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

INTERROGATION NO: 418

PLACE: Tokyo  
DATE: 19 & 22 Nov 45

Division of Origin: Military Analysis Division, Ground Branch

Subject: Philippine Campaign in 1944

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Maj Gen NISHIMURA, Toshio, one of three assistants to General YAMASHITA's Chief of Staff during Philippine Campaign in 1944. He served in this capacity from 5 October '44 to 31 December '44. Prior to this period was a staff officer in Kwantung Army. Very well informed on details of Philippine Campaign in 1944.

Where interviewed: Meiji Building.

Interrogator: Col J. F. Rodenhausen

Interpreter: Lt Comdr W. Nichols (Part time)  
Capt Paul W. Aurell (Part time)  
Lt (jg) Robert W. Newell (Part time)

Other Allied Officers present:

Col P. Cole (Part time)	Lt Weise (Part time)
Lt Col Wolfe (Part time)	Lt Pinkstaff (Part time)
Capt D. Parkes (Part time)	Lt Comdr G. Waldo (Part time)

SUMMARY

As special assistant to General YAMASHITA it was NISHIMURA's job to maintain liaison with the operations, intelligence and supply personnel of the staff in order to know intimately the details and problems.

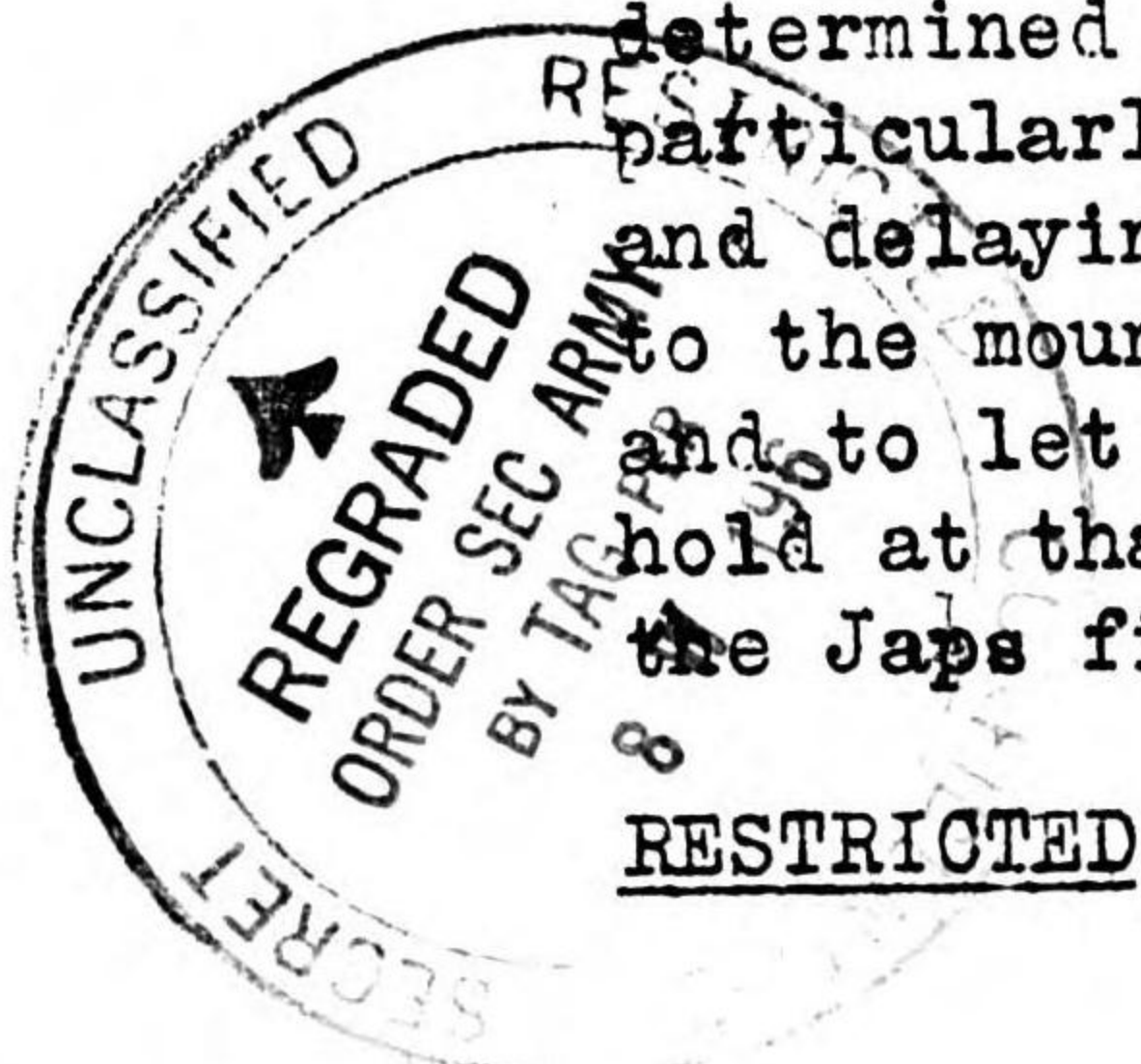
Strength (300,000) and disposition of forces in the Philippines at the time of the Leyte landing was obtained from NISHIMURA. Also the disposition for the later defense of Luzon. Locations of various supply installation and dumps of the Japanese ground army in the islands were obtained.

Since Manila was a main supply point for the southern area as well as the Philippines, it was well stocked with supplies adequate for the forces in the Philippines. Just before the Leyte invasion there were no important shortages. However, since there was only one division (16th) on Leyte to oppose U.S. landings, it was necessary to send additional troops and supplies to that point. Great efforts were made to send men and supplies to Leyte, but most of the vessels were sunk by air action. The troops reached shore by swimming, but all the equipment was lost in the sea. Tacloban had been set up as the headquarters and main supply base for Leyte, but when our Navy opened up with heavy bombardment and our air forces heavily bombed this area, the Japanese troops became panicky and fled from Tacloban into the hills to fight. Thus much of the supply on Leyte was lost to the Japanese from the beginning. U.S. landings at Ormoc Bay sealed the fate of Leyte and eventually of the whole Philippine stronghold.

By the time the Luzon defense opened so much equipment had been lost in the determined effort to supply Leyte that there were great shortages on Luzon - particularly in ammunition of all kinds. To conduct a successful defense and delaying action on Luzon it was decided to withdraw from the Manila area to the mountains to the north near Baguio, the hills to the east of Manila, and to let the Air and Naval personnel (20000) in the area of Clark Field hold at that point. This movement was begun approximately 10 December 44; the Japs figured they would have about fifty days in which to accomplish the

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movement of both troops and supplies out of Manila. Our invasion of Luzon was not expected until the end of January or the early part of February. To move supplies from the depots in Manila there were only 300 tons per day of rail transport and 200 tons per day of motor transport available. Thus in fifty days only 25,000 tons could have been moved; this represented about one-fourth of the total supplies in Manila. Due to our early invasion only about 10,000 tons were actually moved. To add to this situation the reinforcements coming from the north (Manchuria) were attacked by our air forces with large loss of shipping. The troops managed to swim ashore, but again all equipment was lost in the sea. The supply situation became very critical. The one tank division on Luzon had only enough gas for seven hours of operation. Bombing did not cause much loss of equipment in ground installations - about 5 to 10%. Strafing of railroads and truck transport caused great losses of equipment.

NISHIMURA stated that Japanese army officers did not like to study logistics, since they were more interested in fighting. For that reason the top planning from the beginning of the war was faulty and accounted for much of their difficulties and shortages. From the beginning of the war he felt that Japan would gain initial successes but would eventually lose to its larger more powerful opponent.

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I N T E R R O G A T I O N

- Q. What was your official position on General YAMASHITA's staff?
- A. I was a sort of special aide, being one of three assistants to Lt Gen MUTO, Chief of Staff. The staff was divided into three main branches; Operations, Intelligence, and Supply. I represented the Chief of Staff on various occasion and maintained liaison with these branches of the staff. It was my duty to be fully familiar with the general set up at all times.
- Q. Since you were an air officer basicly, did you deal more with this phase than with the other phases?
- A. Although I was in the air forces before, I dealt only with the Fourth Air Army under General TOMINAGA in a liaison capacity. General YAMASHITA had no air force under his direct command.
- Q. Who were some of the other staff officers who served with you in the Philippines - Ordnance, Intendance, Medical?
- A. Maj Gen YAMAMOTO was the second Ordnance officer, the first one being wounded on Leyte - I do not recall his name. Intendance was General Kira, and the Chief Medical Officer was Gen ISAI.
- Q. What was the strength and disposition of the Japanese forces in the Philippines just before the opening of the Leyte operation?
- A. (NISHIMURA produced a hand sketch depicting the dispositions) The 16th Division was on Leyte. The 101st (we think the 100th) and 30th were on Mindanao. There were two Independent Brigades of about three to five thousand men each - one on Zamboanga and the other on Jolo. There was also a Brigade at Cebu and a reinforced Brigade at Bacolod. All of these forces were under the command of General SUZUKI, commander of the 35th Army. In the north on Luzon, the 105th Division was on southern tip of Luzon; the 8th was at Batangas; the 26th at Manila; the 41st Independent Mixed Brigade at Lingayen; the 103rd at Aparri. The 2nd Tank Division was stationed north of Manila. Another Army was to have been formed in the north, but while YAMASHITA formed the army he retained direct command over it and all forces on Luzon. The plan called for five divisions to come from the north (China, Korea and Manchuria). The 1st and 23rd Divisions were to come from Manchuria, along with the 60th Brigade. The 10th and 19th Divisions were to come from Formosa (the 10th having been in China).
- Q. What was the total strength of this force in the Philippines?
- A. Altogether the numerical strength in the Philippines was about 300,000 men, including air forces and construction units. This is the strength, at any rate, that the defense of the islands called for.
- Q. What was your supply position, your level of supplies, just before the Leyte landing?
- A. At the beginning, in October 1944, we had sufficient supplies on Luzon. There were not shortages of anything. We also received additional from Japan. Manila was the Head Depot not only for the Philippines but also for other places in the South such as Borneo and Singapore; so it was always well stocked with supplies.
- Q. There were no shortages of specific items, such as, ammunition of all kinds, tanks, weapons, clothing, food, etc.?
- A. There were no shortages on Luzon; we had plenty of supplies.

- Q. Will you show me the disposition of your various supply installations in the islands?
- A. (General NISHIMURA produced another hand sketch which showed the location of supply dumps and depots). Since Manila was the Main Supply Depot for the entire southern area, it was by far the most important. Blue dots on the chart indicate various branch supply dumps. These dumps contained enough food and clothing to last the organizations they served from one to two months. We always tried to keep at least two months supply of rice on hand.
- Q. What about ammunition and weapons?
- A. There was enough material of this kind at these supply dumps for from one to two weeks of combat. The plan called for each unit to have one of these supply dumps in the region under its control, but this plan was never realized because of our losses of equipment in ship sinkings in the Leyte operation. Each of these was to be located near the various points where we expected the American landings. In each of them there was to be from one to two months supply of food and about enough ammunition for two weeks of hard fighting.
- Q. For such an area of islands wasn't the number of troops rather small?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Why?
- A. I don't know. I arrived on the scene the early part of October after the plan had been drafted. Although the number may appear to be small, this is because the forces were so dispersed. When shown the plan, YAMASHITA estimated that he would need to have 200,000 tons of shipping to move our forces already in the Philippines to meet the enemy landings. Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo allotted him only 25 vessels of more than 3,000 tons, quite a bit less than he needed. If we had had the shipping to move our forces the vital points could have been defended much better.
- Q. Where did these ships come from?
- A. They were allocated by the authorities in Tokyo and came from various places, even as far away as Singapore. They all came to Manila. From there we sent them in twos or threes to Ormoc. They arrived in Manila over a forty-day period from 20 October to 30 November.
- Q. How many of these ships eventually got through?
- A. Only six. Nineteen were sunk enroute. Of the twenty-five, I do know that six of the ships were carrying ammunition and the others were carrying troops and foodstuffs. However, I don't know how many of the ammunition ships were sunk on the way. Although the 16th Division on Leyte was pretty well supplied with food and ammunition, it had to share it with the troops who survived the various sinkings by swimming ashore. This created a shortage on Leyte and we attempted several plans to alleviate these shortages. First we shipped goods by rail down the Legaspi Peninsula then by ship across to Leyte. The railroad was frequently bombed and the guerrillas greatly interfered with the movement of trains. We tried to send truck convoys along with the rail shipments, but they were often captured by natives. The second plan was the transporting of supplies to Batangas\* and then sending them on to Leyte by means of small boats in a series of shuttle hops at night. We planned to establish about ten bases along this route and sent 25 to thirty men to each place to set them up. However, the natives learned of our intention and killed all of the personnel at these spots. We did succeed in getting a few small boats to Leyte by having them

travel only at night and hide during the daytime, following indirect routes. The third plan was to send things to Leyte by air. This plan was concerned only with medical supplies.

Q. What was your situation on Leyte during the operations?

A. The 16th Division had its headquarters and most of its supplies at Tacloban. There was high ground behind the city providing protection from that quarter. The plan was to have three lines of defense against sea landings. The first line of defense was right along the coast; the second line of defense was further inland; and the third line was roughly the locations along which the Japanese forces eventually withdrew to in northwestern Leyte. We did not think that the U.S. Forces would land very close to Tacloban and felt it was a rather secure base. We were fairly well prepared for aerial bombardments, but had no idea of the power of the American Navy's naval barrage. The ferocity of the shelling caused our troops to panic and withdraw from the line along the coast. On top of that, the American forces landed very close to Tacloban, further disrupting our plans. This resulted in the 16th Division withdrawing to the third line of defense in the hills west of Tacloban. In the process we were able to get none of the stores from Tacloban, and the troops threw away much of their equipment in their withdrawal. Actually, the planning in this campaign was very bad. To make matters worse, the Americans landed in northern Leyte Islands. If we had had only four or five field guns at the entrance to this channel, we could have prevented this maneuver, but as it was we had not one single gun there. This had the effect of cutting our shortest supply line from Kaligala Gulf in northern Leyte. This meant that we had to land supplies at Ormoc and transfer them to the third line of defense in the mountains. There was only one very poor road between Ormoc and these operations, and it traversed some very rough country requiring the best type of transport. The American landings on Samar, where we had just a few groups of from 50 to 60 men each, dashed our hopes of supplying Leyte from Legaspi. The final blow, which effectively strangled the ill-supplied troops in northern Leyte, was the American landing at Ormoc; although we did get ample supplies to Ormoc by means of the six large vessels that did get through, plus about 100 small boats and luggers, the problem of getting these supplies to the forces was never solved. As I said before, there was only one poor road, and it was a very, very bad one. The weather was terrible, and daily attacks by enemy aircraft succeeded in inflicting heavy losses along this road on our overland transport. Of the trucks wrecked along this road, 90% were destroyed by air action and 10% by native guerrillas.

Q. As a result of the Leyte operation you must have lost great quantities of the equipment you had for the Philippines as a whole. How did this affect your supply position for the Luzon operation?

A. Our loss of supply and troop transports in the Leyte operations was very great. We lost 19 of the 25 transports. On these ships we lost our very best equipment. When a troop transport was sunk, the men could usually swim ashore, but they did not bring their equipment with them; so all we got were more men. For instance, on October 20, we had only 30 field guns of 7 cms or above, by 30 November we had only 6 remaining. We estimated your army had 300 such field guns by 30 November, on Leyte. Also by the end of December 1944 we could no longer get supplies from Japan; so we knew we did not have enough supplies for the Luzon operations. We were very short of ammunition. We had sent so much fuel to Leyte that the one tank division on Luzon had only enough fuel for seven (7) hours of operation.

Q. Then your operations definitely suffered from this loss of supplies?

- A. Yes. As a result it was decided to make the withdrawal to the mountains north and east of Manila that I described before.
- Q. How much loss of supplies did you experience from bombing and strafing of supply installations on Luzon?
- A. Bombing did not cause much loss - only between 5 and 10%. However, sinking of our troop and equipment transports on their way in from Manchuria was heavy. We lost two-thirds of them. The troops would swim ashore, but they did not have their equipment. The 19th and 23rd Divisions, for instance, had no field pieces remaining when they landed.
- Q. Did you experience any difficulties with maintenance and repair of your equipment? Were you able to keep it in combat serviceable condition at all times?
- A. Manila had a heavy repair depot. There was no shortage of maintenance personnel or equipment. By the middle of December 1944 we had abandoned Manila and had gone to the mountains; so we could no longer service our equipment.
- Q. What about shortages of spare parts?
- A. We experienced a shortage of spare parts at all times, particularly for trucks, tanks, and like items, but no shortage of personnel.
- Q. From what you say, it looks as though Luzon was lost before the operation opened because of your supply losses in Leyte?
- A. Yes, our finest equipment was lost at Leyte; that cost us the Philippines.
- Q. Since this is true, and since Field Marshal Terauchi was so insistent on the defense of Leyte (as stated to Col Cole in his earlier interrogation of Nishimura) why wasn't Leyte better prepared to meet the threat of invasion?
- A. We had figured the various possibilities of your invasion as Zamboanga, Davao, Leyte, Santa Cruz and Aparri. It was very difficult to say just where you would invade; so we did the best we could. We figured Leyte was the most probable point and put our best troops, the 26th Division, on that island. In fact, when you invaded Leyte, one of our staff officers jumped up and exclaimed: "Good, they have picked the place where our finest troops are located." We had also depended on our Navy to assist in warding off invasion, but they failed us.
- Q. You were in the Kwantung Army at the time the war broke out. What was your reaction when you found out you were at war with the United States.
- A. I did not like it; I didn't think we were strong enough to be successful. I can best describe it by saying that when the message came to us in Manchuria, I showed it to my commanding general; he read it, put it down, sat down, asked to see it again, and then shook his head and said, "It is like two men wrestling. The smaller man may gain the initial advantages and success, but inevitably the larger stronger man will win out in the end."
- Q. Do you, as a staff officer, feel that the planning on logistics in the top command was very bad?
- A. In our army the officers do not like to study logistics -- it does not interest them -- they want to study only how to fight. Even in our military academy it is difficult to get the cadets to study logistics.
- Q. Do you personally think that Japan's top planners, your top command, underestimated the capabilities and resourcefulness - the recuperability of the United States after the initial blows were struck?

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A. Yes. I am sure they did not think you would defeat them at Port Moresby and land on Guadalcanal so soon. I have felt all along it was a mistake our going into the war with the United States.

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