANSWER : No, we did not receive that amount. We received only 90,000 or 100,000 kl. After the first air attacks on Palembang in August of 1944 the equipment wasn't damaged very much but air mines were laid in the river Lushi so that navigation became impossible and we could not carry oil to Singapore for more than a month. We transferred some of the ships from Miri to carry oil between Palembang and Singapore. We introduced such measures as loading oil to vessels by smaller craft. The larger vessels carried the oil to Singapore. After the air attacks began at Miri in October of 1944 we had difficulty in carrying oil from here also.

Examples of the allocation of oil are as follows:

1944 (first half)	-	Army	1.0
		Navy	1.45
		Civilian	0.45
1944 (second half)	-	Army	1.0
		Navy	1.25
		Civilian	0.3
1945 (2nd quarter)	-	Army	1.0
		Navy	1.05
			2.5

The reason why civilian proportion rose, though the whole amount did not increase, was because the Army and Navy did not receive their expected shares.

QUESTION: Was this table the allocation of imported oil or all?

ANSWER : All, including imported.

QUESTION: Who determined this allocation?

ANSWER : It was determined at the Cabinet meeting,

QUESTION: Who proposed this ratio?

ANSWER : The General Mobilization Bureau after it consulted with the Army and Navy bureaus.

QUESTION: Are you sure of that?

ANSWER : Yes.

QUESTION: How could the General Mobilization Bureau set that ratio when they didn't know what the imports were?

ANSWER : We could anticipate the amount of oil imported from the south. The Oil Committee anticipated it.

QUESTION: Admiral, you just said the oil proposed was proposed by the General Mobilization Bureau and now you say that the Army and Navy control it. Who makes the decision? How did they know when they didn't know how much the Army imported?

ANSWER : The General Mobilization Bureau knows this figure because they attend committee meetings.

QUESTION: Which officer attended and knows this figure?

ANSWER : The Chief of the Section, Bureau of General Mobilization. It is the officer concerned with allocation of materials.

QUESTION: Does TANABE know who this officer is? (He was chief of the bureau.)

ANSWER : He knows who attended the meeting.

QUESTION: I want to know who knows what the Army and Navy imported from the south?

ANSWER : Lt Col TANABE, Chief of General Mobilization Bureau would know. He is now with the Cabinet Investigation Board.

QUESTION: I would like to hear what happened when they established this ratio in the second half of 1944. What did you do about this, Admiral?

ANSWER : The Joint Committee was most active during 1943. Since 1944 the committee was not so active. So in deciding the ratio those actually interested in the matter met to decide the ratio. I did not attend the meeting which decided the ratio.

QUESTION: What ratio was decided to your knowledge?

ANSWER : I was not concerned with deciding the ratio, so I did not know what ratio was decided upon. I obtained the figures I gave you this morning from the records of the Bureau of Naval Stores. The Board of Naval Stores decided this ratio. The privilege of giving to civilian use was established. Only minimum civilian use was established. The remaining amount of oil was divided between Army and Navy.

QUESTION: Admiral, you were sent here in lieu of the Vice Minister because you could give us the entire picture of the Army-Navy oil. If you do not know, I want you to bring back every man in the Navy who does know how this ratio was decided. They should be prepared to answer such questions like:

1. What committee meetings took place?
2. What did the Navy propose?
3. What did the Army propose?

4. What did the Civilians propose?
5. What compromises were made?
6. When did the Vice Ministers have such conferences?
7. Were the Ministers consulted?
8. Who took the matter to the Cabinet?

I have asked a number of Admirals, the Vice Minister, and you, and I still don't know who set this ratio. Somebody in the Navy does know and I want to talk to him.

QUESTION: What is the Supreme War Cabinet?

ANSWER : It is a council which decides between the Cabinet and Armed Forces.

QUESTION: Was the council an advisory one or did it make actual decisions?

ANSWER : Its duty is to compromise between the Cabinet and GHO of the Army and Navy. It was to compromise their difficulties but it could not make decisions.

QUESTION: Is the allocation of oil a matter for the Cabinet or the Ministry?

ANSWER : When a compromise was reached, the Prime Minister was responsible for the decision. Army and Navy requirements exceed the actual amount available. And the Civil is obliged to be satisfied with scanty amount. They all compromise then.

The usual procedure is this. If the Army and Navy Ministers cannot agree, one of them must resign the ministry. It is not favorable that they resign their membership, so they compromise. After they have compromised, then the proposal is submitted. In the Council they do not quarrel.

The Council was not of much use. The Army and Navy could fight with each other. Before the Council they compromised which they could have done anyway. It was used, however.

QUESTION: Did it ever happen that the Army and Navy could not get together on oil?

ANSWER : There was no such case. Before the compromise long, fierce sessions of argument took place.

QUESTION: Who felt they got the best deal?

ANSWER : The Army and Navy had an equal number of aircraft. The oil should have been divided equally. However, the Navy thought they had more available aircraft, so they thought they should have a larger quantity of oil. From higher standpoints it was decided the Navy should have less.

QUESTION: Who decided this?

ANSWER : The Navy Minister made this decision but first conferred with Chief of General Staff.

QUESTION: Who won if both disagreed, the Chief of Staff or Naval Minister?

ANSWER : I am not sure. The Navy Minister has charge of personnel, so if they do not decide, the Navy Minister can make the Chief of General Staff resign.

QUESTION: If the Army and Navy Ministers disagree, where do they go?

ANSWER : Civil head explains why he needs so much oil. Army and Navy heads give him as much as possible because they know the civilians have much to do with the war effort. Army and Navy have much needs also. They explain how much they need from operational standpoint. Then the Ministers try to make as little as possible the civilian use. Usually they make compromise. If one was not reached, then the matter was submitted to the highest authority.

QUESTION: Who decides between the Army and Navy Ministers, and the Munitions Minister, the highest authority?

ANSWER : If we have no oil, and cannot reach compromise, then the Cabinet has to resign en bloc.

QUESTION: This actually never happened, did it?

ANSWER : There was no such case regarding the oil. We always reached a compromise.

QUESTION: The Army and the Navy actually hold the whip, didn't they?

ANSWER : They had no decision.

QUESTION: Who could make the Army and Navy give up oil if they didn't want to?

ANSWER : No one makes the Army and Navy give up oil. The Army and Navy themselves make a compromise and give up their share.

QUESTION: Do you know whether any officer ever went to the Munitions Minister and asked him for more oil?

ANSWER : The Minister of Munitions has no oil stocks, so the Navy officer only asks that they reduce the requirements and thereby increase the Navy release.

QUESTION: Was a request ever made outside of the regular meetings?

ANSWER : They had quarterly meetings to discuss oil for the new quarter. I think perhaps there was no such case outside of these quarterly meetings.

QUESTION: You can now continue your discussion about oil shipments from the south seas where we left off some time ago.

ANSWER : Since the end of October, 1944 it became very difficult to transport the oil, so we were obliged to carry the oil with smaller craft with more speed. And our convoy consisted of smaller craft with greater speed. We had no such tankers, so we had many losses in ships. In spite of such great losses, we had to get the oil and

continued shipping. During last year only about 50% of the ships which left the south seas reached Japan.

This year we could hardly bring the oil in. Since April 1945 we had no oil from the south. This is one of the greatest factors which determined the end of the war.

QUESTION: Were sinkings due mostly to aircraft or submarines?

ANSWER: At first the submarine was the chief factor but later the aircraft became the greatest menace. This year most of the attacks were made by planes.

QUESTION: What were the stocks on hand after April when the imports stopped?

ANSWER: I do not know the exact number. Since January of 1945 we tried to substitute pine root oil for gasoline. I am sure that the Navy had only 100,000 kl in April.

QUESTION: Aviation gasoline or crude oil?

ANSWER: That included everything, both south seas and home production.

QUESTION: Where can we get stock figures from January, 1945 to the present?

ANSWER: I do not believe the figures can be obtained for I think these records were burned.

QUESTION: In whose department does this fall?

ANSWER: Bureau of Naval Stores.

QUESTION: I would like to find out who made the original estimate that Japan needed 300,000 kl of oil per month to carry on the war?

ANSWER: Vice Admiral MOSEINA, Chief of Bureau of Naval Preparations.

QUESTION: Do you know what the Army needed in addition?

ANSWER: I do not know. This figure is the amount imported from the south seas. I was mistaken.

QUESTION: When were stocks begun to be made?

ANSWER: Since the beginning of this year (1945) the combined fleet set aside a part of the allocation of oil for its operation in repelling the landing of forces in Japan.

QUESTION: Do you know what part was set aside?

ANSWER: At first the combined fleet set aside 30 - 40,000 kl but the stock became less and less. Before the end of the war 20,000 kl was set aside.

QUESTION: Is this per month or the total?

ANSWER: Total.

QUESTION: How do you get 20,000 kl?

ANSWER : 10,000 kl of the total was used for training purposes.

QUESTION: Then the Navy had 20,000 kl of oil for the invasion?

ANSWER : Yes. They also had 10,000 kl of alcohol.

QUESTION: Was the Army program similar?

ANSWER : I think the Army had a little more than the Navy.

QUESTION: Was this the total amount available to the Navy. How about getting additional stocks from Manchuria or Korea?

ANSWER : They had homeland supplies only, none from the outside.

QUESTION: Why couldn't outside supplies be obtained?

ANSWER : We tried to bring 3,000 kl from Formosa but didn't succeed. We brought a very little from the Bonin Is.

QUESTION: What about the sources from the north?

ANSWER : The Army had control of this.

QUESTION: How long was this 20,000 kl expected to last?

ANSWER : All available naval aircraft in Japan could fly three times.

QUESTION: How many planes were committed by the Navy to this?

ANSWER : Approximately 5,000.

QUESTION: Who controlled production of gas in the homeland?

ANSWER : Civilians.

QUESTION: None of that was available for the invasion?

ANSWER : Not enough oil was available on the civilian side and what there was, was used for essential work.

QUESTION: Not even for the invasion?

ANSWER : None even then. We didn't dream of that and had no idea of taking it.

QUESTION: This 20,000 kl is what?

ANSWER : Aviation gasoline.

QUESTION: Was part of the Army-Navy Committee's job the allocation of shipping, that is allocation of tankers, etc.

ANSWER : Yes.

QUESTION: How did the Japanese Government divide the available tankers at the beginning of the war.

ANSWER : These were the figures:

Navy	-	300,000 tons
Army		10,000 tons
Civilian		180,000 tons

The Navy figure involves that of the tankers attached to the Fleet.

QUESTION: Then the Army would have only one or two tankers?

ANSWER : The allocation of tankers has no relation to the allocation of oil.

QUESTION: Did this shipping continue this way on the same basis or was it changed during the war?

ANSWER : The Army continued to have the same tonnage. When the civilian vessels carried oil for the Army, they were under Army control and administration. This was directed by the Army.

QUESTION: Did the Navy control any civilian shipping?

ANSWER : No, the Navy had only its own.

QUESTION: How were the new ships that were built allocated?

ANSWER : When a tanker was newly built, the Navy requested that it be allocated to the Navy first to replace sunken tankers. Then it was allocated to the civilian use.

QUESTION: Who had charge of this allocation?

ANSWER : It was decided by the same method as the oil.

QUESTION: Who administered it?

ANSWER : The Chief of the Bureau of Naval Preparations.

QUESTION: Who directed the routing and control of the ships?

ANSWER : The same as the oil. No individual directed it.

QUESTION: Did the committee set the policy?

ANSWER : Yes, the committee set up a policy.

QUESTION: Who administered it?

ANSWER : When the tankers were newly built, they were civilian tankers. Then the Navy proposed to commandeer them. The Navy Minister first had to consult with the Army Minister and the Minister of Munitions.

QUESTION: Who actually routed the ships?

ANSWER : So long as newly built tankers remained civilian, it came under the Minister of Transportation. If they were for the Navy, it was under the Minister of the Navy. When the Army took over, it came under the War Minister.

QUESTION: It would be possible then for the Army to make more trips and get more oil if there was no central control?

ANSWER : The allocation of shipping had nothing to do with the allocation of oil. The oil brought from the south was pooled and then it was divided.

QUESTION: The allocation was made by ships and not by one gas pool. Who sent these ships and did the bookkeeping?

ANSWER : For the Army the War Minister orders it, for the Navy the Navy Minister, and for civilians the Minister of Transportation.

QUESTION: Do all civilian tankers carry oil for civilian factories?

ANSWER : Not always.

QUESTION: Did the Navy refine oil for civilian use?

ANSWER : Sometimes it was done.

QUESTION: Who controlled this?

ANSWER : During production the Navy takes charge of it but when finished the oil allotted to civilian use was given to the civilians.

QUESTION: Who allotted it and how much was being produced by the Navy?

ANSWER : When the crude oil was brought to this place it was registered as State property and so all know how much could be produced.

QUESTION: Where was it registered as such?

ANSWER : When brought in all interested bureaus were notified. Because we had less oil than our requirements every concerned bureau knew how much was imported.

QUESTION: I don't believe that.

ANSWER : At first the oil imported by the tankers was allotted before reaching Japan but on the way to Japan some were sunk. If all arrived, the oil allotted to the Navy was brought to Navy refineries. But on the way some were sunk so the oil refined at Naval refineries had to be given to civilian or army.

QUESTION: Who determined that?

ANSWER : It was decided after officials from the various ministries met and consulted with one another.

QUESTION: What ministries?

ANSWER : Navy, War, Transportation, and Munitions.

QUESTION: Which officials of these ministries?

ANSWER : In the Navy Department the Bureau of Stores, in the Army the Bureau of Maintenance, in the Ministry of Transportation the Shipping Bureau, and in the Ministry of Munitions the Fuel Bureau.

QUESTION: Who was chairman of this meeting?

ANSWER : There was no chairman.

QUESTION: Who called the meeting?

ANSWER: No one called the meeting but they just naturally met together.

QUESTION: I don't understand that.

ANSWER : The problem was determined every quarter of the year by the Oil Committee. For example:

Ship "A" starts from Singapore 10 April and arrives in Tokuyama 1 May. The oil should be given to the Navy.

Then the committee orders Ship "B" to leave Palembang and arrive at Yokohama to be given to the Army.

Ship "C" is dispatched similarly.

The proportions are determined before they actually arrive in Japan. On the way some were sunk by submarine or air attack and some did not arrive owing to engine trouble. The expected amount of oil could not arrive in Japan. So the actual amount of oil imported to Japan was redivided between the Army, Navy, and civilians according to the same ratio before the ships started from the south. The original determination was made in the committee.

QUESTION: The reallocation was also made by the same committee?

ANSWER : The committee did not determine the ratio but the committee and the General Mobilization Bureau determined the ratio and the committee determined the allotment of shipping.

QUESTION: Didn't the Army and Navy have people who were more concerned with this schedule than others? Who went to the committee meetings prepared to make the schedule of shipping?

ANSWER : The committee with the Vice Ministers as chairman decided because the process of council is different between yours and ours.

QUESTION: Did you ever go to any of these committee meetings?

ANSWER : Yes.

QUESTION: Did you attend meetings where they discussed shipping schedules?

ANSWER : Yes, I attended such meetings.

QUESTION: What did you have to say about them when you were there?

ANSWER : I have forgotten what I said then.

QUESTION: Who prepared the material for the committee then?

ANSWER : The senior member of each section prepares the material for each committee.

QUESTION: Who was the most responsible senior member for shipping?

ANSWER : The senior member of Chief of Transportation and
Chief of Third Department of the General Staff.

QUESTION: Do you know who these men were in 1944?

ANSWER : I will check with the Navy Department and report
the names of these men.