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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO 234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO: 310
(Jap Intell #14)

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 10 Nov 1945

Division or Origin: G-2, Japanese Intelligence Section.

Subject: Japanese Naval Intelligence, its Organization and Operation
with Particular Reference to Small or Escort Carriers.

Person interrogated and background:

Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, Joshio, IJN, is a Naval Officer of 31 years experience, having graduated from the naval academy in 1914. His commands of note began in 1937 when he was commanding officer of the KAKO MARU as a Captain. In 1938 he commanded the TATEYAMA Air Group and from 1939 to 1941 the HAKATA Air Group. In September 1941 he became commanding officer of the ZUIHO and subsequently of the HYUGA for a short time in 1943. Then he took command of the 52nd AIR FLOT at which time he was promoted to Rear Admiral. Following this he commanded the 51st AIR FLOT, and then went to sea as commander of the 3rd CAR DIV. He was chief of staff of the 1st Mobile Fleet aboard the ZUIKAKU at the time of the Second Battle of the Philippine's Sea. Subsequently he was in command of the 1st CAR DIV and then at the end of the war he had the First Special Attack Division (suicide boats) based at YOKOSUKA.

Where interviewed: Meiji Building, Room 554

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. T. M. CURTIS, USNR.
Lt. Comdr. WILLIAM H. BOTZER, USNR.

Interpreter: Lt. OTIS CARY, USNR.

Allied Officers present: None.

Summary:

The small or escort aircraft carriers of the Japanese Navy did not have intelligence officers as such assigned to the ship's complement, altho Flags normally did have intelligence officers.

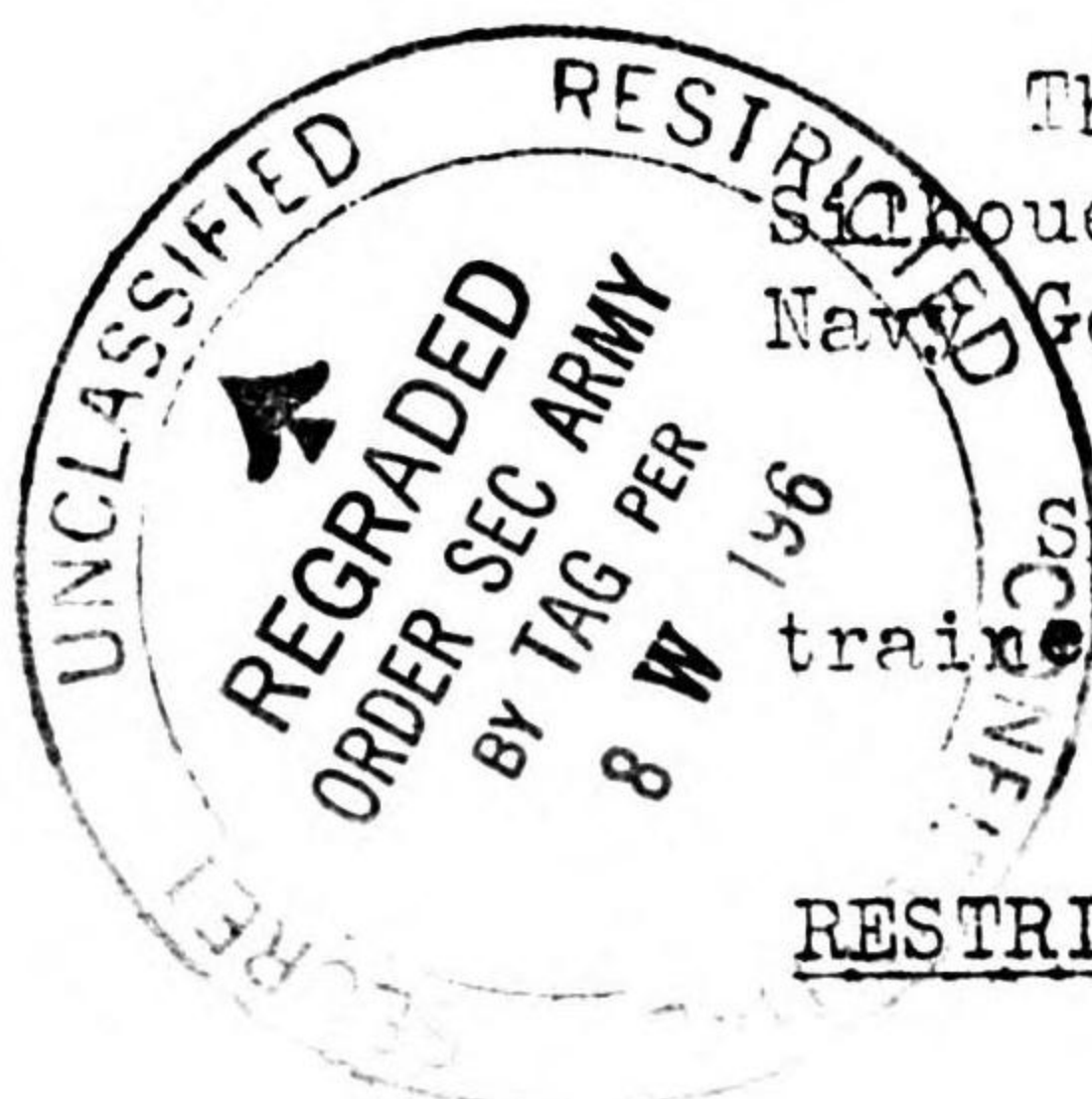
The majority of commanding officers of carriers were not aviators due to the shortage of Captains with flying experience.

The duties of Flag intelligence officers were "narrow". In the main this officer (a Comdr. or Lt. Comdr.) was responsible for communications, having the added duty of evaluating information coming in and getting it to the Chief of Staff.

The briefing of pilots (as much as was done) was handled by the air officer who himself would fly missions upon occasion and by the Commanding Officer of the ship himself. Interrogating also was done by the air officer and by the Commanding Officer of the ship. No written reports of any kind were made, except the dispatch information which went from the ship to the Flag or from the Flag to TOKYO.

There was no program of recognition training on carriers underway. Silhouettes in sheet form were received from time to time from the Navy General Staff, but these were said to be usually out of date.

Smaller or escort carriers were not equipped and crews were not trained for night operations.



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Operational losses were high. Main cause, "engine trouble".

Pilot ability and training had fallen off greatly from Midway to the Second Battle of the Philippines Sea.

Most of the Japanese carrier pilots were petty officers rather than officers.

No air-sea rescue provisions were made for pilots downed outside of visual range of the ship. Carrier planes, according to Adm. OBAYASHI, carried no life rafts or flotation or survival gear of any kind. Within visual range of the carrier they would be picked up by escort vessels, but beyond that "it was just too bad".

Photographic aircraft were not used on any of the carriers or assignments within Adm. OBAYASHI's experience, altho they did have equipment on board for the processing of photographs.

Adm. OBAYASHI denies any knowledge beforehand of plans for the attack on PEARL HARBOR. He commanded the ZUIHO at that time; did not leave the Inland Sea until March, when he went out on several training cruises as far as the BOWIES. His first War mission was anti-Sub Patrol at the Battle of Midway (in the ZUIHO).

Pilots had no special training in anti-sub work. Their orders on sighting an enemy sub were to "Advise the ship and attack". Weapons used were 250kg. bombs.

Interrogation of Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, J., IJN

Q.1. In what Naval actions and operations did you participate?

A. Midway, Guadalcanal, and 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea. I was Captain of the ZUIHO at Midway and Chief of Staff aboard the ZUIKAKU in the 2nd Battle Philippines Sea.

Q.2. What types of aircraft were aboard the ZUIHO at the time you were Captain?

A. Aboard ZUIHO were 6 or 9 reconnaissance and bomber Type 97, (KATE), and 7 or 8 Type 96 VF.

Q.3. What type aircraft did you have aboard the ZUIKAKU in the 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea?

A. About 18 VF and 18 Bombers - Type 97 (KATE) bombers and 18 VF. I am not sure of their Type. Until I became a Captain I was in gunnery work and had had little connection with aircraft.

Q.4. Were Commanding Officers of aircraft carriers generally aviators themselves?

A. No, the majority were not, due to shortage of Captains with flying experience.

Q.5. Did aircraft carriers have an intelligence officer attached to the ship?

A. No. Neither the ZUIHO nor ZUIKAKU had an intelligence officer. The Flag Staff included an intelligence officer in its complement, however.

Q.6. What were the duties of the Flag intelligence officer?

A. The duties were narrow. He was mainly responsible for communications. He was usually a Comdr. or Lt. Comdr. He was not concerned with photographic intelligence. The job of Staff Intelligence Officer and Staff Communications Officer were sometimes done by the same man. On the ZUIKAKU in the 2nd Battle of the Philippines there were both a full time intelligence officer and a full time communications officer. The communications officer was responsible for training and operation of communications personnel and equipment. The intelligence officer was responsible for receiving and evaluating all information coming to the ship. He theoretically submitted his findings to the Flag Chief of Staff who may or may not transmit it to the Captain of the ship.

Q.7. Who briefed the pilots prior to an important mission?

A. This was done sometimes by the Captain, sometimes by the air officer. The air officer did not have an assistant who did this. The ships Captain many times briefed the aviators himself. The air officer gave them weather and navigation information. Communications procedures were standard and no special briefing was necessary. Upon occasion simple communication devices were used, made up by the air group itself.

Q.8. Did the pilots have enemy ship and aircraft recognition training? Who did this?

A. The air officer did this. The information was sent from the Navy General Staff in the form of silhouettes and performance data and the air officer passed this along to the pilots. I never heard of motion pictures being shown. The recognition silhouettes (no pictures) were usually out of date. We could not keep up with all developments. No regular recognition classes were held. Information was distributed in sheet form.

Interrogation of Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, J , IJN. (contd)

Q.9. What were the other duties of the air officer?

A. The air officer had general education duties of all flight personnel aboard. He was usually a flyer and flew on missions also. In combined carrier operations one of the air officers will lead the flight or at least go along. The staff designates the mission and number of aircraft in combined operations. Up to a year and a half ago the air officer was part of the ship's company, then was made a member of the air group aboard. This was a little before the MARIANNAS fell. The duties of the air group commander prior to this change were as follows: The squadron commanders and air group commanders were responsible to the air officer. They advised on employment of the aircraft and aided the air officer in his work.

Q.10. Who interrogated pilots on return from an important mission?

A. Sometimes the Captain of the ship did this, sometimes the air officer. No written reports were made to the Captain except black-board diagrams. The significant information was sent to the Flag Staff. Information of extraordinary interest was forwarded to the Naval General Staff. Radio silence was often in effect which prohibited this transmission until later.

Q.11. What were your methods of communication between ships?

A. Communications between ships was by ultra-violet light at night, by flag hoist and by radio telephone.

Q.12. What information was given to the pilots relating to Allied Anti-aircraft and its capabilities?

A. None (at Midway the assignment of Adm OBAYASHI'S group was Anti-submarine patrol). The Naval General Staff gave general information about the number of guns on various Allied ships but no evasion tactics were ever developed.

Q. 13. Did any of your pilots ever attack land targets?

A. No.

Q.14. In operating ASP did you have definite sectors? What was the method of operation?

A. It depended on circumstances. We do have a book containing ASP doctrine.

Q.15. What was the outer limit of your patrols?

A. 60 to 70 miles. (In his experience)

Q.16. Was your carrier equipped to and did it operate at night?

A. No, we were not so equipped and our crews were not trained for it.

Q.17. What about your operational losses? Type? Frequency? Main causes?

A. There were many.

Q.18. What was the one primary cause?

A. Engine trouble. Also navigation trouble in finding the carrier base.

Interrogation of Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, J., IJN (contd).

Q.19. Who figured out necessary navigation for ASP sectors?

A. Air officer.

Q.20. What about pilot training - in particular on ZUIHO at Midway as contrasted with ZUIKAKU at 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea in October 1944?

A. There was a great deal of difference between our flyers on those two occasions.

Q.21. Do you know the number of flying hours your pilots had at Midway and at the 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea?

A. No.

Q.22. Approximately how old were your pilots?

A. Definitely younger at the 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea.

Q.23. What was approximate age - 16?, 25?, etc.

A. Toward the end it was less than 20.

Q.24. Were most of the pilots officers?

A. No - most were petty officers.

Q.25. What measures were provided for rescue of pilots downed:

- (1) Close to ship?
- (2) At extreme range?

A. Anyone down within visual distance was picked up by escort vessels. No provision was made for those beyond this distance.

Q.26. What survival gear did the planes carry, e.g. life rafts?

A. They had nothing.

Q.27. Did they carry parachutes?

A. Most of the time they did not.

Q.28. Did you have any photographic aircraft on board at Midway?

A. I do not recall. In any event we did not use them, even if we had them.

Q.29. Any photo planes at the 2nd Battle of the Philippines Sea?

A. Again I do not recall but they were not used.

Q.30. Did any naval units regularly carry photo aircraft?

A. We had no sea based photo reconnaissance, to the best of my knowledge.

Q.31. Did any of the Japanese carriers have equipment to process photographs?

A. Yes.

Q.32. Was an officer assigned full time to supervise taking and processing of photographs?

Interrogation of Vice Admiral OBAYASHI, J., IJN (contd).

A. There were none with that specific duty.

Q.33. What pictures did they take? What was the purpose?

A. I'm afraid we didn't use them for much of anything.

Q.34. Did you have cameras on board that could be carried in any aircraft, not necessarily photo aircraft?

A. Yes.

Q.35. Were they carried as a matter of policy?

A. They were taken only on photo missions, and those were few.

Q.36. Did any missions under your direction take photographs?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q.37. Did you know before hand of plans to attack Pearl Harbor?

A. No, I knew nothing. I was then Captain of the ZUIHO in the Inland Sea.

Q.38. What did the ZUIHO do immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

A. We didn't leave until March.

Q.39. What was your first war mission?

A. We first took out training crews, down as far as the BONINS then my first war mission was ASP at Midway.

Q.40. Did you ever have a position as attache?

A. No.

Q.41. Have you ever been in the U.S.?

A. Only on our cadet trip to the U.S. on the YAGUMO (old CA) in 1938 or 1939.

Q.42. Admiral, what is "TOHUMU KIKAN"?

A. I don't know anything about it. It has something to do with the Navy, but is primarily an Army organization.

Q.43. Who was the Navy officer most concerned?

A. I don't know, the Navy General Staff would know.

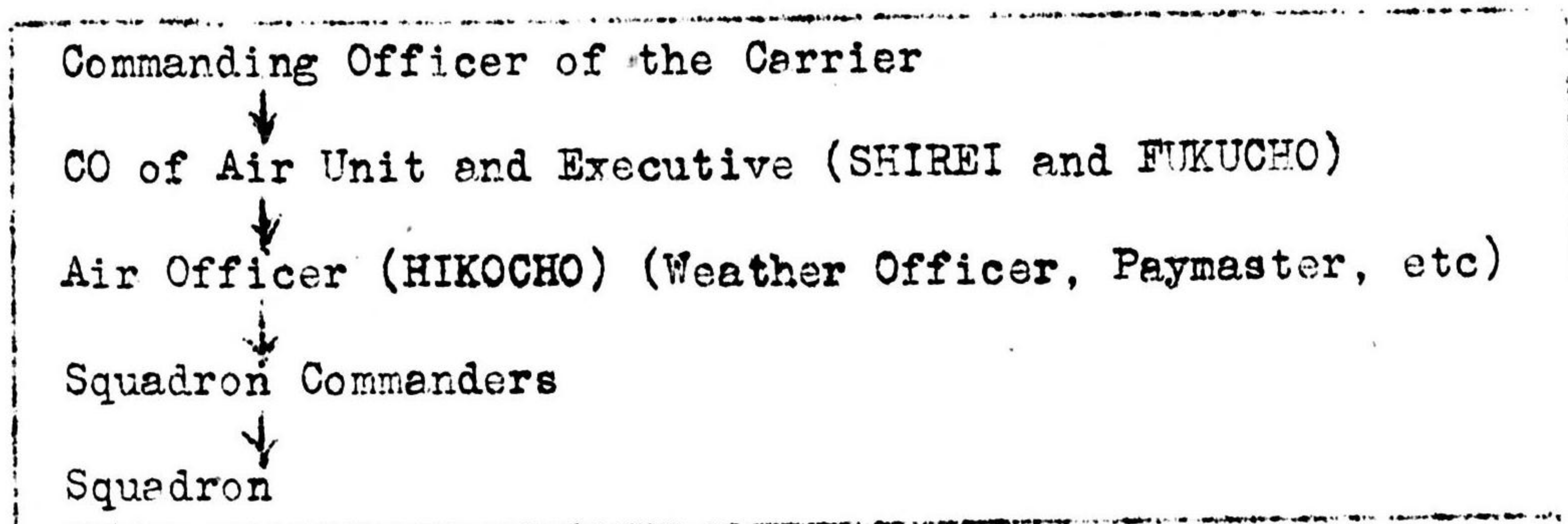
Q.44. Admiral, please draw us a diagram showing the chain of command on a single carrier, and within a carrier formation.

A. (Note) Diagram on following page.

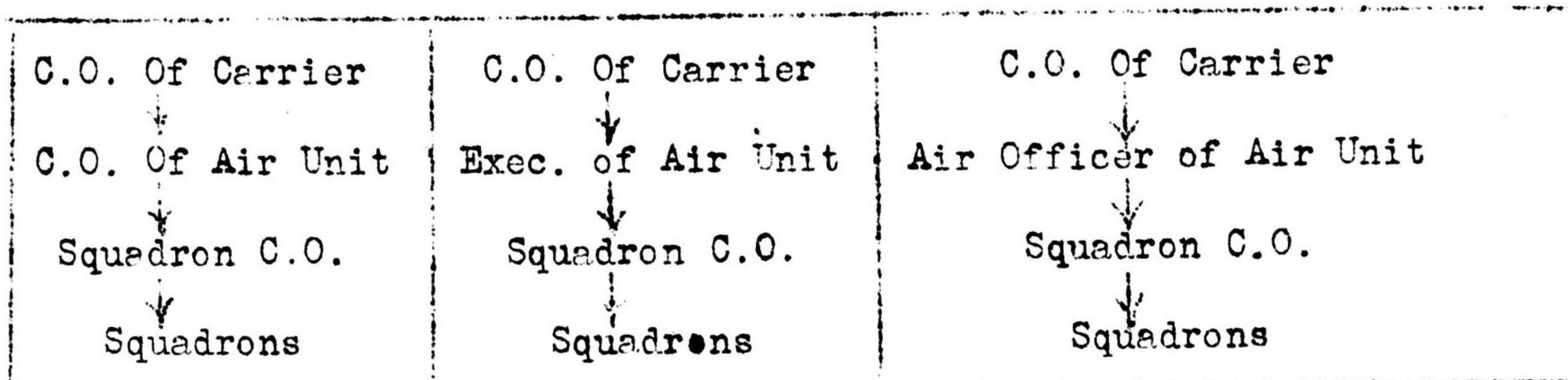
Interrogation of Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, J., IJN, (contd)

Approximate T.O. of Distribution of Air Strength over Single Carrier and Three Carrier Division:

EXAMPLE 1
SINGLE CARRIER



EXAMPLE 2
THREE CARRIER DIVISION



NOTE: In the former (EXAMPLE 1) the Air Officer is responsible for the flight deck and duties of Briefing pilots. In the latter (EXAMPLE 2) the Commanding Officer of the Air Unit, Executive Officer of the Air Unit, and Air Officer of the Air Unit are responsible for the flight deck and duties of briefing pilots in turn. All Air Unit personnel are under the command of the Commanding Officer of the ship. In the middle of 1943, approximately, the Air Officer was dropped from the Ship's complement and became attached directly to the Air Unit.

Interrogation of Rear Admiral OBAYASHI, J. (contd).

Q.45. Did any of your planes ever locate and subsequently make an attack on submarines?

A. No - except false contacts.

Q.46. Were any of your ships ever attacked by our submarines?

A. In Philippines we once avoided what may have been an Allied torpedo.

Q.47. Were pilots specially trained for ASP?

A. No.

Q.48. What were the instructions in the event they sighted a sub?

A. Advise ship and attack.

Q.49. What weapons were used to attack?

A. 250kg. Bombs.

Q.50. What got the ZUIKAKU?

A. 2 torpedoes - from aircraft.

Q.51. Did she capsize?

A. She took 2 hits, she went over on her side, communications went out, after 2 hours she sank.

Q.52. Were the planes aboard the ZUIKAKU when she sank?

A. No, We had launched them prior to the attack.

Q.53. What was the average tour of duty of ships personnel (officers) on a carrier?

A. Usually a year at least.

Q.54. How about pilots?

A. I'm not sure. I don't think there was any definite length of tour.

Q.55. Were squadrons ever trained as a unit and placed aboard a ship intact?

A. No.

Q.56. How many carriers (capable of operations) did the Navy have at the end of the war?

A. I'm not sure. I think there may have been 1 or 2 at KURE.

Q.57. Do you know why they were immobilized?

A. No planes.

Q.58. Was your command of special attack boats the overall command?

A. No, this was only the KANTO Area boat group (at YOKOSUKA).

Q.59. How many boats did you have?

A. 300 or 400.

Q.60. What was the total number planned to be available for the invasion of the home islands?

A. I am not sure. I don't know.