

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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 195)
NAV. NO. 46

Place: Tokyo
Date: 27 October 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Battle of GUADALCANAL - MIDWAY - MUNDA and RABAUL.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Lieut. Comdr. S. YUNOKI, IJN. Main battery Fire Control director on HIEI (BB) at Battle of GUADALCANAL 12-14 November 1942. Gunnery Officer on DD at Battle of MIDWAY, escorting transports. Gunnery Officer, MUNDA February - June 1943.

Where interviewed: Room 340, MEIJI Building.

Interrogator: Captain C. Shands, USN.

Interpreter: Lieut. Comdr. D. Bartlett, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: None.

SUMMARY

(a) HIEI received about 85 hits from cruisers during night battle at GUADALCANAL, 12-13 November 1942. Dive-bombed and torpedoed during next day. Sank from damage and scuttling night 14 November.

(b) Transports received one unsuccessful high horizontal-bomber attack late afternoon 3 June. No hits but possible minor superstructure damage from one near miss. Night attack from a seaplane. One transport damaged but not sunk. About 1000 Marines destined to occupy SAND ISLAND and 1000 Army for EASTERN ISLAND. Transports joined main body and returned JAPAN following carrier battle.

(c) MUNDA and KOLOMBANGARA Field used for staging planes in attacks on GUADALCANAL. MUNDA under constant bombing attacks by dive and torpedo-bombers from GUADALCANAL. Food and ammunition dumps regularly destroyed. Runways damaged but repairable. KUROSHIO and OYASHIO (DDs) sunk by dive-bombers while assisting KAGERO (DD) which was sunk by mines. KIRIGAWA MARU sunk by dive-bombers off VELLA LAVELLA. MINEGUJO and MURASAME (DDs) sunk by cruisers in night action. Mines in vicinity of MUNDA seriously effected supply lines. Heavy bombers damage RABAUL landing strip; dive-bombers damage supply ships.

TRANSCRIPT

Transcript of Interrogation (Lieut. Comdr. YUNOKI, S., IJN)

GUADALCANAL

Q. What was your mission at the Battle of GUADALCANAL, 12-14 November 1942?

A. I was Fire Control Director for the main battery on the HIEI (BB), which was Vice Admiral ABE's flagship. We were leading the KIRISHIMA and were supposed to bombard the airfield, but when we saw your ships we bombarded them instead. We think we sank several, but we had special ammunition for the field so were not too sure.

Q. How many hits did you receive?

A. About 85 hits above the waterline from cruisers and destroyers during the night action. No torpedo hits until the next day. We were hit by a number of aircraft torpedoes, but only three exploded. We received dive-bomber hits several times during the day. About noon we were attacked by 9 Boeing bombers which were very high. There may have been two groups of bombers. No hits.

Q. Was the HIEI sunk as a result of these hits?

A. No, it was scuttled during the night. We lost about 300 men out of 1300.

Q. Were any ships sunk during the night of the 12th?

A. I don't think so. We did not have radar and when we turned on our search lights the American cruisers concentrated upon the HIEI, which was not lost until the next night.

Q. Before the HIEI sank, did it bombard GUADALCANAL?

A. No, the damage was too great. When it was dark we transferred to destroyers. We went to RABAU then to TRUK.

MIDWAY

A. What was your mission at MIDWAY?

Q. I was Gunnery Officer on a destroyer. We escorted supply and troop transports to occupy MIDWAY. 2nd Destroyer Squadron, JINTSU flagship. 12 destroyers about 15 transports. About 1000 Marines were to land at SAND ISLAND and about 1000 Army on EASTERN ISLAND. There were also some engineers.

Q. Was your force ever attacked?

A. Yes, it was attacked twice. The first time was the late afternoon on 3 June, the day before the main battle. The second time was about midnight the same night.

Q. What type of attack was it?

A. The first attack was from high horizontal Boeing bombers. It was a surprise attack. We were on a straight course about 10kts. We did not know the bombers were there until the bombs exploded in the water. One bomb landed close to a transport and caused a little superstructure damage. I was severely punished because we did not open fire until the bombs splashed, but we did not have radar and they were too high to easily see. No other hits made on our ships.

Q. When was the second attack?

A. About midnight the same day, a seaplane attacked one of the transports. It was very low. We thought it dropped a torpedo. It hit one transport and damaged it, but did not sink. The plane strafed killing a few men.

Transcript of Interrogation (Lieut. Comdr. YUNOKI, S., IJN)

Q. Who was in command of the Occupation Force?
A. Vice Admiral KONDO. Rear Admiral SHIRAISHI was Chief of Staff.

Q. Where did you go when you retired?
A. We joined the main body which returned to JAPAN. Later the troops returned to SAIPAN.

MUNDA - RABAUL

Q. How many fields did you have at MUNDA?
A. Two. One at MUNDA and one at KOLOMBANGARA. We had 24 fighters based there but they were all damaged a week after their arrival. After that, planes did not base there. It was used to service planes from RABAUL after attacking GUADALCANAL.

Q. How many anti-aircraft guns did you have there?
A. 18x75mm, 50x25mm, 20x40mm, single and twin mounts. A large number of the machine guns which gave better results against dive-bombers. We think we shot down about 300 planes during the 5 month period beginning February.

Q. Did you have any radar equipment?
A. We had none at MUNDA. We received notice of your airplanes by radio from our spotters on other islands.

Q. How much damage was caused by our bombing raids?
A. We were not often attacked by heavy-bombers at MUNDA, but the dive-bombers and torpedo-bombers made very serious attacks. Food and ammunition dumps were also constantly destroyed. Runways were badly damaged by raids but were usually fixed again within 48 hours.

Q. Were you present at MUNDA when any of the ship bombardments occurred?
A. I left there 27 June 1943 and went to RABAUL, but I was present during some. They did not do much damage except to runways. Much damage there but was repaired in two or three days. Men became restless during shelling.

Q. Were any ships sunk by aircraft during that period?
A. Yes. In May 1943 the destroyer KAGERO was sunk by mines between KOLOMBANGARA and GIZO. The destroyers KUROSHIO and OYASHIO went to help it but dive-bombers came out of a rain squall and sank them at the same time. They didn't expect dive-bombers in such heavy rain. The MICHISHIO (DD) was badly damaged in the same attack.

A small cargo vessel was also sunk by dive-bombers off the northern coast of VELLA LAVELLA about the same time. The transport KIRIGAWA MARU was sunk by dive-bombers in early February 1943 off East coast of VELLA LAVELLA.

Q. Do you know of any ships sunk or damaged during the night surface action in that area?

A. In March 1943, the DDs MINEGUMO and MURASAME were sunk during a bombardment by your cruisers. That is all I know about.

Q. Did you sweep the mines after they were laid?

A. No, we had no mine sweepers in that area. Because it was near GUADALCANAL, it would not have been safe to operate them. We saw mines being laid by ships and planes but could do nothing about it. It made it very difficult to get supplies. I had to leave MUNDA in a small wooden cargo boat.

Transcript of Interrogation (Lieut. Comdr. YUNOKI, S., IJN)

Q. Did you have sufficient supplies to continue fighting?

A. When I left MUNDA in June 1943, we had about 3 months food supply but only about 1 months supply of anti-aircraft ammunition. We expected you to occupy MUNDA soon. We had about 12,000 men in the area but not much ammunition. We lost about 200 men on anti-aircraft guns from strafing, between February and June 1943. It was difficult to maintain anti-aircraft gun crew discipline.

Q. How effective was the bombing upon RABAUL?

A. I was only there December 1943 to January 1944. The horizontal-bombers did damage to the runways because they carried more big bombs. We couldn't fire machine guns at them because they were too high. We just had to sit and watch. The dive-bombers did some damage to the landing strips but not as much as big bombers. The dive-bombers did much damage to shipping and supply dumps. Strafing planes did some damage to machine gun crews when they came in less than 1000 meters.

Q. How effective were the night attacks?

A. At RABAUL they did very little damage. At MUNDA food dumps were burned. Lost more sleep than supplies.

Q. Did you have any Japanese Army pilots operating in that area?

A. Except during the first week at MUNDA when we had only Navy pilots, there were no pilots there. Just landed and flew away again. Some Army pilots were on KOLOMBANGARA but they did not do much.