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

INTERROGATION NO. 453

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 27 November 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis.

Subject: JAAF Personnel and training.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Maj KINUGASA Toshio - age 31, graduate of Military Academy (Infantry).  
Took some flight training at Air Academy in 1942 while teaching there  
but was never commissioned a pilot.

Assignments:

January 1942 - July 1943 - Instructor in basic subjects at Air Academy

July 1943 - June 1944 - Staff Officer of 4th Air Army (Kokugun).

June 1944 - August 1945 - Staff Officer (personnel section) of Air HQ  
(Koku Hombu)

Where interviewed: Meiji Building

Interrogator: Captain John C. West

Interpreter - Mr. Takashi T. Sato

SUMMARY

Maj KINUGASA was able to provide personnel figures on total strength of the JAAF at the end of the war, and had some idea of the percentage of casualties suffered during the war.



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- Q. I note from the documents you have given me (See Enc. #1 and #2) that the total strength of the JAAF, including all categories, at the end of the war is 473,891. Does that include both flying personnel and ground personnel?
- A. Yes, it does.
- Q. How many casualties did the JAAF suffer during the war?
- A. We lost approximately 17,895 flying personnel during the war due to both battle casualties and accident casualties. I'm not sure of the exact number of personnel of other categories which were casualties. However, only about 3% of our total strength was flying personnel (of all categories). We suffered roughly 20% casualties among non-flying personnel. (After some calculation it was determined that this ratio would mean that JAAF ground personnel lost approximately 92,000 casualties during the war).
- Q. Doesn't this casualty figure seem a little high to you?
- A. Possibly, but remember we lost many maintenance personnel in the Philippines.
- Q. Another thing that we'd like to ask you concerns the physical standards for admittance to the cadet training program during various stages of the war. Can you tell us about this?
- A. A little. I know they kept the same mental standards during the war and I don't think they lowered their physical standards very much. They did lower the age for admitting cadets from 17 years in 1941 to 16 years in 1944. The height remained at 155 cm. throughout the entire war. However, not too much emphasis was placed on physical condition. Of course people who wore glasses were never admitted, but the greatest emphasis was placed on various mechanical aptitude tests. These standards were undoubtedly lowered during the war.
- Q. In order to meet these physical and adaptability standards, did the JAAF get the pick of the conscription groups or did voluntary enlistments fill all quotas?
- A. The Air Force always prided itself on being a voluntary organization. Practically everyone wanted to be a flier and it was quite an honor to be selected for this training.
- Q. Did this volunteer system last throughout the war?
- A. No, in 1943 when we lost so many pilots, we had to conscript men who had mechanical aptitude and teach them to become pilots.
- Q. Was this the first time that the JAAF had to draft personnel?
- A. Yes, it was.
- Q. How were regular, non-commissioned officer pilots selected and trained prior to the war?
- A. First they had to pass rigid physical and mental examinations. Then they were trained at the various Air Schools.
- Q. Did they get all their training at the Air Schools (Hiko Gakko)?
- A. No, they only received their basic flying instruction there. Then they were assigned to a unit and received the rest of their training in the unit.
- Q. How about officers?
- A. Officers received their basic flying instruction at the Air Academy. Then they went to the Air Schools for their advanced training.
- Q. Then the Air Schools (Hiko Gakko) prior to 1941 had two divisions, one to give basic instruction to non-commissioned officers and the other to give advanced training to officers?
- A. Yes, that is right.
- Q. When was this changed?
- A. It lasted until our big expansion in 1943-44. At that time the regular non-coms were no longer trained in the Air Schools but were trained with reserve personnel in Renshu, Kyciku and Rensei units.

Q. How about the officers now?

A. The officers continued as before, getting their basic instruction at the Academy and their advanced training at the Air Schools. Of course the Air Schools were renamed Training Divisions (Kyodo Hikoshidan).

Q. Did this mean that more officers could be trained?

A. Yes, the schools had more room for officers after they stopped training the non-coms.

Q. You referred to the big expansion program in 1943-44. Do you know exactly why this expansion?

A. I know we lost a great many pilots in 1943, and a lot of people here were just beginning to realize how important our Air Force was.

Q. Did the reports from the U.S. about building a large air force at this time influence your expansion?

A. I don't think so. We just realized that more air power was necessary, although I know we learned about your big air force from the Germans and from intercepted radio broadcasts.

Q. Did the JAAF ever get any help from the German Air Force in the way of organization plans, a/c or the like?

A. Not to my knowledge. Of course I understand that we got some technical help, but it wasn't in time. I know that we got no help so far as organizational methods, etc. went.