

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



INTERROGATION NO. (USBS 295)
NAV NO. 66

Place: Tokyo
Date: 7 November 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: MIDWAY-EASTERN SOLOMONS-PHILIPPINES (Miscellaneous Notes)

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain TSUDA, Hiroaki, IJN. Captain TSUDA was the Chief Navigator of the HYUGA from September 1941 to February 1943. He was also Chief Navigator on the YAMATO from February 1943 to February 1945. He is now attached to the Hydrographic Office in TOKYO.

Captain INOUE, Isamu, IJN. Captain INOUE was a member of the Training Department of Air Headquarters from November 1939 to November 1941. He was flight Commanding Officer aboard the CHITOSE from November 1941 to September 1942; from September 1942 to March 1944 Captain INOUE was Staff Officer at the YOKOSUKA, Naval Base, he was also Commanding Officer of YOKOSUKA Air Group. He also served as Staff Officer of the 10th and 15th Air Group at KASUMINGURA, from May 1945 up to the present time.

Commander SHIBATA, Otokichi, IJN. Commander SHIBATA was Staff Officer of the South West Area Fleet from August 1942 to June 1943. He was attached to the Navy Department from September 1943 to July 1944; he was Staff Officer of the 8th Escort Convoy in MOJI from August 1944 to September 1944. Commander SHIBATA is a Staff Officer of the Headquarters of Shipping.

Lieutenant Commander NISHIKAWA, IJN. Gunnery Officer on MOGAMI (CA) at MIDWAY.

Where interviewed: Room 528, MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Captain C. Shands, USN.

Interpreter: Lt. (jg) R.P. Brown, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None

SUMMARY

This interrogation consists of miscellaneous notes pertaining to the Battle of MIDWAY, Eastern SOLOMONS and the PHILIPPINES. Its purpose is to supplement other interrogations on these battles.

TRANSCRIPT

Transcript of Interrogation (Captain TSUDA, Captain INOUE, Commander SHIBATA and Lieutenant Commander.)

Captain TSUDA, Hiroaki, IJN

Q. What ships were in your formation?

A. We were a supporting group for the KISA-ADAK force. We broke off from the main body about 1 June and took up a position in the vicinity of 40 to 44N, 171E where we were to intercept any American forces passing through that vicinity to attack either the KISKA or MIDWAY forces. Our forces included:
2nd (battleship) Squadron-ISE, HYUGA, YAMASHIRO. Vice Admiral TOKASU, S.
9th (cruiser) Squadron-KITAGAMI, OI.
3rd (destroyer) Squadron-SENDAI and 12 DDs.
(CVL) ZUIHO and 1 DD.
No. 2 Supply Group: SACREMENTO-MARU
TORA-MARU
1 DD

Q. Were you ever attacked by aircraft?

A. No. We received a signal on 5 June (zone-9) to go south to MIDWAY to reinforce the carriers with the main body. We expected attack at that time but none was received. After joining the main body we returned to JAPAN instead of continuing to MIDWAY.

Q. What effect did the Battle of MIDWAY have upon your future plans?

A. The Battle of MIDWAY was the beginning of the Japanese failure in the war. I do not mean that this was the decisive battle of the war, but the loss of our carriers and some of our best pilots and officers affected us through-out the war. It called for the re-organization of the carrier divisions and the Naval air force in general. Due to the loss of ships we were unable to meet the Americans in force in the SOLOMONS. A big problem was the replenishment of planes and pilots. Our training organization was unable to keep up with the losses.

Q. Were you on board the YAMATO (BB) when it was sunk?

A. No, I had left it a month before.

Q. Did the damage received from air attack on 24 October 1944 effect the navigation or fighting ability of the YAMATO?

A. No, it caused only about one-half knot loss in speed. No damage was done to the turret. One hit was on the port side of the bow, the other amidships on the bow.

Q. During the battle east of SAMAR on 25 October, did it receive any hits?

A. One or two 15cm shell hits in the stern from cruisers. No effect on the ability of the ship. There were no hits on any ship during the battle by destroyer torpedoes.

Q. What caused the damage to the CHOKAI and CHIKUMA?

A. Aircraft attack. On the 26th, YAMATO received two more hits from dive bombers and also minor damage from the B-24 attack. The bombs from the B-24s did not hit but some landed very near to the bridge on the starboard side. The fragments did a little damage to the bridge, killed about 12 men and wounded about 60, including Admiral KOYANAGI. The bombs that landed on the port side were a little farther away so caused no damage.

Q. What was your estimate of the speed of the United States carriers?

A. When they were sighted after we came through SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT, we thought that they were making about 20 knots.

RESTRICTED

Transcript of Interrogation (Captain TSUDA, Captain INOUE, Commander SHIBATA and Lieutenant Commander NISHIKAWA) - - - - -

Later on they increased to 30 knots. Another group was estimated at 30 knots as they pulled away.

- Q. What action did the Japanese force take after breaking off the battle at 0930 until 1300?
- A. From 0930 until 1300 we pursued the carriers into the smoke screen in an attempt to continue the attack, but by 1300 had lost contact. Since we were low on fuel we turned north in the hopes of finding the other group.
- Q. Did the lack of fuel effect your decision to enter LEYTE Gulf?
- A. The chief reason for not entering the Gulf was the delay resulting both from heavy air attacks on the day before and from the engagement with your carrier force. The lack of fuel was incidental. The principal reason was the delay.

Captain INOUE, Isamu, IJN

- Q. What was the mission of the CHITOSE at MIDWAY?
- A. We were part of the 11th Flying Squadron which was going to set up a seaplane base at KURE Island or EASTERN Island. The KAMIKAWA MARU and the tanker NICHIEI MARU were also with us. We were stationed about 6,000 meters astern of the main transport group. We were with the convoy when it left SAIPAN.
- Q. Were you attacked during the MIDWAY Battle?
- A. No. The main body of transports ahead of us were attacked once by horizontal-bombers during the day of 3 June (zone-12) and again by torpedo planes during the night of 3-4 June. The only damage reported was during the night attack. We approached to within about 400 miles of MIDWAY then reversed course, joining the main body later.
- Q. Was the CHITOSE present in any other battle?
- A. While I was on it, it was present in the Battle of the EASTERN SOLOMONS, 23-25 August 1942. We were attacked by two dive bombers just before sunset the 24th, I think. There were two near misses, one on the port side astern and one off the starboard bow. The fragment hit the ship but there were no casualties or damage. The two destroyers with us were not attacked.

Commander SHIBATA, Otokichi, IJN

- Q. What was your mission at MIDWAY?
- A. CruDiv 7 was an indirect escort for the transports in a position on the flank during the first few days out of GUAM. Later took up a position between 75 to 100 miles ahead of the transports during the approach to MIDWAY. In the transport group there were about 15-16 vessels. Six or eight were special navy transports, other Army and supply vessels. The CHITOSE (CVS) was also with this group.
- Q. Were you ever attacked during your approach?
- A. CruDiv 7 was not attacked until the retirement. We received a message that the transports had been attacked, 3 June. I do not know the circumstances.
- Q. What were your orders following the aircraft carrier battle on 4 June?
- A. We were proceeding to MIDWAY to attack. During the night a submarine contact was received. We turned away but the MOGAMI collided with the MIKUMA. The bow of the MOGAMI was badly damaged. The collision occurred at about 28N, 179W.

Transcript of Interrogation (Captain TSUDA, Captain INOUE, Commander SHIBATA and Lieutenant Commander NISHIKAWA, IJN) -----

Q. When did you receive your first air attack?

A. The KUMANO and SUZUYA were never attacked. We were a few miles ahead of the MOGAMI and MIKUMA which were attacked in the early morning of 5 June by both horizontal- and dive-bombers. The ships were not hit by bombs at that time. One plane which was hit just astern of the MIKUMA dove into the deck striking the rear turret.

Q. Did that plane sink the MIKUMA?

A. No, it started fires and reduced its speed a little. It was later sunk by other dive-bombers. Since the MIKUMA and MOGAMI could only make about 15 knots, the KUMANO and SUZUYA increased speed to about 26 knots and rejoined the main body.

Q. What was your position in relation to the MOGAMI and MIKUMA when the MIKUMA sank?

A. We were about 50 miles ahead. The MOGAMI and MIKUMA were attacked two or three times by dive-bombers. No torpedo planes or horizontal-bombers attacked that day. Both cruisers and the two destroyers were also hit. The MOGAMI was hit four or five times by bombs. I think that the MIKUMA was hit about ten times in all. One destroyer was hit in the stern early in the battle. Not much damage except from fire. The other destroyer was also hit in the stern. We received a message saying that about half of the survivors from the MIKUMA were killed when the second destroyer was hit.

Q. Where did you go after the MIKUMA was sunk?

A. We continued northwest joining the main body about 0600, 7 June (zone-9). We retired to the west, then CruDiv 4 (ATAGO, CHOKAI) and CruDiv 7, (KUMANO, ZUZUYA) broke off from the main body and went south. That was about 0900, 7 June (zone-9). We rendezvoused with the MOGAMI and two destroyers at 0600, 8 June. We went direct to TRUK. Later the MOGAMI returned to JAPAN.

Q. During the period of retirement were you attacked by aircraft?

A. No we were never attacked, although we worried about it while we were refueling.

Lieutenant Commander NISHIKAWA, IJN

Q. Give a description of the MOGAMI-MIKUMA collision and the damage received by the MOGAMI at MIDWAY.

A. Cruiser Division 7 (CA), composed of KUMANO, SUSUYA, MIKUMA and MOGAMI, Rear Admiral KURITA, OTC, were an indirect escort for the transports of the Occupation Force. The night following the carrier battle the heavy cruisers were proceeding towards MIDWAY to carry out attack. A submarine contact was reported on our starboard bow. An emergency turn left was executed by all ships but the MOGAMI. It collided with the port quarter of the MIKUMA. The bow of the MOGAMI was badly damaged, principally above the water line. The MIKUMA only suffered minor damage above the water line. At 0300, 5 June 9. (zone-9) we were ordered to retire. About two hours later we were attacked by both horizontal-bombers and a few dive-bombers. No bomb hits were made by either attack but one plane dove into the deck of the MIKUMA inflicting some damage.

Due to the damage to the MOGAMI and MIKUMA, the other two cruisers increased speed and turned to the northwest to join the main body. The MIKUMA and MOGAMI retired to the west. The next day we were attacked by about 40 SBDs. The MOGAMI received 4 bomb hits killing about 100 men, but it was able to navigate and later joined the remainder of the division. The MIKUMA was sunk. No horizontal-bombing attacks were received except the first day attack.