

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO 234 c/o PM San Francisco

INTERROGATION NO. 279

Place: Tokyo

Date: 3 November 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis (see Note.)

SUBJECT: Relationship of Japanese Army and Navy in the Field of Airplane Production.

Where Interviewed: Room 722, Meiji Building

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND OF EACH:

Lt Gen ENDO, Saburo, Chief of the Cabinet Bureau of Research

SPECIAL NOTE:

This was a JOINT INTERROGATION conducted by COL POTTS, representing the USSBS, and by MR SEVERSKY representing the SECRETARY OF WAR.

Interrogators: Colonel Ramsay D POTTS, AC
Mr Alexander P de SEVERSKY, former Major, AC

Interpreter: Lt Cmdr Walter NICHOLS, USNR

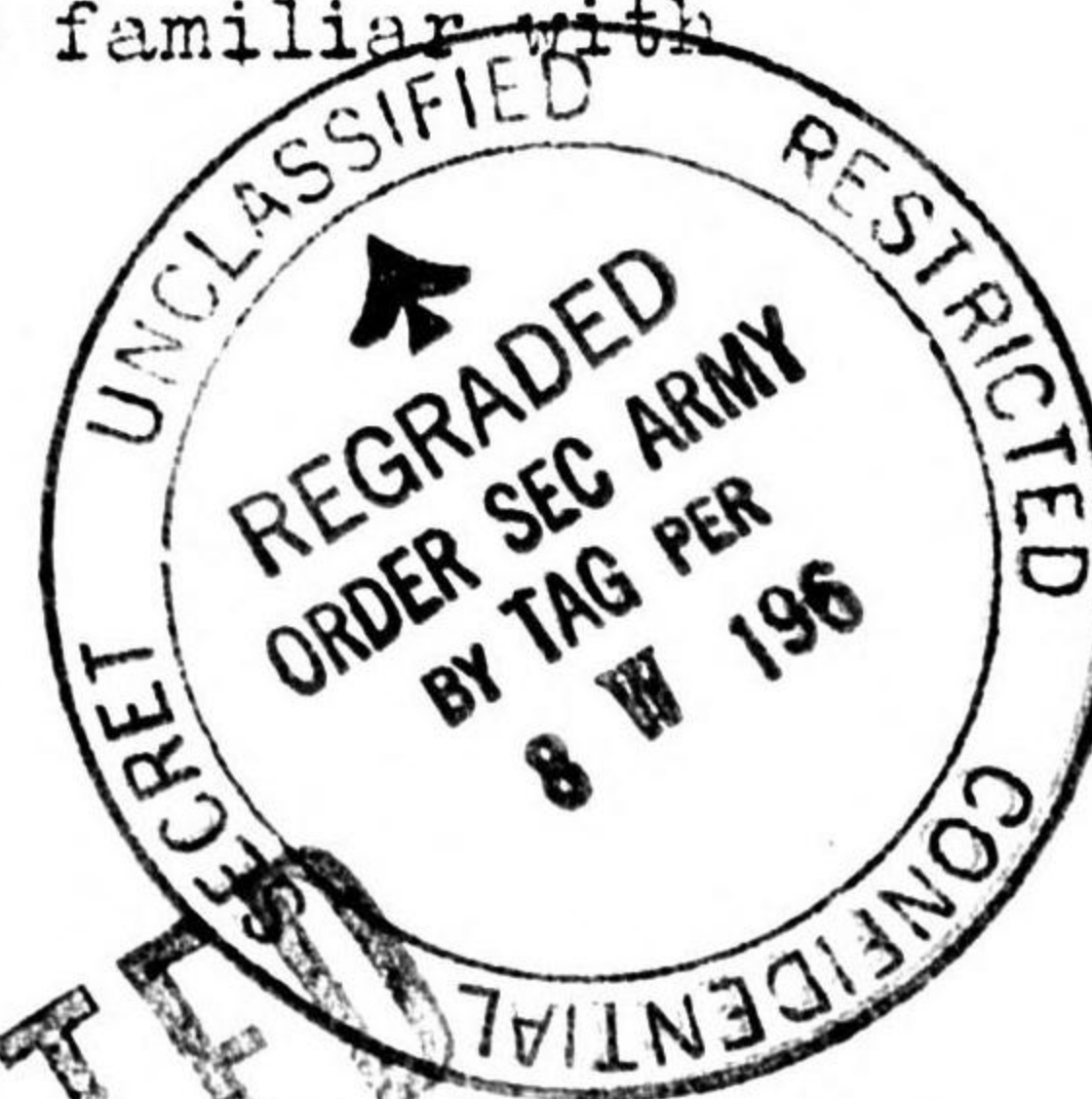
Allied Officers Present: Maj Gen Orvil A ANDERSON, USA
Col David A BURCHINAL, AC
Col Robert TERRILL, AC
Maj Edwin McELWAIN, GSC

SUMMARY:

The Japanese method of determining the types of airplanes to be produced and the military characteristics of these planes is discussed. The Board which decided these matters was composed of approximately one-third airmen, but their relative rank and prestige was low compared with that of other members, and consequently their voice in decisions was weak. A reliance upon foreign types is indicated. The progress of going underground and the advance of the Navy over the Army in this respect is explained. The failure to make further improvements in design is attributed chiefly to constant pressure from the American side in military operations, and consequent high attrition and a resulting insistent demand from field commanders for immediate production.

In planning the air forces by commanders, the Army policy was to assign its second-rate officers to this arm. There was a lack of coordination in the production field between Army and Navy due to inadequate control at the top in the form of an arbitration board.

General ENDO provides a list of names of men who are familiar with particular campaigns.



RESTRICTED

Transcript of: General ENDO

Q. Which body in the Army determined the military characteristics of aircraft, their fire power, their range, etc., and the relationship of aircraft to strategy?

A. Sambohombu decided the qualifications, the requirements of the plane, the performance figures. They would submit these to Kokuhombu which would have its technical section study it and after conference with the factories, and technicians at the factories decided whether they could produce such planes or not. If the factories couldn't make that plane or the technicians couldn't do it, they would lower the requirements, but the original decision was made by Sambohombu.

Q. Was there a strategic board?

A. Yes, a strategic board of the Army.

Q. I think the question breaks down into two parts: First, the division of kinds of planes--in other words who decided whether to produce so many transports, so many fighters, so many bombers--secondly, the decision as to the types and characteristics?

A. The decision as to kinds was made by Sambohombu. As to the numbers of planes by types which would be built and performance figures, they are made out at GHQ and are then passed on to Kokuhombu in the case of the Army, and in the case of the Navy, the Naval General Staff.

Q. Was this question decided by the airmen, or by the Army and Navy Command? Were airmen represented on those boards?

A. Yes. About one-third of the members of the committee were people connected with the air force. For a certain time, before this board was formed, there was a competition between the Army and the Navy, each trying to get some planes away from the other.

Q. In other words, the Ministry of Production and Supply was formed, and allocation began to be made to the Army and the Navy; is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. At the beginning of the war, Japanese airplanes showed an advantage--they were developed for long range, droppable tanks, and firepower; but then they dropped behind and at the end of the war they didn't even develop the types we were sure you would develop commensurate with our types--i.e., four-engine bombers, long range equipment, etc. To what do you attribute the retarding of this development?

A. I wish to explain more about the percentage of airmen--i.e. the one-third who were reported to be on the Board of Strategy: Although I said that one-third of the members of the committee were air officers, the ranks and official positions they held were so low compared to other representatives that differences of opinion expressed in that committee were mainly governed by other members--

Q. Their rank was so low that their relative voice was very weak?

A. Yes, that is right. Coming to this question of the lack of superiority of the Japanese airman at the end of the war, it may be attributed to the fact that we received a great deal of technical information from foreign organizations which we went ahead with and incorporated in the latest type planes, before the war. After the start of the war the research people had what you call "sectionizing" among themselves--did not interchange ideas; therefore they couldn't incorporate some of the advantages one outfit might have learned in contrast to another

Q. Each section kept its own developments to itself; is this the idea?

A. Yes. There were three categories: Army, Navy, and civilian. Between the three of them they did not have any cooperation.

Q. They had no board which forced them to exchange the knowledge?

A. The unification was nil among such organizations as Army, Navy, etc.

Q. That is from the technical point of view. Now I want the same answer from a strategic point of view: I don't see anything in your strategic point of view indicating you were going for the greater reach, greater firepower, greater bomb load, to intercept our lines away behind our positions. There was no progress in your tactical or strategic air thinking. What prevented that development?

A. After the campaign in Java, I was returned to Japan, in April 1942. At that time I proposed that all the air power be composed mainly of fighters, but my opinion was not taken up by GHQ. Unlike the American setup and also the British organization of airplanes of all different kinds, which would be very satisfactory for a country having a lot of materials, manpower, etc, in actual resources Japan was such a poor country that if we went into production of so many different types of airplanes it would be very difficult to continue production: I thought as a defensive measure we should have only fighters which we could build in Japan to better advantage than building all different types of craft.

Due to the rather involved nature of the series of questions and answers on Underground Aircraft factories, the following represents a summary of the statements made by Lt Gen ENDO on this subject:

1. As a result of developments on all fronts in early 1944 but more particularly as the result of carrier strikes against TRUK in February, 1944, the Japanese NAVY expected a big decisive battle to come some time around June in the area north of New Guinea. Due to these and other developments, the ARMY also expected a final all-out battle to occur, but they decided to wait and if possible fight it in the Philippines.

2. As a result of these expected show-down battles and the consequent attrition of airplanes, the immediate all-out production of aircraft was felt to be a matter of the highest priority. There was, therefore, great pressure in the Home Islands to produce airplanes as opposed to the clear-cut need to go underground.

3. The ARMY and the NAVY Underground Programs were the same. Lt Gen ENDO, as Head of the Air Ordnance in the Bureau of Munitions, had allocated 120 underground sites: Fifty to be made ready by the NAVY, 50 by the ARMY and the remaining 20 by the Minister of Munitions (who sought aid from the Minister of Railroads in order to secure men experienced in digging railroad tunnels).

4. Lt Gen ENDO denied that any Japanese observers were ever sent to Germany for the specific purpose of studying German underground construction. He did, however, admit that certain military observers had access to these underground construction sites in Germany and that he himself had attained some benefit from talking to one man who had studied the German underground factories.

5. The NAVY, the ARMY, and the Ministry of Railroads had independent ideas about methods of underground construction, and there was very little interchanging of ideas. The plan called for the NAVY to finish their construction in June, for the Ministry of Munitions, with the aid of the Ministry of Railroads, to finish in July, and for the ARMY to finish in August. Because of the effects of bombing on the transportation system, all of these programs were delayed to some extent.

6. The more rapid construction of underground sites by the NAVY may be attributed to a more energetic handling of this matter by the NAVY personnel in charge of the project.

Q. Why did you not improve the design of your airplanes during the war?

Transcript of: General ENDO -----

A. Due to the very fast tempo of the war, requirements on the number of airplanes to be built was so intense that we had no time to do anything about designing and improvement--we had no chance for conversion; we couldn't convert to new models.

Q. Was that also responsible for the fact that the Army used exclusively the 500-kilo bomb and never increased their bomb load or the size of bombs, or was it an arbitrary tactical decision?

A. Referring back to the ground support theory; they didn't need heavy bombs for what they intended.

Q. And when they began to attack Naval ships, I understand the Navy loaned them their 800-kilo bombs; is that right?

A. Yes, the Army borrowed from the Navy. Due to the lack of number of planes we had in the Navy, the Army was asked to cooperate with the Navy. It wasn't originally the Army's idea to carry large bombs, but due to this change of mission, they used the Navy's 800-kilo bombs.

Q. When was the first time the Army began to use torpedoes?

A. In April of 1945 at Okinawa. That was for the first time.

Q. How about the 7th and 98th Hiko Sentai? Didn't they use torpedoes in the beginning of the Formosa campaign and in the Philippines?

A. I knew of heavy bombers carrying some torpedoes from the Kalaia airfield, but in regard to the actual participation of these bombers, where or when I have no actual recollection.

Q. Actually didn't they start in the summer of 1944, and operate over Formosa?

A. The actual time the Army started training in the use of torpedoes was in May of 1944. The 98th Hiko Sentai started it.

Q. What about the special type bomb you were going to use in connection with this Tokotai suicide plane for which I understand you got the idea from Germany?

A. The Medaito was about one meter wide and weighed about a ton, and in shape the bomb would be shaped something like a bow--concave.

Q. It was built in Osaka arsenal wasn't it? I was told they built three to six one-ton bombs in Osaka?

A. I doubt very much if they actually built them--they were studying that. The one-ton bombs built in Osaka were probably a different type of bomb.

The next series of questions were intended to develop a statement on Japanese Air policy and procedure. General ENDO's comments on this subject may be summarized as follows:

1. The influence of the AIR FORCE in the Japanese ARMY was small. The best men from the ARMY were always assigned to ground jobs, usually in the field, and the men who were not particularly competent were sent into the air forces. Therefore, in the organization as it developed, the rather mediocre men were channeled into the AIR FORCE. Consequently, at meetings where questions of policy or tactics were to be decided, the opinion of the airmen was not accepted because they were considered to be second-rate ARMY officers who had been shunted into the air organization.

2. The AIR FORCES were always attached to the GROUND FORCES and came directly under the command of the Group Force Commander. During the war there were four large ARMY commands, each with an AIR FORCE attached.

The HIGH COMMAND in the home islands found it extremely difficult, without going through the Emperor, to order air units detached from a particular ground force that was inactive in order to assign them to another ground force commander where the air might at that time be particularly active.

3. Because of the complicated procedure necessary to detach one air force from its parent ground component in order to shift it into another area, there was a complete lack of flexibility in mobilizing the necessary air force at any given critical point in moments of emergency.

Q. Do you believe that a great number of weapons were made that were not actually used--that you could have made better use of your natural resources?

A. On account of "sectionalism" of the Army-Navy air forces, the Army might have so much material which the Navy could utilize, but the Army won't give it to them, so production goes down quite a bit. Two or three years ago they didn't know whether they were fighting America or whether they were fighting each other. Citing a few examples: Mitsubishi and some of these other factories might be located, say, in Nakajima where one plant is for the Navy and one for the Army. One plant might be lacking nickel and the other might have enough, but they wouldn't pass it around to make full use of it. In Mitsubishi, for example, there was a factory built by the Army, but they didn't have machine tools to fill the factory. The Navy had a factory but didn't have building material, and they wouldn't pass the machine tools to the Army at all--that is an extreme case.

Before I became the head of Air Bureau, Ministry of Munitions, I had always maintained that in case Japan would be defeated, it would be due to these fights relative to the influence of Army and Navy--they are always fighting each other in that respect. That could be one of the reasons why Japan might be defeated. I had maintained that opinion after I became the head of the Bureau of Aviation and of the Minister of Munitions.

Q. And while Army and Navy were fighting, aviation was suffering?

A. Yes, that's right. I was the head of General Affairs Bureau of the Army Kokuhombu, while the other, an Admiral by the name of ONISHI, was the head of the General Affairs Bureau in the Navy, and we had a number of plans: We had been planning to get these two departments together into one in which production as well as technical ideas would be exchanged. At that time Premier TOJO decided to establish this new Ministry of Munitions; some part of my idea was realized in the production side only, but technical matters were taken up separately by Army and Navy in Koku Hombu. I also wanted to organize both departments of Army and Navy in one headquarters so they would be much closer, but we never realized that.

Q. I want to ask you a question which you don't have to answer if you don't want to: During testimony here, someone expressed the opinion that the Japanese Spiritual Power would compensate for technological backwardness, so to speak, and that eventually you would be victorious anyway, because your spirit would overcome our technological strength. Apparently the Emperor and his cabinet came to the conclusion that that is not so, and they stopped the war or you would still be fighting. You are a technical man: Do you share the same opinion or not?

A. I had been at one time teaching at the Army Staff College. At that time I always maintained, if Japan ever went into war it would not be for the purpose of conquering another country; but if Japan had to fight--was forced to fight--whether she wins or loses was out of the question altogether. At the time of my being the head of Air Shitan down in Malaya, I had given a talk to my men in which I said, even Napoleon who opposed England couldn't win the war, and even Hitler couldn't win against England. In addition to that we had the U. S. against us, etc., and from my opinion of Japan being forced to fight for its existence, this problem, whether we win the war or lose the war was not the primary purpose. Therefore, I told my men that they could fight without worrying whether they would actually win the war or lose the war: To win the war or lose the war is not of any prime concern to my men; they should be willing to die gladly, knowing that it was unavoidable and that they were doing the right thing.