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HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO #234
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RESTRICTED



INTERROGATION NO: 312

Place: Chofu, Yamaguchi Ken
Date: 4 November 1945

Division of Origin; Military Analysis Division.

SUBJECT: JAAF Fifth Air Army

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND OF EACH:

1. Lt Gen NAKANISHI Ryosuke -- student of English; University of Vermont 1928; Asst. Military attache, Washington, 1928-31; served as Infantry Officer 10 years; student, HOKODA flying school 1941-42 but NOT a pilot; CG 4th Air Brigade, Burma, June 42-Jan 44; At Army Air Testing Dept, Tachikawa, Jan-Aug 44; C of S, Fifth Air Army, China, Aug 44-May 45; unit moved to Korea, May 45, where it remained at end of war. Subject insisted interrogation be conducted in English which he speaks quite well.

2. Maj TAKAHASHI Masaji -- Fifth Air Army staff officer 1944-45; squadron commander of 60th Flying Regt in Southern Area 1942-3.

Where Interviewed: Hq 1st Bn, 128th Inf Ret, Chofu.

Interrogators: Capt Chalmers M ROBERTS, AC
Sqdn Ldr Edward W BLOXHAM (RAF), MI

Interpreter: Capt Dow PARKES, MI

Allied Officers Present: 1st Lt Donald MEIKLEJOHN, MI

SUMMARY:

JAAF activities in Burma, China and Korea, with details of operational instructions; JAAF gasoline shortage and use of alcohol; intelligence net in China; suicide planes and training of suicide pilots; campaign against USSR in Korea.

- Q. When you went to China, was only the 5th Air Army there?
- A. Yes, but the 13 Flying Division later was added to that.
- Q. What Flying Brigades (FBs) were there?
- A. 1, 2, 5 and 8 FBs; the 8th came from Manchuria, I think.
- Q. How many planes did you have in 5 FA when you went to China?
- A. About 300 in all; by the end of the war, 500.
- Q. How many of your planes in August 1944 were trainers?
- A. 50%.
- Q. How many planes were in the 5 FA when you moved to Korea?
- A. 250 combat planes and 250 trainers; we took to Korea 200 trainers and 100 others (10 recco, 30-40 fighters and 50-60 bombers). The rest were left in China with the 13 FD.
- Q. Did you still control 13 FD?
- A. No, the China Expeditionary Army controlled it.
- Q. The 5 FA was separated from CEA control?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Who ordered the move to Korea?
- A. Dai Honei (Imperial GHQ) through Air General Army (Koku Sogun). At the same time Dai Honei addressed the same order to the CEA providing for release of 5 FA.
- Q. What was your mission in Korea?
- A. To join in the defense of Kyushu and south Korea.
- Q. Who was to defend North Korea?
- A. After the Russians attacked we were ordered to do that; before the Russian attack no air defense was provided against the north. (The general here noted that in Manchuria practically the only Japanese aircraft were trainers)
- Q. Where was your HQ?
- A. At Keijo under the Korean Army.
- Q. Did you carry out attacks against Okinawa?
- A. The 8 FB, which went ahead to Korea, did carry out 7 or 8 attacks using 2 or 3 light bombers each time.
- Q. Which Flying Regts were used?
- A. 16 FR and 90 FR.
- Q. When the 5 FA was in China was it under the China Expeditionary Army?
- A. Yes, directly.
- Q. Was 2 FA under the Kwantung Army in Manchuria?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What difference in this command set-up was made when Air General Army was formed?
- A. When we moved to Korea, we came under the command of Air General Army.
- Q. You were not under 6 FA?
- A. No; 1 FA, 5 FA and 6 FA were all directly under Air General Army.
- Q. Was none of them under a ground army?
- A. None
- Q. What was your mission in China?
- A. 5 FA was committed to the defense of all China with emphasis at first on Canton and later on Shanghai and Tsingtao; at first we expected landings in south China and later expected them in north China. In the second place our mission was to protect shipping from the southern area to Japan and also along the Yangtze river between Hankow and Shanghai; thirdly, our mission was to protect Nanking and Hankow against the 14th and 20th Air Forces.

- Q. Did you have any offensive missions?
A. By Aug 44 we were so weak that we could not carry out offensive missions. At any given time we had only 5 or 6 operational fighters.
- Q. Did you provide any support to the ground operations attempting to link central China with the Canton area and with French Indo-China?
A. In those operations we did use between 5 and 8 recco planes; no other planes were used.
- Q. Why didn't you attack Allied transport routes and other congested ground areas?
A. We were too weak.
- Q. Did you carry out any offensive missions in the Hanoi area?
A. Only one or two recco missions at most.
- Q. Did you at that time have your forward HQ at Hankow?
A. Yes; the HQ later was moved back to Nanking.
- Q. Where was the boundary between 5FA and 3FA?
A. It was the same as that between the China and FIC ground armies; the 5FA area was the same as the China Expeditionary Army and was bordered on the north by the area of the 2FA which was the same as the Kwantung Army.
- Q. Did you fly offensive missions against B-29 bases at Chengtu and if so at whose orders?
A. The China Expeditionary Army issued those orders from Hankow on the basis of their own intelligence and our recco.
- Q. Did you receive intelligence from your own agents near the U.S. fields?
A. We had no agents of our own near the fields.
- Q. Didn't you have flares lit near the Allied fields there?
A. No. It was very hard to find the fields. (Note: Persistent questioning on this point failed to alter his statement.)
- Q. Did your planes follow the B-29s back to their bases?
A. No, as we didn't have the range. We did, however attempt to intercept them en route to and from their bases to their targets.
- Q. Why didn't you attack the Allied supply routes or terminals from India to China?
A. Our planes lacked the range.
- Q. Why didn't you attack them from Burma bases?
A. We received no orders from Imperial General HQ to do so; in Burma we were independent and had our own mission to perform.
- Q. Could you have attacked the supply route?
A. Yes, with very long range bombers, but in Burma we were too weak to carry on offensive operations; when we entered Burma we had 100 planes but our strength decreased.
- Q. Did you have any suicide training in China?
A. Yes.
- Q. Were the planes for that purpose sent to China?
A. Some of them.
- Q. Did you also carry on regular training in China?
A. Yes, the 105 Kyoiku Hikodan (Training Flying Brigade) at Peiping (which is still there) carried on regular training.
- Q. Did the pilots go to Japan to finish the regular training?
A. Yes, to Japan or elsewhere; we were too weak in aircraft to complete the training in China.
- Q. Did you give the pilots their first solo training?

- A. Yes, we started training at the very beginning and each man had one year or more. The training was very difficult to carry out since: (1) we were short of planes, and (2) Allied planes continually attacked the training fields.
- Q. Where did you get your new pilots?
- A. We got a very few from schools in Japan and most of them from the 105 Kyoiku FB (Flying Training Brigade). We completed the training in our own operational units.
- Q. Who trained your suicide units? - the 105 Kyoiku FB?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was that separate from the regular training?
- A. Yes. The suicide pilots went into the special training after their regular training was partially completed. At the end of the war we had about 350 trainees in all in 105 Kyoiku FB - 100 in suicide training and the rest in regular training.
- Q. Were any units sent from Japan to be trained as suicide units?
- A. No, the trainees came as individuals.
- Q. Were they then formed into numbered suicide units?
- A. Yes. Imperial GHQ assigned the numbers in orders directing the formation of a certain number of units, first comprising 8 and later 4 planes.
- Q. How many suicide units were formed in China?
- A. At the end of the war we had 16 in China. We sent 7 or 8 to 6FA and during the Okinawa campaign we sent 2 or 3 to Formosa to operate under 8 Flying Div.
- Q. What types of planes were employed in the suicide units?
- A. They were all trainers - very old types.
- Q. What types of planes were used for regular training?
- A. We had only 5 or 9 planes for each Kyoiku hikotai (flying training unit) for daily use - mainly KI 9s and also KI 36, KI 27, KI 51 and KI 43 model one.
- Q. Were any of those planes sent from Japan for the suicide units?
- A. No; the KI 27 were sent from the Mukden Air Depot in Manchuria.
- Q. Were they stored there or used for training there?
- A. They were used by 2 FA for training but new planes such as the KI 27 were made in Manchuria and stored there as well until the end of the war.
- Q. Were any planes made in Korea?
- A. No, we planned to make KI 27s there but did not get under way. (The general added on questioning that KI 79 is the designation for the trainer version of KI 27).
- Q. Were your operations in China or Korea affected by a shortage of gasoline?
- A. Yes, that was a great problem and curtailed both training and operations. In China we had 20,000 kiloliters at the end of the war and the same amount in Korea and Manchuria combined. Our defense of south Korea was very much curtailed by lack of gasoline; we had two months supply there for operations at the end of the war and none left for training. We were using mainly alcohol mixed with gasoline for training; we used alcohol, first with the KI 9, then the KI 27, then with all planes but the alcohol was very hard to use; I don't know why. We had no experience with the use of alcohol as opposed to gasoline with the suicide units (I think 6 FA suicide units used gasoline) but we were studying to determine which was better at the end of the war and no decision had yet been reached. The alcohol was made in Korea mainly from potatoes and to some extent from rice and possibly pine roots; much was made on Saishu Island, which was primarily under the Korean Army but partly under 5 FA. There were no planes of 5 FA at Saishu but we took over control of Saishu from 6 FA when we moved up to Korea.

- Q. When you were in Korea, did you get gasoline from Manchuria?
A. Yes - I do not know the details. We also received some from China but none from Japan or the southern area.
- Q. Had you any working relations with the Navy?
A. None, either in China or Korea.
- Q. How about the protection of shipping?
A. Yes, since the Navy air force was so weak we helped the Navy in that mission but our operations were independent. The Navy convoy command never had control of the Army aircraft which were under the China Expeditionary Army.
- Q. Who controlled the China Airways, the civil air line?
A. It was a private company under the China Expeditionary Army.
- Q. In Burma, you were the CG of the 4th Flying Brigade?
A. Yes.
- Q. How were the duties of the 4FB and 7FB distinguished?
A. I was chiefly responsible for North Burma. I was at Toungoo - I had 50 FR, 8 FR and 14 FR (which later was sent to New Guinea). The first squadron of 8 FR was recco and the other two were light bombers. I also had control at times of 34 FR. 7 FB was based at Rangoon and was supposed to carry out long range bombing such as that against Calcutta. 8 FR, however, did carry out two small night attacks against Calcutta staging through Akyab.
- Q. Why were not the attacks against Calcutta continued?
A. The Flying Division Commander at Rangoon did not order any more attacks.
- Q. Who directed his actions?
A. The Burma Army in the main and sometimes the Third Air Army (3 FA).
- Q. Were any fighters based at Myitkina?
A. I did not use the airport as it was not then in good condition, but my successor did use it.
- Q. Were attacks against Allied fields in Northeast Assam in the Autumn of 42 carried out only by 4 FB or also by 7 FB?
A. 4 FB for three days in a row, at the end of November 1942, attacked with 64 FR, 50 FR, 8 FR and 14 FR.
- Q. Who ordered the attacks?
A. The divisional commander, pursuant, I think, to orders of 3 FA.
- Q. Were you called back to Singapore or to Rangoon to confer about the attacks?
A. To Rangoon, to confer with 3 FA's Chief of Staff.
- Q. Where did your light bombers retire to?
A. Heho, Meiktila, Schwebo and Toungoo; later we retired to Thailand.
- Q. Did your planes return to different bases from those where they took off?
A. Yes.
- Q. Did you control your operations from the ground?
A. Yes, but on the first day of the three-day strike I went over myself in a recco plane and watched through glasses.
- Q. How did you know that the U. S. fields would be good targets?
A. By recco planes; we had no special intelligence.
- Q. What is "special intelligence"?
A. Signalling from an airfield with a light.
- Q. Had you any other means of acquiring intelligence?
A. No.
- Q. Did the 81 FR carry out any recco?
A. Yes, they were directly under 5 FD and sometimes helped with recco.

- Q. Did you have any FCS (Independent Flying Squadron) under your command?
A. I don't remember any.
- Q. Were you furnished intelligence on the movement of U. S. planes into China?
A. Yes, by a lookout post at Myitkina.
- Q. Did you have anyone sending in information?
A. The ground forces forward of Akyab and Myitkina sent such information to Rangoon, from where it was relayed to me at Myitkina.
- Q. What information did you secure from Japanese agents in Calcutta?
A. None; I don't know about any such agents (the General was adamant on this point despite repeated questioning).
- Q. Did you employ your planes in support of ground operations?
A. Yes, but only at Akyab.
- Q. When did you personally return to Japan?
A. January 1944.
- Q. Had you returned to Japan earlier?
A. No.
- Q. What about the occasion in Tokyo when you were cited for service in Burma?
A. In Jan 44 I was wined and dined but the Emperor did not appear personally and I received no Imperial decoration.
- Q. (addressed to Major TAKAHASHI) From what base were the attacks launched by 60 FR, of which you were then a squadron commander, against Malaya?
A. That was in Dec 1941 from Pnompenh.
- Q. How many JAAF planes were used in the Malaya campaign?
A. Possibly 500; there were 27 in my unit and the other units involved included 64 FR, 98 FR, and 12 FR, all under 7 FB. In addition, under 3 FB, the 59 FR, 75 FR and 90 FR went to Malaya.
- Q. Did any of those units advance from Indo-China to Burma?
A. 64 FR went to Burma.
- Q. How many JNAF planes were involved in the Malaya campaign?
A. I don't know.
- Q. Who sank the Repulse and the Prince of Wales?
A. The Navy.
- Q. When did 60 FR move down from Japan to Pnompenh?
A. We left Japan on 14 Nov 41 and staged through Formosa and Hainan, arriving at Pnompenh on 5 Dec 41.
- Q. Did you know your mission when you left Japan?
A. No.
- Q. How long were you in Malaya?
A. Until May 42; then I was in Japan until July 42, then in Manchuria until Feb 43, then again in Malaya and Sumatra until Oct 43, being all this time with 60 FR. Thereupon I returned to Japan.
- Q. Were you in the airborne operation in Palembang?
A. No, that was carried out by the 12 and 98 FRs, who dropped supplies, and by a special unit, the Teishin Hikosentai (Raiding Air Regiment) which dropped the troops.
- Q. (addressed to Gen NAKANISHI) Had you made any special preparations against the Russian invasion after 5 FA had moved to Korea?
A. No. All orders on that point were issued by Imperial GHQ after the Russian attack.
- Q. When did you first hear that Russia was in the war?
A. We heard that from the Army in Manchuria and in Korea.

- Q. What orders were issued you by the Korean Army?
A. We were ordered to carry out only defensive operations, but that order came from Air General Army and not from the Korean Army.
- Q. Did you actually fight the Russians?
A. No, not at all; the climate was very bad for flying.
- Q. Did Russian planes fly over Korea?
A. Not into south or west Korea where my bases were; I had only trainers at Rempo, Genzan, Kainei, Kaibun and Sentoku - planes of 44 FR at Taiden did fly about 7 recco sorties into east Korea but did not fight the Russians.
- Q. At the end of the war, what planes did you have north of 38 degrees north?
A. Less than 100 planes of 53 Koku Shidan (Training Air Div.); 8 FB at Heijo was sent to Urusan.
- Q. How many suicide planes were there under 53 Koku Shidan?
A. About three units or 15 pilots; there were 150 planes training for suicide units south of 38 degrees - about 25 units. Each unit had 4 planes plus either one or two reserve planes.
- Q. Were the units numbered?
A. No, because their training was not completed; but the units north of 38 degrees were numbered. I forget the numbers.
- Q. What was the highest suicide unit number you remember?
A. It was in the 400 series, but the series were set up by 100s and were not necessarily all filled up.
- Q. How were the blocks of numbers set up?
A. Imperial GHQ required reports of training which had been completed and then assigned numbers to those units, so that the numbers in a given area were not necessarily consecutive. The numbering depended on when the training was completed. (In answer to further questioning, he said no particular 100 series was allotted to any one Air Arm, but that the whole numbering system was handled by Imperial GHQ in Tokyo.)
- Q. How did you learn of the Japanese surrender and what was your reaction?
A. We learned of the surrender from the Emperor's broadcast and at first I thought it was untrue since it was so sudden. My staff members also were all very surprised. Fuller details, however, were issued by Imperial GHQ on the radio.
- Q. Did any of your pilots wish to disobey the Emperor's orders?
A. Not a one. The Japanese ground soldiers, however were hard to control since the Koreans became hostile and uncooperative.
- Q. What do you think will happen to Japan now?
A. It is a very difficult situation and it is very hard to predict what will happen. The people are now quiet but food is short.
- Q. What will the people think of the GUMBATSU?
A. Not too well.
- Q. What will you do yourself now?
A. I will live quietly; I am too tired.

End of Interrogation.