

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



INTERROGATION NO.: 365  
(Japanese Intell. No.23)

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 16 Nov.1945

Division of Origin: Japanese Intelligence Section, G-2,  
USSBS.

Subject: Briefing and Interrogation of Navy Pilots and  
Photographic Reconnaissance.

Person interrogated and background:

YAMAGUCHI, Moriyoshi, Commander, IJN

1926 - Graduated from the Naval Academy.

1938-1940 - Attended Naval War College.

1940-1941(June) - Hikotaicho of Yokohama Air Group.

1941(June) - Became Staff Air Officer for 4th Fleet.  
(Vice Admiral INOUE)

1942(August) - Became training officer in tactics and  
recognition at the Kasumigaura Air Group.

1943(June) - Went to the 202 Air Group in the Celebes as  
air officer and executive officer.

1944(March) - Joined 61st Air Group and then became  
Senior Staff Officer of 1st Air Fleet.

1944(Aug.) - Went to 2nd Air Fleet under Command of  
Vice Admiral FUKUDOME.

1945(Jan) - Returned to Homeland and became Chief of  
General Affairs Section of the First Air  
Technical Research Arsenal under Vice  
Admiral TADA.

Where interviewed: Meiji Building.

Interrogators: Lt. Comdr. William H. Botzer USNR  
Lt. Comdr. F. Shackelford, USNR

Interpreter: Lt. Otis Cary, USNR

Allied Officers present: None.

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Transcript of Interrogation (YAMAGUCHI, M. Commander IJN)

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SUMMARY:

Commander YAMAGUCHI has 3000 hours of flying time and did his last combat flying at HANGKOW before he went to the Naval War College in 1938. While he has not served on a carrier, he has aided in training carrier pilots, and has had considerable experience with shore-based groups.

Both briefing and interrogation of pilots were the responsibility of the air officer who was assisted by two or three regular flying officers. These assistants (HIKOSHI) without special training, gathered together for the air officer all pertinent information concerning the mission. Sometimes reserve officers trained as "YOMUSHI" did the same thing. While the "HIKOSHI" worked with the Air Group (KOKUTAI) where two or three "HIKOSHI" also compiled data on weather, communications, and target information before a mission. Following a raid, the flight leader, with the pilots in the flight present, reported to the air officer in the operations room and answered any questions. A pilot who disagreed on any of the points would speak up. Later a written report on a standard form was submitted by the strike leader; a copy of which went into the ship's log.

During 20 days of a 10-month training course, pilots would devote half the day to recognition training based on publications and movies (poor). This, in the case of a carrier would be supplemented by 15 to 20 days of training at sea, depending on the program and will of the air officer. Some attention was given to fields of fire and the safest approaches for attacks, such training being based on information from the 3rd Dept., the Air Technical Research Arsenal and The Tactical Board.

Photographic pilots, with 30 hours of special training, were often organized into units of 8 planes (Myrts) toward the end of the War) which would be assigned to three different carriers. These 8 plane units would generally have one "HIKOSHI" trained as a photographic interpreter.

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Transcript of Interrogation: (YAMAGUCHI, M. Commander, IJN)  
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Q. 1. What was the last active flying you did?

A. HANGKOW before I went to the Naval War College in 1938.

Q. 2. Are you familiar with carrier operations?

A. Yes, but I have never had carrier duty. I have trained carrier pilots.

Q. 3. What provision was made for briefing pilots before they took off on a combat mission?

A. An officer (HIKOSHI) under the air officer was responsible for getting together information for the air officer to give the pilots. He collected communications, weather, codes, etc.

Q. 4. Was the HIKOSHI attached to the ship or the flying unit?

A. He is a member of the flying group but since the group always goes on a particular ship he is also in substance a ship's air officer.

Q. 5. Was the training program designed so that a particular group (KOKUTAI) would stay with a particular ship?

A. Yes, and the commander of the Group would become the ship's air officer.

Q. 6. How many HIKOSHI would be with group?

A. Two or three. In addition each squadron (HIKOTAI) has 2 or 3 who collect information for the HIKOTAI commanding officer.

Q. 7. What are "YOMUSHI"?

A. Sometimes they doubled up and served as HIKOSHI. They are reserves and the HIKOSHI are regulars.

Q. 8. What is the basis for selecting HIKOSHI?

A. At the outset of the war no particular qualifications were required of the HIKOSHI. The intelligence organization as compared to your fine one was very poor. During the war there was some little improvement.

Q. 9. How long have you had the HIKOSHI?

A. We've had them a long time. Originally they helped the air officer on the flight deck.

Q. 10. Are the HIKOSHI fliers?

A. Yes, but while serving as HIKOSHI they seldom fly missions.

Q. 11. What is their rank?

A. Usually Lieut. (j.g.) or full Lieutenants.

Q. 12. Have they had any special training in intelligence?

A. No, that is a bad point about the Japanese Navy.

Q. 13. To whom are the pilots responsible after takeoff?

A. To the Flag alone, not the Captain of the ship.

Q. 14. How many hours do you have?

A. 3,000 including time in flying boats and Frances twin-engine reconnaissance planes.

Q. 15. Did the Navy have the same organization of HIKOSHI in their shore-based Groups?

A. Yes.

Q. 16. When they return to the ship, to whom do they report?

A. The Air Officer is responsible for the interrogation. The HIKOSHI assist but the Air Officer conducts it.

Q. 17. When a pilot lands, what does he first do?

A. He goes to the operations room, which is a big room, and is "interrogated" by the Air Officer. The flight leader, in the presence of the pilots on the flight, reports to the air officer and answers any questions. If one of the pilots on the flight disagrees, he would state his views.

Q. 18. Is a written report submitted?

A. Yes, by the flight leader on a standard form.

Q. 19. Were any such reports in the material found at KOFU?

A. I think not.

Q. 20. How many copies are submitted?

A. It varies.

Q. 21. Does a copy of the report go into the ship's log?

A. Yes.

Q. 22. Would we find such a report by examining a carrier's log?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. 23. Were your pilots trained in recognizing and identifying Allied ships and planes?

A. Yes.

Q. 24. About how much time was assigned for this training?

A. For about 20 days they devoted half of their time to recognition. These 20 days were a part of a 10 months training course for pilots. I was one of the instructors.

Q. 25. What aids were employed in recognition training?

A. Movies and recognition manuals. The movies were poor.

Transcript of Interrogation: (YAMACHUCHI, M. Commander IJN)

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Q. 26. Was your information fairly well up to date?

A. Compared to your data on our planes, it was laughable.

Q. 27. Did you show fields of fire and illustrate the safest approach for attacks?

A. For your single and twin engine planes, we would simulate your planes by using ours and have our pilots practice dummy runs against them. We knew the location of your guns and taught this information.

Q. 28. How did you get this information?

A. From the 3rd Dept. and our Tactical Board.

Q. 29. What training in recognition was continued after flight training? In a carrier at sea, for example?

A. The air officer was responsible for making out a program and employing it. Standard publications on recognition and the latest data from the General Staff were available on carriers. Pilots received 15 to 20 additional hours of recognition training after becoming carrier based.

Q. 30. What publications were there?

A. Three volumes prepared at YOKSUKA and published by KOKUHOMBU.

Q. 31. We would like copies.

A. I will try to get a set for you.

Q. 32. Was there a system of keeping the books up to date?

A. Yes, supplementary information would be supplied.

Q. 33. Tell us about your photographic intelligence.

A. It was poor but we did our best.

Q. 34. Did you have specially equipped photographic planes?

A. Yes, SAIUN (MYRT) was such a plane. It had both fixed and portable cameras. SAIUN (MYRT) usually flew on photo missions at about 30,000 feet. Your radar made our missions difficult.

Q. 35. What did you think was the best Allied fighter?

A. P-38's and F6F's.

Q. 36. Was any instruction given to carrier pilots regarding what to do if forced down at sea?

A. No. They had rubber boats, but couldn't get them out if the plane sank fast. We would search for them by plane and possibly direct ships to them if they gave us their location before going down.

Transcript of Interrogation(YAMACHUCHI, M. Commander, IJN)

Q. 37. What photographic planes were based on carriers?

A. SAIUN.

Q. 38. Were photographic squadrons based on carriers?

A. Not squadrons, but 8 photographic planes would be divided among 3 carriers.

Q. 39. Were the photographic pilots specifically trained?

A. Yes. They were trained both ashore and after becoming carrier based.

Q. 40. How many hours of training would these pilots have?

A. Thirty.

Q. 41. Were there any specially trained interpreters with the photographic units or on the ship?

A. One HIKOSHI attached to the unit would be trained in photographic interpretation.

Q. 42. How did you get your technical information on our planes?

A. Air Technical Research Arsenal personnel would supply data and in addition we would secure information from your magazines.

Q. 43. How many personnel worked on technical analysis of Allied equipment?

A. Ten officers and ten civilians.

Q. 44. How many enlisted personnel?

A. 150.

Q. 45. How many planes were in your basic fighter section?

A. Two units of 2 planes each. It was not too effective because of our poor pilots and equipment.

Q. 46. Toward the end of the War what qualities were you planning to emphasize in your future planes?

A. There was no such program. KAMIKAZE attacks were the only things left.