

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

INTERROGATION NO. 174

PLACE: Tokyo

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Oil and Chemical.

DATE: 26 Oct 1945

SUBJECT: Production and administration of oil in South.

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND OF EACH:

NAKAMURA, HARSUO (Note: There are two other NAKAMURAS in oil.)

- 1930-38 - Dr. in physical chemistry.
- 38-39 $\frac{1}{2}$ - Kawasaki A/C Co.
- 40-42 - Conscripted into Army Fuel Depot Tokyo A/C Fuel.
- 42-43 - Palembang, Sumatra.
- 43 - Scientific Staff War Ministry.

WHERE INTERVIEWED: Room 807, Meiji Building.

INTERROGATOR: Lt Comdr G. M WILLIAMS.

INTERPRETER:

ALLIED OFFICERS PRESENT: None.

SUMMARY:

1. Palembang Oil Production (Sumatra).
2. Pang Balon Braudon Oil Production.
3. Transportation of oil.
4. Distribution of oil.
5. Reports.
6. Army-Navy Co-operation in Singapore.

Labor. Palembang labor included 15 - 30,000 native workers, 3,000 Japanese from Japan, and some Dutch and American prisoners, but no German technicians.

Palembang Oil Production. In 1942 the production was low but by 1943 production was up to prewar standards. Some of the original operating machinery was left intact. The two plants at Palembang were able to produce 11,000 kl/D The last month was 250,000 kl/M Avgas ran 8-10% of production, with the best record 12%. Motor gas ran 20-22%. The best gas ran 95-96 octane and by adding tetraethyl lead 100 to 116 octane could be achieved. NAKAMURA said the burning point of this fuel, however, was too high and that other gas had to be mixed with it to achieve proper results and that the resulting octane was about 92, although small quantities of higher octane could be produced for use. A production quota was set for 1943 for 3,000,000 kl; it was more than fulfilled.

Transportation. Avgas was generally transported in drums. NAKAMURA remembered only one instance of shipping avgas by tanker. Motor gas was generally sent in tankers. Local use gas was transported in drums. Drums became a critical item and a drum factory was established but didn't work too well. Shipping was a severe bottleneck, production capacity being far in excess of transportation capacity. A plan for wooden ships was instituted but during the time NAKAMURA was there only one wooden ship was used. A more radical experiment was then made. This involved putting gasoline in 50-80 Kilo rubber bags and towing them between Palembang and Singapore. One or two such shipments were made, but shipping problems involved made the experiment unsuccessful. It was also difficult to load and unload these bags and avgas could not be shipped unless the rubber was specially treated.

Distribution of Oil. Production figures sent 60-70% to Singapore. Some went to Japan directly. All oil that went to Singapore was in a refined state unless a breakdown of machinery prevented this. 30-40% of production went to the Navy, mostly in the form of diesel and bunker oil. A few times destroyers came in and were fueled directly. But most of the oil was picked up by Navy tankers. NAKAMURA was not clear on the subject of fleet tankers but he said that both fast and slow tankers came to Palembang but towards the end of his stay only slow ones arrived. Only about 1% of production was consumed locally.

Palembang crude was sent to Balikpapan once for refining. Java crude was regularly sent to Balikpapan.

Pang Balan Braudon: At the beginning of Japanese occupation oil was sent from Pang Balan Braudon to Singapore but later on these shipments were practically abandoned due to submarines. Large tankers further more couldn't get in because of shallow water. At one time there was a plan to destroy the plant but eventually the plant was limited to diesel oil and avgas. There was more motor gas than could be handled. There was even a plan to dump it all in the river, but this plan was abandoned because of the fire hazard. Effort to refine motor gas into avgas failed.

Reports. Each refinery made monthly and annual report to the Southern Fuel Depot in Singapore. The monthly report included: (1) Production of crude, (2) Production of refined oil, and (3) Tonnage shipped to particular localities. The annual report included the total monthly reports plus formulas used for making oil. There was also an experimental report. These reports were sent by the Southern Fuel Depot to the Southern General Army.

Army-Navy Co-operation in Singapore. NAKAMURA testified that there was an Army-Navy fuel committee established in Singapore in 1942 (Navy witnesses say there was no such official body). The purpose of this committee was to exchange the resources of the separate Army-Navy oil kingdoms. For example, Balikpapan produced lube oil and Palembang none. Technical information was also exchanged.

Air Raid Defense. After the middle of 1943, there was a plan to complete air raid precautions by November. In December these precautions were still incomplete due to the difficulties of underground construction in the watery soil. There then ensued a great discussion between the central authorities arguing about underground construction, the local authorities saying it could not be done.