

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

INTERROGATION NO. USSBS No. 99 (NAV-22) PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 22 OCT. 1945  
TIME: 1330-1800

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Japanese Occupation of KISKA, the KISKA Garrison, and Operations in the KURILES.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Commander MUKAI, Nifumi, is a regular officer with twenty years of service in the Japanese Navy. He is not an aviator. From 1 May to 30 June 1942, he was the commanding officer of the Special Naval Landing Force which occupied KISKA. From 1 July 1942 to 30 July 1943 he was Senior Officer of the KISKA Defense Force. He occupied a similar position at KATAOKA on PARAMUSHIRO until the end of February, 1944, when he went to MUSASHI on the same island. In April, 1945, he was detached and went to SASEBO, where he now commands the AINOURA Naval Barracks.

Where interviewed: Room 618, MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: J. S. RUSSELL, Captain, USN.

Interpreter: D. BARTLETT, Lieutenant Commander, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None other than above.

SUMMARY:

(Note: all dates and times are those of TOKYO, zone minus 9).

According to Commander MUKAI the first plan of action in the ALEUTIANS was to take the island of ADAK by a joint landing on the part of both the Japanese Army and Navy. Then, after a period of about one week, to land on KISKA and ATTU, using the same forces which had taken part in the occupation of ADAK. The object of taking ADAK was to provide a temporary defense in depth, the Army falling back to ATTU and the Navy to KISKA. Commander MUKAI thought the ADAK venture unwise, since he, with his force, would be required to make two landings, and he did not enjoy the prospect, due to the difficult terrain and weather conditions. He was of the opinion that the whole operation was one of reconnaissance. He expected to evacuate KISKA in September of 1942. He learned that the plan was changed, and that he would be required to land only on KISKA, two weeks before the Battle of MIDWAY, and hence, he emphasized, the change in plan could have been in no way connected with the outcome of that battle.

The force with which Commander MUKAI landed on KISKA at 1900 on 7 June 1942 was comprised of one battalion of Special Naval Landing Force of 550 men and a party of labor troops of 700 men. The Landing Force was embarked on the HAKUSAN MARU and the labor troops on the H\_\_\_\_\_ MARU, both transports of 10,000 tons. (Commander MUKAI could not remember the name of the second transport other than that he thought it began with an "H"). He went ashore with the Landing Force at REYNARD COVE. The Landing Force was divided into three parts; the main body proceeded directly overland to the head of KISKA HARBOR, skirting the inshore end of SALMON LAGOON, a second group moved along the coast of the ridge down the center of the island, and a third group moved along the shore. Four landing barges proceeded along the shore toward KISKA HARBOR. These stood by to assist the third group of the shore party to cross the entrance to SALMON LAGOON, then moved on down to the entrance to KISKA HARBOR, where they awaited a call from the force ashore in the event that the evacuation of casualties might be required.

Three prisoners of war were taken a short distance inshore from the U.S. Weather Station. These were a pharmacist's mate, a cook, and a weather observer. No one else was met, but the three P.O.W.'s said that there were four more men from the weather station who had gone in to the hills to the south.

The three landing force groups assembled at 0230 the next morning on the northwest shore of KISKA HARBOR. The two armed transports then moved in and landed the labor troops, equipment and supplies. Present in KISKA HARBOR at various times during the first few days of the occupation, in addition to the two armed transports, were the light cruisers KISO and TAMA, the converted light cruiser ASAKAMA, four destroyers of the 21st Destroyer Division, three auxiliaries carrying gasoline, fuel oil and supplies - the HINO MARU, NISSAN MARU and AMAGI MARU - and the KAMITSU MARU. The latter brought in gasoline, equipment and supplies for six flying boats which had landed on 8 June.

As soon as the labor troops and supplies were landed from the two transports the development of the base was started. Four 13mm AA guns were emplaced on the high ground just east of the U.S. Weather Station. Four 7cm AA guns were emplaced to the northwest on the slope of the mountains. Four 12cm coast defense guns were installed on NORTH HEAD. Radar was located below the crest of the ridge to the west. One 40 KVA power unit and one 80 KVA power unit were set up along the stream just east of the Weather Station, and a 15 KVA power unit near the pond. A communication center was established with a receiver in the Weather Station building and transmitter southeast of the pond. Mechanical equipment was lacking, so all this took up the remainder of the month of June.

U.S. air attacks began on about 10 June with B-24's, B-17's, and PBY's taking part. It was considered that the latter were on reconnaissance missions. These air attacks interfered with the work of developing the base considerably.

Remembering the four Americans who were reported to be in the hills to the south, the KISO sent a boat with an armed party aboard around to the south shore of the island. This was not done immediately, however, and was unsuccessful. After the search was discontinued, and on about 22 June, three (Commander MUKAI said this possibly could have been four) gave themselves up. These were thought to be civilians - 1 "weatherman" and two "lookouts". On about 30 June the last man was found behind the main camp. None of the Americans had identifying tags or papers. The disposition of the prisoners of war was as follows: the three taken in the first day were questioned as to weather and sent to YOKOSUKA on the ASAKI MARU, which left on 15 June. The second three (four?) after being given whiskey, water and bread, and being briefly questioned, were rushed out to the KISO which was on the point of departing for OMINATO. The seventh (eighth?) prisoner was kept for some time since no ships were sailing for JAPAN. This prisoner was quartered in the building which housed the U.S. diesel generator. (This power unit was not used by the Japanese because of the voltage and frequency). The prisoner was tall, slender, had brown hair and blue eyes. He had a pleasant disposition and was well liked by the Japanese. He was finally placed aboard a destroyer sailing for YOKOSUKA in October 1942.

The flying boat camp and the beach from which these and the float planes operated was located a short distance around the shore to the southwest of the main camp.

On 19 June the NISSAN MARU was sunk in the harbor by a bomb from a B-17. The hit was registered on the third attack.

On 1 July the landing force became a garrison force, the "Fifth Garrison Force". The ARGENTINA MARU and the CHIYODA (built as a Navy seaplane carrier) augmented the force at this time with about 1200 men. The AA defense was augmented and six midgeot submarines were brought in. The 18th Destroyer Division (three DD's) escorted this force. The next day the three destroyers, after standing out, ran into fog, and anchored off SALMON LAGOON. There they were subjected to a torpedo attack by a U.S. submarine. One was sunk and the other two seriously damaged.

The AA defenses were augmented as follows: four 12cm high angle guns were installed midway between NORTH HEAD and SALMON LAGOON, four 7cm high angle guns on a hill on the south shore of KISKA HARBOR, three 12cm coast defense guns on the west end of LITTLE KISKA ISLAND; four 25mm AA machine guns on a hill behind the Main Camp, and batteries of four 13mm AA machine guns were installed, one on NORTH HEAD, one by the Submarine Base, one on LITTLE KISKA and one near the radar station west of the Main Camp. The 13mm battery in the last location was very difficult to install due to the terrain.

About 200 moored mines were placed off the west shore of KISKA ISLAND in the bight of the shoreline directly west of KISKA HARBOR.

The labor battalion was supposed to build a pier at the Main Camp, but were hampered by the lack of equipment, and each time the construction was started it was destroyed by wind and sea.

Observation float biplanes were moved in within a few days of the arrival of the occupation force for short range reconnaissance and anti-submarine work. The day after the landing six flying boats were brought in. (These, he said, were moved out about 17 August, due to the difficulties of using them in the prevailing foggy weather and the swell in KISKA HARBOR). About 10 July the spotting planes were augmented by float fighters. Near the end of June some of the float planes, which were under repair in SALMON LAGOON, were damaged by bombs. He heard (but cautioned that it was second-hand information) that the destroyer OBORO, on about 20 June, was damaged sufficiently by a near miss to be sent back to the Empire for repairs. There was much interference with work, but no great damage by U.S. air raids until about mid-September when the air attacks became very severe.

The installations were subjected to a U.S. surface ship bombardment on 8 August 1942. The day was foggy. Two spotting planes, probably cruiser-borne, appeared. One was shot down by a float fighter and the other hid in the fog. At about 1300, 15 minutes after the spotting planes appeared, an intense bombardment began. It was impossible to be sure in the fog, but the U.S. force was thought to consist of ten ships, including CA's, CL's, and DD's. Shells came like rain for thirty minutes. Only two Japanese were killed, because the personnel had taken to the bomb shelters. The north end of the barracks area was destroyed, although most of the shells directed at the Main Camp fell beyond it. At the end of about thirty minutes the U.S. force withdrew to the south. The Japanese batteries did not fire one round because they had no fire control radar and the fog was too thick for visual control.

After mid-September U.S. bombing occurred twice daily and the damage was severe. The Japanese radar picked up the attackers imperfectly, owing to the U.S. tactic of low-level approach. The results of these raids, as he saw them, were:

- (1) Ships had to leave harbor, although none, he said, were sunk there. (n.b.: see later list of ship losses).
- (2) Great damage to all buildings ashore.
- (3) Radar damaged, but quickly repaired.
- (4) Many wounded, but few killed. (In the first big raid of 15 September ten were killed and many more wounded).
- (5) All planes damaged.
- (6) Material damage by fire great.

After the big raid of 15 September all of Captain MUKAI's personnel devoted themselves to anti-aircraft drill, digging in and repairing damage.

On 1 July Captain SATO, Toshimi, assumed command of the garrison which was then designated the Fifth Garrison Force. About the end of September, 1942, Rear Admiral AKIYAMA came in with about 200 communication personnel and the name of the garrison was changed to the 51st Base Force.

In September, on orders from Imperial General Headquarters, the infantry battalion and company of engineers which had occupied ATTU came to KISKA - a total of about 1200 men under Major HOZUMI. These troops landed at and developed the GERTRUDE COVE area. At the same time, and on similar orders, the YAMASAKI Regiment landed on ATTU and became the occupying force there. Late in November the Army troops were put under the command of Brigadier General MINEKI, who brought with him to KISKA two companies of anti-aircraft artillery and a very small battalion of infantry. A road had been built through the mountains, the Army working on the GERTRUDE COVE end and the Navy on the KISKA end. The small battalion of infantry which General MINEKI brought with him took up a position on the west side of the island between KISKA HARBOR and KISKA VOLCANO. One anti-aircraft company set up positions at GERTRUDE COVE, and one in the area west of KISKA HARBOR.

Winter, spring and early summer were spent in improving defense, anti-aircraft drill, and repairing bomb damage. Food and ammunition ran short. The last surface transport reached KISKA in about February, 1943. Supply by submarine was attempted, but was not adequate. The only supplies run in from ATTU were small quantities of anti-aircraft ammunition, this by submarine; no other craft attempted this hazardous run.

During the winter the garrison started building an air strip, mostly by hand. There was much blasting to be done, and this was occasionally assisted by American bombs. The strip was originally planned to be 1000 meters long, but this had to be reduced to 800 meters. The air strip was intended for the use of land based fighters.

#### The Evacuation of KISKA

Beginning early in May some personnel were removed from KISKA. About forty men, mostly hospital cases, were taken off in each submarine. Due to U.S. bombing it took about three days to load each submarine. Possibly a total of about 700 men were taken off this way. This operation was finally stopped due to the lengthy process.

Total evacuation was eventually accomplished in one surface ship operation. On 28 July 1943, two cruisers, the KISO and ABUKUMA, and eight destroyers entered the harbor in the fog. The sighting of LITTLE KISKA HEAD, which was mistaken for an American ship in the fog, caused the launching of two torpedoes by one of the destroyers. One torpedo struck the Head while the other missed and ran on into the Harbor where it struck the cliff east of the Submarine Base. Both torpedoes detonated, which led the garrison to believe that they were being bombed. One hour elapsed between the entry and the departure of the evacuation force. All personnel of both Army and Navy were waiting on the two beaches in KISKA HARBOR. All landing boats which remained with the garrison, plus those which the destroyers brought, were used to bring personnel out to the ships. Approximately 3100 Navy and 3000 Army were evacuated, using eighteen landing boats. Commander MUKAI was the last to leave the beach and boarded the closest destroyer - Commander YOSHIDA's ship, the name of which he could not remember. When the landing boats had completed their service they were sunk. Timed explosives were left to destroy shore installations, eight to twelve hours after the evacuation. The guns were immobilized by the removal and destruction of important parts.

### KURILE Operations

The evacuation force went to SHINUSHU-PARAMUSHIRU, arriving 1 August 1943. Commander MUKAI landed with the entire Navy party at KATUOKA, while the Army troops landed at the well-developed harbor and airfield at KISHIMABARA. With about 2400 Navy personnel Commander MUKAI worked on building an airstrip and gun emplacements. SHINUSHU was attacked on about 14 August 1943 by six B-24's which bombed from very high altitude on a track from northeast to southwest. Their bombs caused no damage. These were followed by B-25's, coming from north to south. These severely damaged one transport and burned 500 drums of heavy oil on SHINUSHU. One B-25 was shot down by ship's anti-aircraft fire. No more B-25's came for a long time, but B-24's continued. Winter came. Some casualties occurred to personnel building the air strip. B-34's (PV's) came sporadically on nuisance raids, but caused very little damage. He left KATAOKA the end of February, 1944, and went to MUSASHI on the south end of PARAMUSHIRO. He returned to SASEBO in April of 1945.

### Japanese Losses at KISKA

Commander MUKAI could remember the following losses in ships at KISKA:

- KANO MARU - torpedoed by submarine outside and beached just east of Submarine Base, 12 July 1942.
- NOJIMA MARU - damaged by bombs in two different attacks, 25 August and 3 September, 1942, and beached near TROUT LAGOON in the Harbor.
- 1 Army Transport - damaged by bombing in December, 1942, and beached just east of the Main Camp.
- 2 SC's - were torpedoed by submarine and sunk about five miles north of KISKA HARBOR end of July, 1942.
- 1 DD - sunk by bombing four miles northeast of KISKA VOLCANO, 11 February 1943, by persistent attacks by B-25's and B-26's as the DD was attempting to run up the west coast of KISKA and north around into the Harbor.
- 1 Army Transport - crashed by a B-26, November, 1942, burned and beached at GERTRUDE COVE.

He estimated Navy shore personnel losses to be about 200 killed and 600 or more wounded. Army losses were unknown to him, but he estimated that they were as many or more than those of the Navy.

Commander MUKAI stated that there were no more U.S. prisoners-of-war taken after the original round-up of weather personnel. However, he said the body of a man from a B-24 fell on NORTH HEAD during the winter. It was buried near the 12cm HA guns there. One P-40 was shot down, April, 1943, near SALMON LAGOON, and the pilot's body was buried there.