Ref 1935/44

25 Jan 46

Interrogation of Lt Cdr UTSUNOMIYA Subject: Japanese Navy Air Force

1. Source

Lt Cdr UTSUNCMIYA Michio, Staff Officer 13 Air Fleet, was both highly intelligent and very co-operative. Many of his statements have been checked and his reliability is assessed as good. Source was interrogated at the Japanese Liaison Office in Raffles College. In appearance not imposing, source sported a goaty fluffy little beard which emphasised the smallness of his stature and the quaintness of his walk.

2. Personal History (age 32)

1932 Joined Maval Cadet School

36 Midshipman "YUWATE" (old cruiser)

37 Actg Sub Lt "KIROSHIMA" (battle cruiser)
"UZUKI" (destroyer)

Oct 37 Training at KASUMIGAURA Air School as float plane pilot for an eight months! course

38 At YOKOSUKA Air Group (KOKUTAI) studying reconnaissance for four months
Promoted Sub Lt

"ASHIGARA" (cruiser)
Apr 39 TATEYAMA KOKUTAI
Jun 40 "HAGURO" (cruiser)

Nov 40 "MYOKO" (cruiser)

Dec 40 Promoted Lt

Mar 41 Chief Flying Officer "HAGURO"

Mar 42 Attached to 12 Special Base Force and proceeded from SASEBO to the ANDAMANS

Aug 42 Returned to SASEBO owing to illness

Sep 42 Appointed to YOKOSUKA Air Technical Depot
Aug 43 Chief Flying Officer on "KONGO" (battleship)
Sep 43 " "NAGATO" (battleship)
" "ATEGO" (cruiser)

Dec 43 " "ATAGO" (cruiser)
Feb 44 " "CHOKAI" (cruiser)

Mar 44 Attached to 1 Air Fleet - SAIPAN

May 44 Promoted Lt Cdr

Jun 44 Appointed Staff Officer 36 KOKUSENTAI - RABAUL

Aug 44 Appointed Air Staff Officer 1 Southern Expeditionary Fleet

Jan 45 Joined 13 Air Fleet

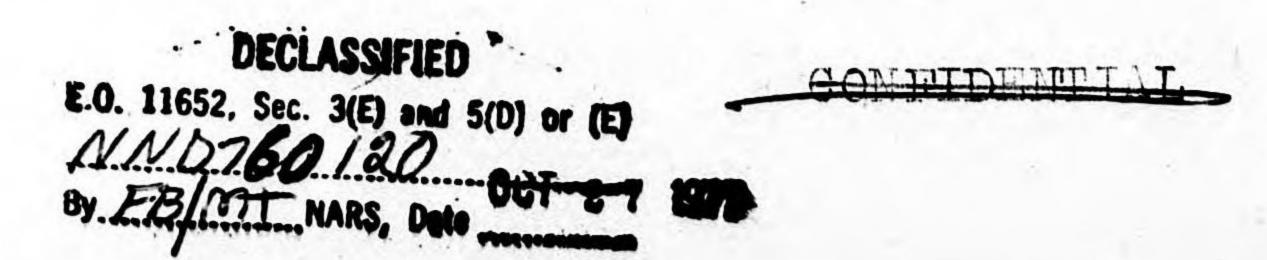
3. 12 Special Base Force

Source did not arrive in the ANDAMANS till early Jul 42. There were attached to 12 Special Base Force 8 JAKEs whose duties were anti-submarine patrols to the East of the Island. Two or three aircraft were sent out on patrol each day. Different areas were covered on each flight up to a distance of 300 miles.

Recce flights were never flown to the West of the ANDAMANS. For signals for air-ground communication a frequency fixed by the Combined Fleet (RENGOKANTAI) was used. Source was second in command of this small air unit but he had to return to JAPAN after a few weeks in the ANDAMANS owing to illness.

4. 1 Southern Expeditionary Fleet

The duty of 1 SEF was mainly the protection of convoys within the Southern Area. Attached to 1 SEF were 11, 12, 13 & 936 Air Groups



These were responsible for training and convoy protection. Il Air Group was responsible for fighter training, 12 Air Group for carrier attack aircraft and carrier-borne bomber training, 13 Air Group for land-based attack aircraft training and 936 Air Group for convoy protection. The area covered by 1 SEF was SUMATRA, MALAYA, the ANDAMANS and NICOBARS, BURNA and FIC up to and including HANOI. From there northwards convoy protection was the responsibility of the CHIMA Fleet. JAVA, BORNEO and the CELHBES were the responsibility of the 2 SEF. 3 SEF covered the PHILIPPINES and 4 SEF the Northern AUSTRALIA area.

The main bases used by 936 Air Group for convoy protection were SELETAR (HQ), PEMANG, SAIGON (CATLAI). Subsidiary bases were KOTA DAHRU, PUKIT, VICTORIA POINT, POHT BLAIR, CAMRANH, KINON, LABUAN, ANAMBAS and MANCOWRY. Source stated that 936 Air Group might have used LUMUT about once or twice during that period. LUMUT was later often used by 936 Air Group. From Dec 44 to Mar 45 936 Air Group came under 1 Escort Fleet and not under 1 SEF. In Mar 45 936 came under the command of 13 Air Fleet (HOKUKANTAI). The grand Surface Escort Fleet was not in a position to issue orders to 1 SEF. It only had direct control of units in the Southern Area when 936 Air Group came under 1 Escort Fleet, as 1 Escort Fleet was responsible to the Grand Surface Escort Fleet. However, the Grand Surface Escort Fleet did issue pamphlets on general method of convoy protection but they were not in a position to issue orders upon the subject. Details of convoy protection were normally left to 936 Air Group.

5. Flying Boats

Flying boats were never used by 936 Air Group as the Japanese rarely used them against submarines. Flying boats were considered useful for long distance patrols. No units in the Southern Region had an establishment for flying boats but a number came into the area on temporary duties.

6. Army-Navy co-operation

Source stated that the Naval Air Force did not normally ask for help from Army units unless there were absolutely no Naval aircraft available. In North BORNEO and North SUMATRA there were no Naval aircraft and the Navy had to ask 3 Air Army for aircraft for convoy protection in those areas. Convoy protection, however, remained the responsibility of 13 Air Fleet (KOKUKANTAI) even in these areas. 13 Air Fleet (KOKUKANTAI) controlled these aircraft through HQ 3 Air Army (KOKUGUN). In addition to the above demands had to be made on various occasions for fighter cover for convoys. Source stated that these demands were effected speedily as he himself paid visits, when necessary, to the Chief Operations Staff Officer 3 Air Army.

7. SABANG

SABANG was not used as a base by 936 KOKUTAI because it was dangerous owing to heavy swells.

8. 11 Special Base Force (SAIGON)

Originally a number of aircraft had been attached to 11 SBF to help in convoy protection but later they were withdrawn in order to simplify control. Similarly, all air units in accordance with requests by signal from Naval Staff in the area were placed under 13 Air Fleet.

9. "SHAKESPEARE" Incident

Source stated that Cdr MIURA (ref Report 1935/30 para 10 page 4) was wrong when he said that searches had been carried out on the day following

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the first attack on the "SHAKESPEARE". Cdr MIURA was in SOURABAYA at that time and source was emphatic that no patrols were flown on the following day. There had been three naval aircraft at PORT BLAIR. One had been shot down by HM Submarine "SHAKESPEARE" on the day of the attack, and the other two required repairing. In addition to these aircraft there were four to six Army aircraft at PORT BLAIR and a number at PENANG, but owing to a muddle at HQ, 13 Air Fleet orders did not reach PENANG or PORT BLAIR and no aircraft were sent out as far as source knew, though two Army fighters with a very short range might have carried out a search.

10. Numbers of Japanese aircraft sont to OKINAWA in Mar 45

Lt Cdr UTSUNOMIYA gave the following figures as approximately correct:-

Fighters	60
Carrier-borne attack aircraft	30
Carrier-borne bombers	15
Land-based attack aircraft	20

All-night flying pilots, approximately 200 in number, and sufficient other aircrew for these aircraft, were also despatched (N.B. - source stated that a good deal of night-flying training was given in the Southern Region. This was carried out at all times and not only during the moon period).

11. "EMILY" aircraft

1 "EMILY" aircraft was attached to each fleet for transport purposes. In source's opinion it was a good aircraft but difficult to pilot.

12. Flying Units (HIKOTAI)

Flying Units (HIKOTAI) were organised within an Air Group for simplicity of movement and control.

13. 851 Air Group

851 Air Group was responsible for recce along the INDIAN Coast in 1942. Night attacks were made by flying boats on convoys. These operations were given up because of lack of aircraft.

14. Aircraft on submarines

Source believed that aircraft on submarines were used to carry out night recce flights off COLOMBO in 1942.

15. Intelligence re CEYLON

Lt Cdr UTSUNOMIYA stated that they had good intelligence of Allied shipping movements in 1942. They had information from signals sources when Allied ships left port and they received numerous documents regarding Allied shipping dispositions from JAPAN. The source of this information was probably spies. Spies, source stated, were never landed by naval aircraft but he believed that some had been sent by submarine.

16. British Fleet Air Arm

According to source the Japanese Navy did not have very much information about the naval air arm organisation, but they received a fair amount of documents on the capabilities of British Naval aircraft. Source considered that the main basis for these reports was supplied by the Germans.

17. 601 Air Group

601 Air Group was in the Southern Region in Mar 44. While in the Southern Region it was based at SELETAR though it was an aircraft carrier-borne unit. The fleet to which it was attached was at LINGCA while 601 Air Groupwas at SELETAR. 601 Air Group rejoined the fleet in Apr 44. In this fleet there were 4 aircraft carriers, the "SHOKAKU", the "TAIHO", the "HUY00" and the "ZUIKAKU". Source was at that time on the cruiser "CHOKAI". While at SELETAR 601 Air Group carried out training, and the shape of an aircraft carrier was drawn on the airfield in order to facilitate that training.

18. Convoys

· a) General

Attempts were made to patrol a convoy route the day before the convoy actually crossed the area reced. Source was of the opinion that fairly full agreement with the Army Air Force on methods of convoying had been reached, but Army aircraft had a shorter range. Source put down the failure of convoying to lack of aircraft. He stated that they were unable to carry out both anti-shipping and anti-submarine patrols and their radius of action was limited to 300 miles except when land-based attack aircraft were used. The main plan for convoy protection was determined by 13 Air Fleet (KOKUKANTAI). This included the course, ETA and ETD of the convoy. Other details, including the number of aircraft to be used and the areas of patrol, depended on the decision of the OC 936 Air Group. This plan had to be submitted for approval to the Flag Officer.

b) Example of a convoy

Source gave the following as a typical example of a convoy operation:-

If X was the date of the convoy's departure on X minus one a patrol of the convoy route would be carried out at night with radar-equipped aircraft and during the day by magnetic-searcher-equipped aircraft on each occasion up to 250 miles. On X-day direct escert was carried out by 2 or 3 aircraft from an hr before sunrise to half an hr after sunset. The first land aircraft would be over the convoy for 2 to 3 hrs and then would be relieved. At night front and side patrolling would be carried out by radar-equipped aircraft. During these rece flights the bomb load was normally one 250 kg bomb. The following methods of patrolling were used:-

$$v_1$$
 or v_2 v_3 v_4 v_5 v_6 v_7 v_8 v_8 v_8 v_9 v

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c) Methods of attack and communication

The attacks were to be carried out immediately after the enemy had been discovered. A target bomb would be dropped and VEREY signals would inform the convoy. Witeless reports giving details of the attack would be sent to base. The frequency used normally for anti-submarine patrols was 7045 kilocycles. These frequencies were used both by ships and aircraft. Messages generally took the following form "SE SE SE" transmitted, meaning "enemy submarine sighted", followed by place, time, result of attack, course, speed.

d) Reliefs

Direct escort aircraft were, as a rule, to be relieved while over the convoy. The aircraft which was to assume duty reported its ETA before leaving, and when it relieved the aircraft on duty it signalled to that effect by banking steeply. The aircraft when completing its duty would then return to its base after carrying out a final recce of the side and fore course of the convoy. Normally aircraft remained over the convoy for 2 to 3 hrs. From SINCAPORE reliefs were flown up to 300 miles. From KOTA BAHRU there was a further 300 mile sphere and the same applied to SAIGON. On certain occasions aircraft would proceed to a forward base to carry out protection of the convoy when necessary. When reliefs were flown from two bases, the escort aircraft were to make certain that the convoy was never left unprotected.

19. Naval air training in the Southern Region

a) Organisation

31, 11, 12 & 13 Air Groups were organised in order to supply a large number of pilots who were urgently required. They were also to be made available to participate in operations if no other aircraft or pilots were available. Owing to the difficult fuel situation and the lack of aircraft, this training had to be discontinued and they had to concentrate on the preparation of suicide pilots.

b) 11 Air Group

Il Air Group was organised at IWAKUNI in Jul 43. Preliminary orders for its organisation were given in May 43. It then had 29 aircraft. It was reorganised at SINGAPORE in Oct 43 with 24 aircraft in use and 12 spares. The numbers of aircraft in use and spares were expected to increase to 90 and 60 respectively, but these never materialised. All aircraft were transported to the Southern Region by air. 2 aircraft were lost owing to bad weather and 3 aircraft were lost during take-off and landing. Il Air Group had been used on a number of occasions in operations. 18 ZEKEs had been used to give cover to the fleet going from BORNEO to LEYTE in Dec 44. In addition they had used them against the B-29s raiding SINGAPORE. They had not been keen to use these old models with inexperienced pilots against B-29s, but they thought them better than nothing.

c) 12 Air Group

The organisation of this unit was ordered in May 43. It was organised at OITA and removed by air to SINCAPORE in Jun 43. At that time it had 14 aircraft. In Jun 43 to Sep 43 it was at KOTA BAHRU and had about 24 aircraft. In Sep 43 it was removed to THUDAUMOT and had 17 carrier-based attack aircraft and 22 carrier-based bombers though its establishment was 36 of both types. During the removal from JAPAN to the Southern Region 3 aircraft were lost. 12 Air Group used a frequency of 7045 kilocycles.

12 Air Group was not used in operations except that it gave antisubmarine cover to a few convoys. Ground personnel of 12 Air Group were formed into the FIC Air Group.



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d) 13 Air Group

The formation of this unit was ordered in May 43. It was removed from ORYU and OMURA to AYER TAWER by air and the transportation was completed by the beginning of Jun 43 without the loss of any aircraft. This unit had an establishment of 27 aircraft and the actual numbers varied between 22 & 28.

e) 31 Air Group

31 Air Group was organised at MANILA on the 1st Apr 43. It removed to DJOKOJAKARTA in Aug 43 and started official work in Dec 43. Up to Aug 43 it had an establishment of 74 aircraft but had, in fact, 100 aircraft. After Aug 43 the establishment was increased to 124 aircraft but, in fact, they had approximately 60 aircraft. During the removal of this unit from the PHILIPPINES to JAVA 140 aircraft were lost owing to damage to the convoy on whose ships they were transported. 200 aircraft left MANILA but only 60 arrived. In Mar 45 all aircraft belonging to 11, 12, 13 & 31 Air Groups were removed from these units and handed over to 381 Air Group except for those aircraft sent to take part in the OKINAWA Battle.

UTSUNOMIYA last visited 31 Air Group in Jun 45. At that time the maintenance had not been bad and about 50 aircraft were flyable out of the total of about 68 aircraft. By Aug he considered that they would have about 60 aircraft serviceable. All these aircraft (WILLOWS) had been modified to carry 2 x 60 kg bombs. They had plenty of bombs. In source's opinion these aircraft would be useless to the Indonesians even though they could find any pilots to fly them. He also considered that they were useless as bombers without bomb sights and they could only be used with any chance of success if they were piloted by skilled pilots and used as suicide aircraft at dusk and at dawn.

f) Instructors & Students

11 .	Air	Group	28 Officer Instructors, 20 Petty Officer Instructors. Students about 70 at any one time.
12	11	17	35 Officer Instructors, 14 Petty Officer Instructors. 70 Students at any one time.
13	11		8 Officer Instructors, 10 Petty Officer Instructors. About 30/40 Students at any one time.
31	99	11	40 Officer Instructors, 50 Petty Officer Instructors. About 300 Students at any one time.

g) Plan of training & Results

The time which should be spent in any one of these units by a student pilot was 4 months. Students went first to 31 Air Group for primary air training and were then distributed to either 11, 12 or 13 Air Groups, depending upon whether they were going to become pilots of fighters, carrier-borne attack aircraft, bombers or land-based attack aircraft. During the primary training most students completed 40 hrs! flying and were capable of general day and night flying during moon period in simple training aircraft. In the fighter training Air Group pilots were expected to do a further 70 hrs! flying training. For attack aircraft and for bombers, pilots had to do 75 and 85 hrs respectively of further training. For land-based attack aircraft an additional 300 hrs! flying training was required. From Aug 43 to Nov 44 they expected to have about 70 pilots from 11, 12 & 13 Air Groups. The reason for the length of time used by the course was the time lost by the move to the Southern Region. From Oct 44 to Jan 45 about the same number of pilots were to graduate from 11, 12 & 13 /ir Groups but owing to shortage of aircraft and spares, the course was extended. On graduation students were normally transferred to

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operational air units in JAPAN or the PHILIPPINE area. Some, however, remained in the training units.

According to source, owing to the lack of supply of aircraft many students were unable to graduate from these training units. He said "they were quite efficient as they had studied with high spirits".

h) Code Names

11, 12, 13 & 31 Air Groups were all training units and did not have any special code names.

i) Training programmo - 11 Air Group

I. Aim of Training

Source gave the following as a typical example of a training programme for a naval air training unit. During the 4 months which normally students spent with 11 Air Group, they were taught basic principles of handling and repairing works to make them efficient members of an operational unit. During the latter half of the course emphasis was laid on the study of special methods of attack and training was given to make the pilots efficient members of a suicide unit. Subjects were divided as follows:-

II.	Air Subjects	Number of occasions	Hours
	Take-off & Landing Aerobatics Formation Flying Pursuit Methods	12 times 7 " 12 " 5 "	4 3 6 2 2
	Fundamental basis of attamethods Successive attacks Aerial Combat Firing Super Altitude Flying	7 " 10 " 3 " Once	6 3 5 5 1 1 1
	Mothods for attacking lar aircraft	rgo 3 "	1호

Total of 34 hrs! flying.

N.B.- Acrial combat was divided into "Superior Position Combat", "Samo Position Combat" and "Inferior Position Combat".

III. Ground Subjects

Ground education was divided as follows:-

Ropair	40 times	60 hrs
Handling	20 "	10 "
Signals	80 "	40 "
General affairs administration Recce Meteorology Weapon training Tactics	Twice 5 " 20 " Twice	2 " 10 " 10 " 25 " 4 "

The main emphasis of training during the latter half of the term was on take-off, landing within a limited area and formation flying. Efficient student pilots were enrolled into "A" class and were thoroughly trained for air combat, and those who were "in high fighting spirit but were not quite efficient" were enrolled into "B" class and were trained for dive-bombing in formation.

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IV. Daily Routine

0600 hr		Reveille
0800	1	Flying commenced
1330 '	t	finished
1530		Ground training commenced, including physical training
1730	rs.	Ground training completed
A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	11	Preparation
		Lights out

During proparation, on occasions signals practice was given.

20. Bomb Damage - SINGAPORE 1944-5

a) Raid of 5 Nov 44

This raid took place between 1100 & 1230 hrs and was carried out by 15 aircraft from a direction of 180° at a height of 6,000 metres, the weather being fine. The following places were bombed and damage caused as under:-

(1) Dockyard

I. B Sub-station completely destroyed

II. Part of No.1 & 2 pumps in the Pumping House at

No.1 Dock damaged

III. Empire Dock caisson and its apparatus slightly damaged. The pump was also slightly damaged but was soon repaired, and the caisson was repaired after 3 days when another one was brought from KEPPEL Harbour

- IV. Draughtsmen's Shop Completely destroyed
- v. Garage Half destroyed
- VI. Forging Shop Partly destroyed
- VII. Telephone Shop Partly destroyed

Other attached equipment at the Dock also received damage.

(ii) "NOTORO" - Tanker of 10,000 tons. Stern was badly damaged while this ship was in dock, and it has not yet been repaired.

(iii) Ammunition Depot

- I. Several places in the Store quarters damaged II. 10-ton gasolone tank burnt out
- (iv) Railway Part of SELETAR Station was destroyed and several railway lines were cut. However, this had very little effect on the working of the dock

(v) Coaling Jetty

The coaling jetty was damaged but not very effectively

b) Raid of 1 Feb 45

This raid was carried out between 1100 and 1230 hrs by about 100 aircraft coming in from a direction of 210° at 6000 metres. The weather was cloudy and aircraft came in waves of from 5 to 10. Damage was caused as under:-

(i) The Dockyard

I. 50,000-ton Floating Dock sunk

II. No.1 Air Pressure Chamber severely damaged III. Shipping Machine & Chain Testing Shop partly

damagod

IV. Fittings & Sawing Shop partly damaged

v. Nos.1 & 2 Electric Shops slightly damaged

VI. Woodwork Shop completely destroyed

VII. Electrical Store completely destroyed VIII. No.1 Generating Station half destroyed

IX. Artillery Workshop completely destroyed

x. 7 Storchouses completely destroyed

(ii) "SHIRETOKO" - a Tanker of 10,000 tons

Burnt out and sunk in the Floating Dock

(111) Munitions Dopt

Storequarters bombed

(iv) Living quarters

Soveral houses destroyed

c) Raid of middle of Mar 45

On this occasion about 90 aircraft approached from an angle of 270° at heights varying from 6,000 to 9,000 metres in waves of 5 to 8 aircraft. Damage was caused as under:-

(i) Munitions Dopt

Storequarters bombed and slightly damaged

(ii) Dockyard Living Quarters

Several houses damaged

Source considered that this last raid was very ineffective. "ISE" and "HYUGA" (battleships) had left for LINGA early in Mar.

d) Raid of end of Fob 45

On this occasion KEPPEL Harbour was attacked and some hits were made, but there was no serious damage. A few bombs fell in the town area and 2 oil tanks were set on fire by incendiaries on an island off SINGAPORE.

c) Source's opinion of the bombing

Lt Cdr UTSUNOMIYA was scathing in his remarks about the bombing which, he said, was very ineffective all the time. Aiming was poor and bombs rarely hit the targets for which they were intended. He considered that if they had bombed in formation instead of by single aircraft, more damage would have been caused. Warning of the likelihood of raids was received when rece aircraft were seen two or three days before the raid. In addition, Lt Cdr UTSUNOMIYA said they had had immediate warning of all aircraft leaving CALCUTTA and they were able to tell the exact number of aircraft which were to be used. Their only difficulty was where the aircraft were going. These facts were discovered by signals intelligence.

Source considered that the B-29 signals security had been very bad. They did not always, however, know of the approach of other aircraft, c.g. the MOSQUITOS, which were often not picked up even by radar. On the second occasion he had considered that the main object of the

raid was the Floating Dock and he realised that this attack had been very successful. He said that while over the target the raiding aircraft were very free with their NT and they heard the orders given to attack the Floating Dock. A/A were grouped around the workshops but not specifically round the Floating Dock. They had planned to build a box barrage for the protection of the Floating Dock, but they were unable to do so owing to shortage of ammunition. No balloons were used, but smoke screens were used and source considered that they were effective in putting aircraft off their aim. After the raids they expected recee but did not take measures to hide the damage because they considered that B-29s had probably taken aerial photographs at the time of the attack. However, they camouflaged undamaged buildings to make them look as though they were damaged. No damage was caused to the "MYOKO" or "TAKAO".

f) Defences

An operations room was established at SELETAR Naval Base, but there was no direct control of fighters and A/A. When to fire and when not to fire was determined by liaison by telephone between the head of the A/A and the head of the fighter defences. In the normal way A/A guns were not to fire while the fighters were over the target. A plan of the A/A lay-out is attached at App "A".

g) B-29s

B-29s were, in source's opinion, excellent aircraft but he was very scathing about its handling over SELETAR. He considered that if he had had good fighters available they would have been able to cause grave damage to the raiding aircraft as they ran the gauntlet from the ANDAMANS to SINCAPORE. Their route was storeotyped and well known to the Japanese. He considered that the best method of attacking B-29s was aerial bombing. Source had seen a flight of 9 B-29s bombed down at BOUGAINVILLE.

h) Photographs of damage

Photographs of damage caused at SELETAR were taken, but these were sent to TOKYO and no photographs remained in the Southern Region.

i) Pathfinders

No pathfinders were used in this area. Source had studied the methods of pathfinders used by the British and considered them a very good idea. Information on this subject had been received from Germany.

j) B-29s destroyed

No B-29s were actually shot down over the target, and their signals intelligence had informed them that during the first raid hardly any aircraft had been damaged, but during the second raid of 1 Feb and the raid of the middle of Mar six to nine aircraft failed to reach their base on each occasion. According to signals intelligence the main reason for the forced landing of B-29s was electrical failure and because bomb doors would not close, rendering landing difficult.

21. Attack on the "TAKAO" by midget submarines

Source stated that an attack by midget submarines was made in Jul 45 on the "TAKAO", but little damage was caused. A 20-metre crack was caused by the detonator, but the main charge did not go off.

Interrogated by:

S/L Stevenson P/O Cortazzi Int I ACSEA SEATIC OC ADV HQ SEATIC (E.A. Hoaslett) 11.

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ATAIU 903 Wing Kallang (for S/L Reason)
HQ Malaya Command (for Col GS (I))
USSBS Washington
                                                                  oach
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2 MOBSEC SEATIC c/o HQ 12 Army Rangoon
               c/o Malaya Command
                c/o 6 Inf Bde Kluang
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