

RESTRICTED

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 395)  
NAV. NO. 81

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 16 November 1945

Subject: Occupation of the PHILIPPINES and DUTCH EAST INDIES.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain FUJITA, Masamichi, IJN. Staff Officer of 2nd Fleet Southern Sea from 1941 to 1942; and Staff Member of Bureau of Military Affairs, M.D., Tokyo from 1942 to 1945.

Where interviewed: MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Commander T.H. MOORER, U.S.N.

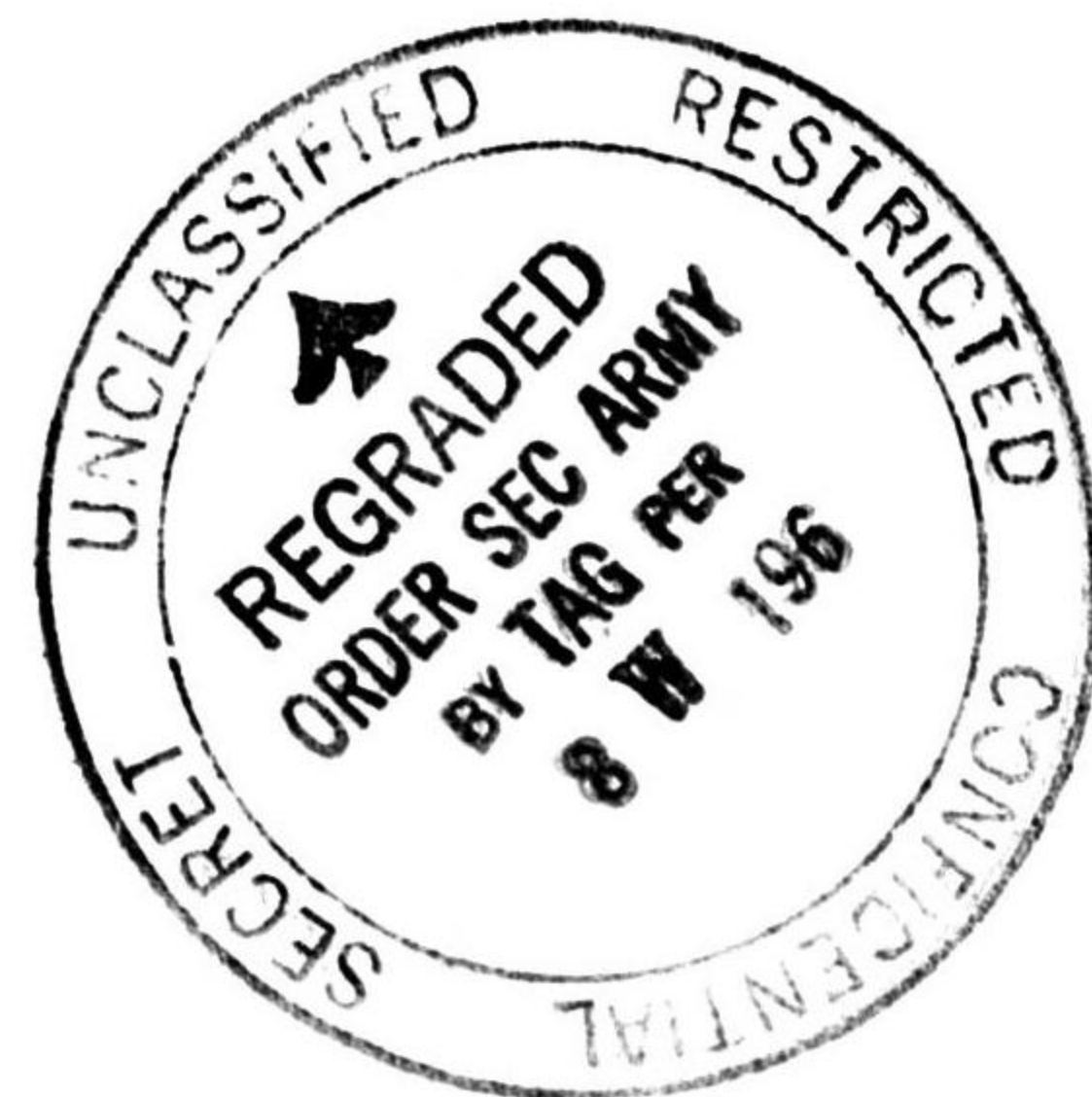
Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. Seymore (n) MILLSTEIN, USNR.

SUMMARY

This interrogation amplifies and clarifies certain points discussed in previous interrogation (USSBS No. 67: NAV. NO. 14) regarding the Japanese occupation of the PHILIPPINES and NETHERLAND EAST INDIES.

RESTRICTED

395-1-



TRANSCRIPT

Q. After the move into the PHILIPPINES and MALAYA was initiated, what was the expected reaction from: first, the Americans in the PHILIPPINES; second, the Dutch; and third, the British in MALAYA?

A. From the Americans, air opposition; from the Dutch, no particular opposition with the exception of submarine attacks; and from the British, surface opposition.

Q. In regard to the air opposition of the Americans, do you mean that you expected attacks on the invasion force? Did you think that the American air force would be able to sink your ships?

A. It was thought that there would be some damage to ships, but the main concern was the attack by the American aircraft on the Japanese air force.

Q. What was the most critical factor likely to cause the failure of the operation?

A. The most critical operation at the beginning of the campaign was considered to be MALAYA, followed in turn by the LUZON landing. We expected considerable resistance in the JAVA SEA during the final phases of the operation.

Q. For what reason did you think that the MALAY Area was particularly strong?

A. Because the British were increasing their sea power. We didn't expect much air strength; but after the arrival of the PRINCE of WALES and the REPULSE, we expected a commensurate air cover.

Q. What action did you plan to take in case you met such strong opposition that you were unable to carry out the original operation?

A. The plan was to continue the operation in the PHILIPPINES with all the forces available, regardless of cost; and after that was completed to again attack MALAYA.

Q. Explain the cooperation effected by the Army and the Navy during the invasions?

A. According to directives from General Headquarters, there was mutual cooperation. However, there was no fast rule as to who was in command of each operation. Generally speaking, the service having the predominant force controlled the operation.

Q. Concerning the method of control of the land-based force, was it controlled by the Second Fleet or controlled by the invasion force at the focal point of the action?

A. The 11th Air Fleet was merely ordered to cooperate in the landing operation; any request for air support not in the operation order had to be directed by the Second Fleet, if not volunteered by the 11th Air Fleet.

Q. After a base was captured, for instance BALIKPAPAN, do you know what time was required to establish the air base?

A. About 7 to 10 days were required to repair a field. That was one of the weak points of the campaign. Although an effort was made by the base force to furnish aviation supplies and field equipment, considerable time was required since the fields had to be constructed by hand labor.

Q. What small aircraft carriers were in this operation?

A. Only the RYUJO.

Q. Did the original plan provide for the use of the RYUJO?

A. Yes, it was held in readiness in case a weak point in the plan was discovered. In this case there was no suitable fields available

RESTRICTED

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain FUJITA, Masamichi, I.J.N.).

in the SUMATRA Area, so the RYUJO was ordered down there to assist in the last stages of the JAVA campaign.

Q. On 8th December many small Japanese fighters attacked our sea-planes based at DAVOA; where did they come from?

A. PALAU.

Q. Describe the movements of the Main Body of the Second Fleet after the initial success of the PHILIPPINE and MALAYA landings?

A. The Main Body proceeded to FORMOSA and then to PALAU where in the latter part of January it rendezvoused with an additional carrier force from JAPAN.

Q. Why did you concentrate such a large force at PALAU?

A. In order to support the JAVA Operations and then attack the British in INDIAN OCEAN.

Q. And that plan was not in the original operation order?

A. It was made after the success of PEARL HARBOR and in view of the general favorable conditions it was decided to rendezvous this force and proceed to the INDIAN OCEAN.

Q. How long did you operate around KENDARI?

A. About one week. We attacked PORT DARWIN 19 February.

Q. What was the mission of the Second Fleet during operations South of JAVA?

A. It was to cut off any escape of the Allied Forces from the JAVA SEA.

Q. Do you know of any operations your big carriers conducted down there?

A. Yes. They bombarded CHRISTMAS Island and attacked a Dutch destroyer. Very few Allied ships escaped from JAVA SEA.

Q. Explain the mission of your submarines.

A. The submarines in the South CHINA SEA were ordered to attack the British ships; the submarines stationed around the PHILIPPINE ISLAND were to act as scouts. In general the submarines were used entirely to cooperate with the Second Fleet and not as an attack weapon against merchant ships. Submarines discovered the PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE and were instrumental in causing their destruction.

Q. During these operations was the Admiral in command of the several amphibious operations free to move from one place to another at his own discretion, or was his flagship assigned a task for each invasion.

A. He would go on his own accord to carry out his mission, depending upon the situation of the time.

Q. Was the total number of ships, including war ships and merchant ships that were used in each invasion, assigned in advance or were the many small forces necessary for simultaneous operations organized as the campaign progressed?

A. The forces were organized in advance. A provision was also made for possible losses but they did not occur.

Q. What was, in your opinion, the general situation after this area had been occupied? What do you think the Japanese should have done next?

A. It was my opinion and also that of several officers of the Second Fleet that the Japanese should have fortified the PHILIPPINES and EAST INDIES with the forces available and should not have attempted to

RESTRICTED

395-3-

RESTRICTED

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation (Captain FUJITA, Masamichi, I.J.N). . . .

advance to the east, thereby introducing a supply problem we could not successfully solve.

Q. Did you think that at the time, 1 March 1942, or did you form that opinion in 1945?

A. 1942. I think the biggest mistake made by the Japanese was the fact that they occupied the advanced bases rather than making strikes and then withdrawing to the inner wall formed by a line of SAIPAN, PALAU, SORONG, TIMOR, JAVA and SINGAPORE.

Q. After the completion of this campaign, was there some high level indecision as to what policy to follow?

A. Yes, the opinion of the Second Fleet was to stop the advance as it was, but the General Headquarters in TOKYO decided to go on.

Q. Was this decision made by the Army or Navy?

A. Both, the Combined Headquarters.

The Headquarters at TOKYO did not know the difficulty with supplies we had in advanced areas.

Q. Do you think one of your biggest difficulties was one of supply?

A. The difficulty of supplies and also the men were tired of fighting. The men were tired because of the continuous fighting.

Q. Army or Navy men?

A. Both, but mainly Navy because the men of the ships were tired because the same ships were used in all the operations. There was no relief and ships were always underway and always fighting. This applies particularly to small ships--destroyers and cruisers.

Q. Did the First and Second Base Forces provide ships for all of your operations?

A. Yes, in Japan the Base Force is merely a local defense force providing auxiliary vessels, patrol vessels and minesweepers.

Q. Were the troops and land forces supplied by Army or Navy ships?

A. The troops and supplies were carried in vessels chartered by the Army.

RESTRICTED