

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

INTERROGATION NO: 299

PLACE: Nagoya  
DATE : 3 Nov 45

Division of Origin: Military Analysis, Team #3

Subject: JNAF - 13th Airflot Counterinvasion Preparations

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Lt Comdr ONO graduated Naval Academy '32, KAGAMIGAURA Air School '33, becoming observation pilot; 3 years as observer on sea duty, SASEBO, KURE. Chief Air Officer on cruiser at KWAJALEIN Dec '41; observation instructor, SUZUKA; on CV under 1st Airflot up to Aug 44; Aug to Oct 44 on staff of 3rd Airflot; Staff officer with 5th and 2nd Fleet at KURE and OITA till Mar 45; Chief Air Officer, YAMATO Air Base March to June 45; June 45 to date, Staff Officer, 13th Airflot.

Where interviewed: Asahi Building

Interrogator: Capt Haskins

Interpreter: Capt MORIKAWA, Japanese Navy

Allied Officers Present: Lt Palfrey

SUMMARY:

A discussion was held concerning the disposition of 13th Airflot planes for preparation against invasion of Japan and the difficulties encountered owing to shortage of trained pilots, maintenance personnel and fuel.

- R E S T R I C T E D -





I N T E R R O G A T I O N  
- R E S T R I C T E D -

Q. What were the Naval Air facilities at HIKONE?

A. That was a new airfield just being developed. There were as yet no aircraft there.

Q. How large was it?

A. 600 x 30 metres.

Q. How many planes could it accomodate?

A. About 30.

Q. What type?

A. Type 93 (Willow).

Q. Was it planned to dispose 30 Type 93's there as part of the KETSU disposition?

A. No, it was rather in the nature of an emergency landing field, to be used by whatever unit might need it.

Q. What was the general plan of disposition for KETSU by the 13th Air Flotilla?

A. The plan of disposition was as follows:

Kyushu bases	150 Type 93 (Willow)
Hakata	50 Type O Observation (Pete)
Iwakuni	30 Shiragiku (trainer)
Matsuyama	30 Shiragiku
Unspecified airfield near Iwakuni	80 Type 93
Shikoku bases	100 Type 93
Yamato	30 Type 93
Oi	50 Shiragiku
Suzuka	50 Shiragiku
Kowa	30 Seaplane fighters (Rex)

Q. Was this plan put into execution?

A. Yes.

Q. When?

A. The end of July, although it was originally ordered to be completed by the middle of July.

Q. When was the invasion expected?

A. At the earliest, 15 August.

- R E S T R I C T E D -



- R E S T R I C T E D -

- Q. Did this disposition include the full strength of 13 Air Flot?
- A. No, in addition to the 600 there were 100 planes which had been prepared but had not yet been disposed by the end of the war.
- Q. What sort of pilots were to be used in the operation?
- A. About one half pilots who had completed their training and one half student pilots.
- Q. On an average, how much flying time had each category had?
- A. Of those who had completed their training, most of them averaged about 200 hours, although a few had had as much as 500. The student pilots averaged about 100 hours.
- Q. In the plans for KETSU, were any specific targets assigned to 13 Airflot?
- A. Landing craft.
- Q. Was the 13th Airflot to operate by day or by night?
- A. By night.
- Q. Assuming an invasion of Kyushu, how many planes would sortie?
- A. About one quarter the first night and so on successive nights.
- Q. How long would it take for the planes to take off once the alarm had been given?
- A. About  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.
- Q. To what extent were planes dispersed around the airfields?
- A. Completely; every plane was at least 100 metres from the field.
- Q. What percentage of these dispersed planes could have taken off?
- A. About 80% owing to serviceability factors. There was a shortage of maintenance personnel and shortage of fuel prevented planes from averaging more than 2 hours flying time a month. It worked out that a plane was only used on an average of once every three weeks.
- Q. Was any attempt made to keep the engines in condition by running them every day or so?
- A. No and I was greatly concerned about this. However, at the end of the war an order came out to that effect.
- Q. Of the 80% which did take off, how many would reach the target?
- A. I should estimate that 20% would reach the target.
- Q. Of those planes which did not reach their targets, how many would be shot down by Allied action?
- A. About 70%; the remaining would crash owing to pilot or engine failure.
- Q. How much training in night flying had these pilots had?
- A. About 10 hours.
- Q. Was any special night flying equipment installed in the planes?
- A. No.

- R E S T R I C T E D -



- R E S T R I C T E D -

Q. What navigational aids were there?

A. The more experienced pilots would be in the lead planes and they would carry lights. In addition certain coastal airfields were being equipped with beacons.

Q. Under what command would these planes operate in Kyushu?

A. Kyushu Air Force, which had headquarters at Oita.

Q. What other commands besides 13th Airflot were at Yamato?

A. 53rd Airflot, which moved from Meiji just before the end of the war, and the 3rd Air Fleet.

Q. Do you know anything of the operational plans of the 53rd Airflot?

A. All I know is that they were planning to make mass attacks against B-29's with as many as 100 planes including Zeros (Zekes), Shiden (George) and Raiden (Jack).

Q. What about their plans for KETSU?

A. Their targets were to be landing craft, but their mission was primarily tactical rather than suicidal.

Q. In your experience with Type 93 (Willow) trainers, what were the chief maintenance difficulties?

A. Engine failure owing to the use of alcohol or alcohol and gasoline mixed.

Q. What was to be their bomb load?

A. One 250 - kilogram bomb.

- R E S T R I C T E D -