HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
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RESTRICTED

INTERROGATION NO.478

PLACE: TOKYO.
DATE: 24 November 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis, Ground Branch.

Subject: Defense Preparations of 12th Area Army in Tokyo Area.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Major General TAKASHIMA, Tatsuhiko, Chief of Staff of 12th Area Army for defense of Kanto Plain Area. 1937-1940 on staff in headquarters of South China Regiment. Formosa Infantry Regiment. Nov. 1941 to May 1942 on staff of 16th Army which moved into Java. May 1942 to March 1943 Chief of Staff of 3rd Army at Gotanko, Manchuria. March 1943 to December 1944 Vice-Chief of Staff of Eastern District Army, Tokyo. March 1945 Chief of staff of 12th Area Army organized to defend Kanto Area.

Where interviewed: Room 238, Meiji Building.

Interrogators: Colonel J. F. Rodenhauser Colonel P. Cole.
Captain Dow Parks

Interpreter: Lt (jg) McCoy.

Allied Officers present: Squadron Leader Bloxley, RAF.

SUMMARY

General Takashima brought with him detailed lay-outs of the defense preparations against our expected invasion of the Kanto Plain Area. He explained the state of preparations and the supply situation as of August 15, 1945. Great faith was placed in the success of the Kamikaze air attacks which had been planned as well as the suicidal stand that was to be made at the beaches by certain selected infantry divisions. The defenses as outlined were very strong and all troops and supplies were being placed underground as defense against our air attacks. Most of the troops and supplies were in place on August 15th. Our attack was not expected in this area until about 1 January; so additional preparation had been planned in the intervening period. There were 530,000 troops and 500,000 civilian laborers involved in these preparations and the defense. They were short of rice but expected to harvest the rice crop before our invasion.

An interesting fact is that the Army had nothing to do with preparation of off-shore obstacles or defense; these matters were entirely within the province of the Navy. The Navy had planned to mine the waters off shore just prior to invasion, but what other preparations were to be made by the Navy were not known to the general. There apparently was very little exchange of plans between the 12th Area Army Headquarters and the Navy, because General Takashima had no knowledge of Navy plans with which to coordinate his operations other than the mining operation.

General Takashima stated that he believed his defense would be highly successful and that we would not be able to land. He had no apprehensions about the use of atomic bombs against him, as his military forces were all underground; however, he did state that if we had used the bomb, he expected to lose the half-million civilians employed by the army.

Many of the divisions were newly formed and inexperienced in combat. These divisions were only about 50% equipped on 15 August. These were principally suicidal outfits.

Q. Outline your assignments in the Army since 1937.

A. For answer see first page of report under "background".

Q. Explain the charts of your dispositions as you have them drawn up.

A. I shall answer the questions presented to me on our estimates of enemy intentions and our plans to counter these moves. We expected the U.S. Forces to land in Kyushu in November of this year. We made preparations in the Kanto region for the American attacks to come as of January 1946. These plans were as I shall outline below. Manpower: We expected the Americans to use from 40 to 50 divisions in their landings of November 1945. We expected them to approach from one of two routes - either by way of Iwo Jima, Ogasawara Gunto and the Izu Peninsula - or from Iwo Jima direct to the Kanto area. We felt that the landings would be made in the Tokyo region at either Kujikuri or Kashima (secure a foothold here and then come up from the south). We also considered the enemy's attempting to take Oshima and Tateyama for airfields before landing on the main coastline. We expected that landings would be preceded by aerial and naval bombardments. The air attacks would endeavor to hit our transport system, inland defense facilities, and destroy our air power. The Naval bombardment would be directed at our shore installations. In April 1945 it was planned to let the Americans land and then engage them, but by June we had amassed sufficient strength that we felt we could repel the foe on the beackes. Our main strength was at Kujikurihama; we had less strength at Kashima, feeling that even if US should land here, the terrain would be against the attacker.

(At this point General Takashima opened a very large map showing the disposition of the Japanese Ground Forces. These were generally in position as indicated by 15 Aug.)

The 52nd Army with four divisions was on the shore with support inland. On the Izu Peninsula we had one mixed brigade, one mixed regiment and one division. The 53rd Army was deployed on the Kanagawa coast; it was composed of three divisions, one mixed brigade and one mixed regiment, and extended south as far as Fujihara. We also had one division on Oshima and one brigade on Hachijo. These organizations would have dealt directly with the initial defense on the coast. The supporting units are inland: the 81st, 93rd 201st, 202nd, 209th, 1st Tank Division, 4th Tank Division, and 214th Division. Those divisions indicated by unbroken green circles were in position in August. The broken lines indicate divisions that were to be moved into position about two to four weeks before the critical battle. They were to be in the positions indicated by the time of the expected landings.

Q. Where were those divisions to come from?

A. From Hamamatsu, Kaniyama, Nagoya and Sendai.

Q. What were the numbers of these divisions?

A. These units were kept in reserve with other divisions at these places, and the Supreme Command would decide what divisions would move up. They had not been named at the end of the war. In all, we had 17 divisions, two tank divisions, four brigades, and three tank brigades- making a total of about 530,000 men. This is the total force that was in position and does not include those to be moved up or those on the islands.

Q. Were all of the forces in position as of August 1945?

A. Yes.

Q. What was to be done with these troops between August and the time of he expected landings?

A. Not a great deal. They would strengthen the defenses in the region. By August the defenses were comparable to those on Iwo Jima. They would have been stronger by November, Much of this work was done by a civilian defense force, and they had to be instructed and trained to a limited degree. As far as the Army was concerned, we had sufficient men in the area.

Q. How was the supply situation in regard to ammunition, food, etc.? Did the divisions have sufficient supplies? Were they fully equipped?

A. (The general opened another large map to talk from) Between August and November, we would have (1) established shore defenses, (2) set up our guns, (3) engaged in training, in that order. We planned to attack the U.S. surface forces with planes as we did off Okinawa. The Navy had the responsibility for placing mines which would impede the invading forces. Our forces inland were to keep pushing toward the point of the American landings. In anticipation of your air force disrupting lines of communication, especially at places like the Edo River, we worked on the roads to strengthen them and were working on the problem of making bridges across these rivers more secure. We felt that within two weeks after the landing operation the battle would reach a crisis and be decided. Now as regards the supplies: Ammunition: The chart shows the location of ammunition stores. The fuel figure is low because we had few tanks, and it doesn't include the fuel held by the air force.

Q. How much ammunition was there; that is to say, how long could the forces on the line engage the enemy in real hard fighting?

A. It is hard to say, but roughly for about three weeks, judging by former standards. In modern warfare, enough ammunition to last for one week.

Q. Only enough for one week?

A. Our plan for the expenditure of ammunition was different than yours. We planned not to fire while you were firing. Our suicide planes were to drive the invasion fleet away from the coast, and then our ground forces could open up and eliminate whatever enemy troops might have reached shore.

Q. Then the firing on our troops as they landed would have been very light?

A. Yes. We weren't going to engage the Americans in an artillery duel, but we would fire on the troops on the shore at certain times.

Q. You intended to oppose our landings with only small arms and hand to hand combat?

A. Yes, our cannon were few. We planned to rely more on mortars, which have a range of about 1000 meters. These would hold the enemy in check, and we planned to then infiltrate.

Q. What percentage of the supply figures on the chart did you expect to use in repelling the landings?

A. We had plenty of mortars - about 250 in each division and the figures of the ammunition to be used by the mortars do not appear on the chart. The chart shows only the supplies on hand for the overall plan and does not show the ammunition handled by the individual units as the mortars were. So the expenditure of ammunition used in repelling the landings would not affect the figures on the chart to any great extent.

Q. Does the chart show the ammunition and supplies held by the regiments, battalions, companies, etc.?

A. It does not show the ammunition made by the individual units, and most of our mortars were made by the units from bombs that we would not use. These do not appear in the figures given on the overall chart.

Q. Is the ammunition shown on the chart to be used mainly in counter-attacks or to rebel our landings?

A. A small amount would be used to repel the landings. Most of it would be used in attacks. The figures on the chart show the ammunition made and supplied by the high command. The weapons made by the individual units are not included, but then they are not very many.

Q. How well equipped were these troops? Were they up to proper standards of equipment, or were there actually shortages of certain items?

A. The divisions with numbers above 200 are new divisions and are not fully equipped. By August 1945 only 50% of what is shown on the chart was on hand. This is due to two factors: (1) Allied bombings of our installations. (2) The necessity for us to disperse with the consequent lowering in efficiency.
(NOTE: The implications of the foregoing two reasons are that these effects were to the production of supplies.)

Q. Outline some of the specific effects you refer to.

A. Not a great deal of damage was done to railroads; hence, there was no great effect of the transportation of military goods. The main trouble was with the civilian labor supply during and after the bombings. There was a tremendous effect on sea transportation. For example, one of the sea lanes was from Manchuria to Niigata; the American air forces began to lay mines in this area about March, and by July the Japanese had succeeded in moving only 50% of the goods from Manchuria to Niigata that they had planned on. In the Izu area the supply situation was bad from the first of 1945. We did succeed in landing some supplies on Hachijo by means of small boats. Our original plans called for a brigade to be placed on Oshima. This was later changed to a division. We couldn't fully supply this division because of the difficulty of getting supplies across the water.

Q. What were the main shortages here?

A. We had insufficient ammunition and food for one division. We also lost ammunition and guns because of the bombings. On one occasion we lost 300 tons of ammunition in Matsuda in Kanagawa Prefecture, Naruto in Chiba, and Ishioka in Ibaraki (the total figure represents the total loss in the three places). Most of our losses of ammunition because of bombing was the result of scattering the ammunition around and then having it get caught during the large raid in July.

Q. Have you included guns in the loss figure given above?

A. No. There is represented ammunition losses only. Another effect of the bombings was that in the raids on Tokyo and other large cities a great percentage of the living quarters of the residents were destroyed. The consequent dislocation resulted in the military getting less support from the civilian population.

Q. Did the civilians refuse to work after the raids?

A. No. There was no antagonism. The people just couldn't get to work. There was a labor problem and also we had insufficient raw materials. For example, the blockage of Tsugaru Straits and the cutting off of our coal supplies from Hokkaido affected the valume of production of military goods. The fuel shortage forced us to rely on substitutes, alcohol and charcoal, with the concommittant loss in efficiency.

Q. What were the extents of these shortages?

A. As of August we had 40% of the ammunition we had planned; 90% of the fuel, and 100% of the food and clothing (this doesn't include the basic foods of rice and wheat which were to be obtained from the November Harvest). An American landing before November would have had serious consequences because of this.

Q. Would you have had enough ammunition by November?

A. You can get a better picture of this aspect from the War Ministry.

Q. Specifically who would be the best contact on this subject in the War Ministry?

A. Lt. Col. KUNITAKE, Military Affairs Department. Incidentally, the figure I gave previously about our having enough ammunition for one week assumes continuous firing during that time.

Q. What was the rule of the Navy in the plan for the defense of the Kanto area?

A. I don't know except in so far as the naval ground forces at Yokosuka are concerned.

Q. Didn't you know anything about the navy plans?

A. All I know is that there are some navy guns along with army guns protecting the entrance to Tokyo Bay, Eno Shima, and other similar places.

Q. Was there a naval officer on your staff?

A. The Supreme Army (Sogun) was above us. There was a naval representative on their staff.

Q. What did this naval representative do?

A. The Sogun had cognizance over the entire area of northern Japan of which the Kanto Area Army is only one of three parts.

(Colonel Cole: I want it to be in the record that this man was preparing to fight a decisive battle, perhaps the last battle of the war, and he has no knowledge whatsoever of the navy's plans.)

Q. What was the role of air power in this last battle?

A. There was to be no direct support of the ground forces. The air force was to rely largely on suicide attacks against allied shipping.

Q. Was there no plan for strifing our troops on the beaches and other similar tactical support?

A. No.

Q. Were there any air officers on your staff?

A. Yes, we had an air defense division. During the drafting of the plan there was some dispute as to how kamikaze should be used. One school of thought wanted to concentrate on allied shipping(Transports), the other wanted to concentrate on warships. It was decided to concentrate on transports, but our planes were also to attack warships while they were carrying out a shore bombardment, also attack LST's and other such special ships.

Q. Should we get a foothold on Japan and establish airfields, would they be attacked?

A. The plan in effect as of August did not call for any such attacks, because it was predicated on the assumption that the Americans would not be able to establish landing strips.

Q. (Col. Cole) Have you considered that in the establishment of the Normandy Beachhead we had a landing strip on the beach in two days?

A. We had no plan for attacking airfields.

(The next questions dealing with the air force were posed by Squadron Leader Bloxley, R.A.F.)

Q. Did you request air searches?

A. Yes, we did as regards Iwo Jima.

Q. Was there any detailed scheme for covering all of the waters from Sendai to Sagami Bay?

A. Yes, there was quite a bit of cooperation between observation units of the air force and our army.

Q. Did the navy help in these?

A. I don't know. It was the function of the Sogun to arrange for naval cooperation.

Q. What organization was responsible for the air defenses in this area?

A. The First Army (Air). The navy also cooperated in this. I don't know the number of the navy force involved.

Q. Did you have an air officer in your operations room to decide when the air force would go into action?

A. No. The Sogun decided the time.

Q. What of the air defenses against B-29 attacks? This army had an operations room to collect the information on air defenses. What was the air division which worked in cooperation with the area army? They had an office in the Takebashi in the Palace Grounds. How did the officers of the area army and air forces handle the information received there?

A. Until the first of July we had an Air Defense Division under us. On July 1st was placed under the First Air Army. What remained was the air raid warning system which still collected information.

Q. Did the army control anti-aircraft fire?

A. Yes, until the end.

Q. What coordination existed between Anti-aircraft Fire and Fighter Defenses?

A. The cooperation between the two was achieved at Takebashi. The AA Divisions had a limited amount of reconnaissance of their own. They formerly got radar reports, but after July these reports went directly to the air units. However, the AA Divisions retained use of the civilian warning system.

Q. (Col. Rodenhauser) What was the quality of your troops? Were they experienced combat veterans or untrained recruits for the most part?

A. The divisions whose number is above 200 are newly-formed divisions. They had had no experience in combat.

Q. Did any of the men have combat experience?

A. The officers were experienced. The men were generally inexperienced. Most of them had received training formerly and then had been called up again. They were generally between 30 and 40 years of age.

Q. How much ammunition had you expected to use for training?

A. From August to November we would have used about 10% of the total store. Very intensive training was intended after August.

Q. The dispersal of supplies implies a later use of road transport to move them to desired locations or scenes of combat. How were you supplied with transportation? Did you have sufficient?

A. We planned to haul the supplies by train from distant points and then use trucks. The use of trucks was difficult because of bombing and strafing attacks; so we would have had to use our trucks at night. When an enemy landing was indicated, we planned to move up as much ammunition as possible. Between August and November we would have had about 5,000 trucks in the Kanto Area. This include the trucks held by the air forces.

Q. Where were these trucks to come from?

A. We would have obtained these trucks from the army, navy and the civilians. We were also going to use horse-drawn carts, bicycle-drawn carts, and hand drawn carts, as well as the trucks.

Q. Looking about Tokyo at present it seems that bombings destroyed quite a quantity of your truck transportation. Did this affect your problem any?

A. We felt we could meet the transportation requirements, but Allied bombings could have complicated our problems considerably.

Q. How much training had the divisions with numbers below 200 had?

A. The 81st and 93rd were crack divisions. The 201st, 202nd, 209th and 214th are attack divisions along suicide lines. Everyone except the division commander was a young man. They were good as suicide troops.

Q. Were your tank divisions well-trained?

A. The two tank divisions are crack divisions, fully equipped. The 1st had received experience in Manchuria. The four tank brigades were not fully equipped.

Q. How were the tanks to be employed?

A. There was some argument over this point. At first, it was intended to use them in concentrated form at the beaches. This was later changed; the tanks were scattered and were to be employed more widely.

Q. Would they have been used as mobile units or as pill-boxes?

A. The greater number would have been mobile. Some would have been used as movable pill-boxes.

Q. How many tanks did you have in one tank division?

A. The divisions were different in size. The 1st, which was larger than the 4th, had about 300 tanks. There were from 60-70 tanks in each tank brigade. These tanks were to be used in conjunction with hand-fired rockets in the event of an American break-through.

Q. What size were these tanks principally?

A. Most of them were medium size, but there were a few light tanks.

Q. What was the breakdown of your strength shown on the large chart?

A. It is still being prepared.

Q. Of what significance is the different numbers for divisions?

A. Their organization, equipment and duties are different.

Q. How are they different? What about those divisions whose number is below 100?

A. They are crack divisions to be used in coast defense and in critical fighting. They are fully equipped and well-trained.

Q. What about those above 100?

A. The main difference is in their duties. They are somewhat more mobile than those in the shore defenses. They have ascertain amount of transport.

Q. If we attacked, would they move down and meet our invasion?

A. Certain numbers might. The majority would remain where they are and fight there.

Q. How about those divisions numbered from 100-200?

A. They are organized a little differently. They have few cannon and no artillery regiments. They are concerned with shore defenses and have no mobility. They later got some artillery regiments.

Q. Tell us about the organizations with numbers between 200 and 300.

A. These are attack divisions. They are all inland except the 201st. The organization of these divisions is somewhat different. Those numbered in the 100's have four regiments; those in the 200's have three regiments, one of which specializes in attacking.

Q. How were these troops protected in their positions on the coast?

A. The majority of them were in caves. In a local area, they were of the fox-hole type. By August we had communications trenches between squads. We intended to have them between platoons by November. The best caves could with stand a hit by one or two-ton bombs. By August the total length of under-cover emplacements equalled the length of the shore line in the area.

Q. What about under-water obstacles? To what extent were they set up?

A. The under-water obstacles were the responsibility of the navy.

Q. You mean to say that the army has nothing to do with anything once it gets wet? You put up no underwater barbed-wire or other such obstacles?

A. No. The army put tank traps on the shore.

Q. What is your estimate of the success you would have had, if we had attacked as you estimated?

A. I think that we would have been successful and won. We would have succeeded in driving you off the beaches.

Q. Did the dropping of the atomic bombs change your mind in any way?

A. No. There was no change in our plans. Its greatest effect was on civilians. It did not effect the army. Our men were dug in deeply enough to protect themselves. There was only one area where we couldn't get under cement.

Q. We could have gotten ashore here?

A. We did face a problem in setting up a defense that was effective in this area (along beaches). The depth of the land was only eight meters here and we hit water generally after digging only 1½ meters. It was impossible to erect cement fortifications here so we had to rely on natural defenses. However, we feel we were safe, as it would be almost impossible for an enemy to use tanks here. If the enemy should get ashore he would be as much bothered by the depth of the soil as we were.

Q. Were the tanks, guns and other equipment stored underground as well as the men?

A. Yes, we had nothing but observation posts on the surface.

Q. What was the reaction of your soldiers when they heard about the atomic bomb?

A. They were not worried about it. They considered the large area. We were worried about the civilians in this large area which is agricultural. With them we had about 1,000,000 men, but they might have wilted and run away in front of the atomic bomb.

Q. Assuming that you would not get the kamikaze support as you thought, what do you think your chances for successful defense would have been?

A. This would have been highly detrimental to our side. However, the air force and its fuel were very widely scattered. We feel that it would not have been extensively destroyed all at once.