

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

INTERROGATION NO: 307
Japanese Intell. No. 13

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 45

Division of Origin: Japanese Intelligence Section,

Subject: Japanese Army Air Intelligence at HIKOSENTAI,
HIKOSHIDAN Level.

Person interrogated and background:

Lt. Col. MATSUMURA, Shizuma, Japanese Army Air Force Intelligence officer of 10th Air Division (HIKOSHIDAN) from March 1944 to end of war.

Graduated from Army Officers' School in 1927 as an artillery officer; graduated from artillery and engineering school in 1929; in 1939, entered Army War College, general course; in 1941, after war began, was assigned as anti-aircraft staff officer for the Western District; in 1942-43, underwent bombardier instruction at HAMMAMATSU, and in March 1943 was assigned to 3rd Air Brigade (HIKODAN) in JAVA as staff officer for operations and intelligence as well as duty involving flying as a bombardier; from October 1943 to March 1944, commanding officer of 98th Air Regiment (HIKOSENTAI) in BURMA under the 5th Air Division (HIKOSHIDAN).

Where interviewed: Meiji Building.

Interrogators: Major R.S. Spilman, Jr., AC, AUS.
Lt. S. P. Ahlum, USNR.

Interpreter: Lt. Otis Cary, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

1. No intelligence officers were assigned to any Army Air Force unit below the HIKOSHIDAN (Air Division). However, in the subordinate units, officers directly under the C.O. were assigned to perform duties of an intelligence nature.

2. On bombing strikes, briefing covering bomb run, altitude, course, flak positions, etc., was given, using maps and photographs. The unit leaders carried annotated photographs in the plane.

3. Planes on patrol missions carried cameras and the HIKOSENTAI had facilities for developing film and producing prints. Trained photo interpreters were assigned only at HIKOSHIDAN (Air Division) level.

4. Information sent to field units from Imperial Headquarters included plane identification, technical intelligence, intelligence from prisoners of war and captured documents, tactical methods of the enemy and some order of battle information. Results of reconnaissance and other intelligence collected by operational units outside of Japan were transmitted to higher Headquarters by fragmentary mission reports and by periodical reports issued at ten day intervals.

5. In the TOKYO Area where ground, air, and AA units were close together, much of the paper work was eliminated, and exchange of information was obtained largely through conferences.

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TRANSCRIPT

Q.1. Have you ever done any active combat flying as a bombardier?

A. Yes, in the JAVA theatre.

Q.2. What was the mission of your unit during the days when you were a combat flier?

A. Anti-shipping patrols and bombing in INDIA.

Q.3. What kind of briefing did the pilots in anti-shipping patrol work receive?

A. There was negligible briefing as regards patrolling.

Q.4. How much ship recognition instruction did the pilots get?

A. We often took a few silhouettes with us. We flew only three sectors, and those rather haphazardly, because there wasn't much shipping in the area.

Q. 5. What were the instructions to the pilot in case a ship was sighted?

A. The orders were to contact base immediately, giving speed, course and identification of the ship, and then get out of the vicinity. We carried no bombs on those patrols.

Q. 6. When you returned from a mission, to whom did you tell the results of the patrol?

A. We never got together with anybody after a mission unless we had actually found something.

Q.7. Did the table of organization call for an intelligence officer in the HIKOSENTAI (Air Regiment)?

A. No. I kept one officer around who was for all purposes the intelligence officer, but he was not listed as such.

Q.8. Did you carry cameras on your flights?

A. Yes.

Q.9. Were the photographs developed in the HIKOSENTAI, and what was done with them?

A. We never took any pictures. If we had, we had the facilities to develop them at the HIKOSENTAI. Then we would have let the air division (HIKOSHIDAN) know what we had. As commanding officer of a HIKOSENTAI, I originated no attacks or plans; I was just a funnel through which orders from above were issued to the HIKOSENTAI.

Q.10. Did your HIKOSENTAI ever act in support of ground troops?

A. No. The fighter HIKOSENTAI did that.

Q.11. On attacks against CALCUTTA, what kind of maps, charts, pictures, or other material were used, first for study before the mission, and secondly to take with them.

A. They had aerial pictures and maps. The pictures could be carried on strikes, the maps could not. The bombing run to be made was marked on the photograph, also the altitude, course, speed, etc.

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Q.12. Did all the pilots carry such photographs, or just the squadron leader?

A. Just the leader.

Q.13. Before take-off, what information as to flak and defenses in general was given the pilots?

A. They had no official flak intelligence as such. However, I had had a certain amount of anti-aircraft experience before I went into aviation, so I tried to plan the best course over a target that would avoid as much anti-aircraft fire as possible.

Q.14. Did photo interpreters go over the pictures to determine anti-aircraft positions prior to a mission?

A. There were no photo interpreters at HIKOSENTAI or CHUTAI (squadron) level. We read the photographs ourselves.

Q.15. Were any order of battle maps, or estimates of enemy disposition, prepared at HIKOSENTAI level? Was there a map room and a file of intelligence matters?

A. It was all kept in our heads. All the information came to me from the division(HIKOSHIDAN), and I just executed it. Maps were sent down for a particular mission. When we were close enough, I went to the division headquarters for conferences, and kept track of the information that way.

Q.16. Describe as completely as you can the duties of the officer who performed intelligence duties in the HIKOSENTAI.

A. Generally, he expedited the mimeographing, kept the files straight, and made the routine reports on operational aircraft and personnel, as well as reports on weather based on the patrols.

Q.17. Were mission reports made of negative flights?

A. Yes.

Q.18. Were consolidated mission reports made periodically?

A. Yes, 3 per month

Q.19. What was the rank of the intelligence officer in the HIKOSENTAI?

A. In my HIKOSENTAI he was a major. He also doubled in operations. He was of equal rank with the commanding officer (Maj. TOGA) in this instance.

Q.20. Were any enlisted men with training in intelligence assigned to the HIKOSENTAI?

A. None.

Q.21. Was there an intelligence unit as such assigned to the air division (HIKOSHIDAN) in your experience?

A. Yes, a major, a first lieutenant, four non-commissioned officers and four other enlisted men.

Q.22. Was this a purely intelligence unit?

A. Yes, it was carried on the table of organization as such.

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Q.23. Outline in as much detail as you can the functions of the intelligence unit you just described.

A. The general set-up was to obtain all the information from higher echelons and work it over. The 10th Air Division (HIKOSHIDAN) had its own radar network, and sent down that sort of report. Then the 32nd Air Warning outfit (KOKU JOHO RENTAI), with its many outposts sent in information to us directly. Long range information came from higher echelons, from headquarters.

Q.24. Did the 10th HIKOSHIDAN keep count of enemy losses and enemy strength?

A. Information on that came from above. We did not attempt to do that.

Q.25. Was there a war room with situation maps, etc., at HIKOSHIDAN level?

A. No. We made use of the Eastern Area Army Headquarters facilities for things like that.

Q.26. What kind of reports did the HIKOSHIDAN receive from below?

A. Nothing. The 10th HIKOSHIDAN was all fighters, and we didn't bother with any reports. We had some reconnaissance planes at the start, but when these suffered damage they were redeployed after February.

Q.27. What kind of reports did the HIKOSHIDAN make to higher echelons?

A. We submitted reports on information from radar stations and observation posts in our own early warning system. After actual raids, we reported somewhat on the activities of our fighters.

Q.28. You made no periodic reports?

A. We did at the beginning, but later we gave it up because of the shortage of paper and because headquarters was so close by.

Q.29. What were the functions of the 10th HIKOSHIDAN in assembling and reporting to headquarters on the estimated loss of Allied planes?

A. Two organizations - the air division and the anti-aircraft people - were responsible for defending the TOKYO area. We got together and tried to decide on the number each had shot down and what were duplications, and then send the report on up.

Q.30. What did the organization of the air brigade (HIKODAN) amount to?

A. We eliminated the HIKODAN in the Empire because everything was fighters and we wanted to do away with one step in the chain of command.

Q.31. In your field HIKODAN - the 3rd HIKODAN in JAVA - was there a formal intelligence unit?

A. Not on the official table of organization, although generally there was one officer picked for that duty.

Q.32. Describe your duties as intelligence officer for the 3rd HIKODAN in 1943 in JAVA.

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A. I was a major at that time. I had a captain below me who was largely used in an intelligence capacity. Both of us doubled in operations and intelligence. There was no provision in the table of organization for an intelligence officer. The commanding officer of the HIKODAN had one staff officer - I was it.

Q.33. What kind of aircraft identification pamphlets did lower echelons receive and where were these issued?

A. About twice a year a new aircraft identification sheet would be issued at the office of the Chief of Staff and sent on down. One copy was sent as far as squadron level, where it would be recopied as necessary.

Q.34. Was the same procedure followed with regard to technical intelligence?

A. Yes.

Q.35. With regards to information on enemy tactics?

A. At HIKOSHIDAN level changes in tactics, etc., would be noted and information sent out about it, either in written form or by dispatch.

Q.36. Were the combat experiences of HIKOSHIDANS exchanged back and forth, either by direct contact or through the chain of command?

A. There was direct interchange of such information between HIKOSHIDANS; also through air headquarters in TOKYO.

Q.37. What did you know about the training of intelligence officers?

A. There was no schooling, no organized training at all. Once a week all intelligence officers got together with the intelligence officer at Air General Army (KOKU SOMBU) to exchange experiences.

Q.38. How did they exchange information with tactical units in the field?

A. There was very little such exchange. They didn't need it.

Q.39. When you were in BURMA did you get any guidance with regard to the tactics used by U.S. and Allied aircraft?

A. Yes, by dispatch and written document.

Q.40. While in BURMA and JAVA, what information did you get from prisoner-of-war sources and how was it received at SENTAI level?

A. We got none at all in BURMA and JAVA. We got some in the TOKYO area; information from the B-29 crews was quite helpful regarding course, rendezvous points, methods of attack, etc. The Army General Staff was responsible for extracting the information, and the Kempei did the work.

Q.41. In the field, were there any instructions for handling prisoners-of-war?

A. We had instructions not to question them, to send them to higher headquarters for the Kempei to handle.

Q.42. What were the instructions as to captured documents, crashed Allied planes, etc.?

A. If such material was deemed of any importance, it was sent back to

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the next higher echelon.

Q.43. While in BURMA and JAVA did your organization find any crashed aircraft or prisoners-of-war which gave you any information?

A. No. Very little came into my hands down there.

Q.44. What are your opinions on the Japanese Army Air Intelligence organization?

A. They were especially poor at collecting and disseminating intelligence. The information on the MARIANAS was bad; we didn't know when the B-29's left there too definitely so that I could get my planes into the air fast enough, and sometimes we wouldn't know they were coming until they were actually over the city. We under-estimated your bombing radar, and didn't expect bombing through heavy overcast. Our own communications were a big drawback in the intelligence set up; we could get information, but we couldn't pass it along fast enough. We had no information on your carrier striking forces against the Empire in advance, for example.

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