

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY - R E S T R I C T E D
(PACIFIC)
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. 362

(Japanese Intel. No. 19)

TOKYO

Date: 12 Nov. 1945

Division of Origin: Japanese Intelligence Division, G-2, USSBS

Subject: Organization and Operation of Japanese Army Air Force.

Person interrogated and background:

Lt. Col. ASHIHARA, T.

1928 Commissioned 2nd Lt. Army, Arty.

1933 As bombardier of Heavy Bomber Squadron.

1934 Recd pilot training and became Company CO of Light Bomber Unit.

1939 (to July 1941) Became instructor in Army Air Academy Toyooka Airport - IKUMAGAWA.

1941 (Aug to Feb) Staff member 4th HIKODAN, 5th Air Division, in Burma and Thailand.

1944 (Mar to June) HOKOTA Light Bomber School, Instructor.

1944 July (to April 1945) KOKU, HONBU (Air Headquarters) 2nd Dept.

1945 April (to end of war) Head of CHOSA-KA (Inquiry Dept) at Koku Hombu (Air Headquarters) and Koku Sogun (Air General Army)

Where interviewed: Room 554, Meiji Building.

Interrogators: Maj. R. S. Spilman, AC
Lt. Comdr. Paine Paul, USNR

Interpreter: Lt. (jg) Scribner McCoy, USNR

Allied Officers Present: None.



RESTRICTED

362-1-

SUMMARY

Col. ASHIHARA was head of the Technical Intelligence Section of KOKU HONBU (Air Hq.) and, concurrently, chief of Operational Intelligence of KOKU SOGUN (Air General Army). A single overworked staff of 5 to 8 officers, 3 petty officers, 1 civilian and 10 file clerks did the work for both sections. The combined sections were concerned with 3 types of information: (1) matters within the homeland, (2) information about own forces, (3) information about the enemy. The last is ASHIHARA's definition of JOHO (military intelligence). Sources of information were Imperial G. H. Q., lower echelons and reconnaissance units.

The Technical Intelligence Section received data from technical officers as far down as the division (SHIDAN), and from foreign diplomatic representatives. Reports were made to the research laboratory at TACHIKAWA occasionally from there to civilian aircraft research laboratories. The Naval Air Arm, Fleet, and Army Ground forces had similar organizations.

The Operational Intelligence Section received reports from:

- (1) Army Air Units (no lower than divisions, which assembled data from subordinate units) covering location and strength of enemy, technical data, enemy tactics and results of own (Japanese) attacks,
- (2) Land Units - covering details of enemy air attacks, (usually inaccurate)
- (3) Diplomatic sources, including fragmentary information about new aircraft type, location of air units, and tactics. (The best information about production of B-29 was obtained from U.S. radio broadcasts.)
- (4) Navy - re U.S. carrier task forces.
- (5) Civilian agencies - concerning air raids, bomb damage etc, reported through the Home Ministry.

Reports were prepared by the Operational Intelligence Section from these sources and disseminated to Army and Air Defense Divisions by radio, if urgent, by document, if less urgent, and by air courier. Estimates of enemy intentions were beyond the scope of Col. ASHIHARA's sections and were prepared by Imperial G.H.Q.

Photo intelligence in the SOGUN was ineffective. In July, 1945, a photo reconnaissance squadron was assigned directly to SOGUN but was limited by the range of the planes.

Intelligence officers received no specific training. The lack of training is considered by ASHIHARA to have been a major cause of the defeat.

- END OF SUMMARY -

Transcript of Interrogation (Lt. Col. ASHIMURA, T.)

- Q.1. What is the Colonel's military background?
- A. (See first page.)
- Q.2. Were you with Col. MIYASHI in CBI, 1941 and 1942?
- A. (See first page.)
- Q.3. Joho (Intelligence) can mean many things. What was the Japanese Army's (Air Forces) conception? What does it include?
- A. (1) Information within the country.
(2) Information re our own forces.
(3) Information about the enemy.
The 3rd is my definition of JOHO.
- Q.4. What were the principal information sources about the enemy?
- A. From three (3) places:
(1) Imperial HQ.
(2) Own lower echelons.
(3) From reconnaissance units.
- Q.5. What type of information was received from Imperial HQs?
- A. It covered all types of intelligence. Reports received at SOGUN and HOMBURU were those considered pertinent.
- Q.6. We have the impression that the Japanese AAF intelligence includes reports of agents (diplomatic), communication interception, and various things that make up order of battle. Is that correct?
- A. Correct. The air units get intelligence from its own agent and at the same time, that agent reports to Imperial HQ and it is then distributed.
- Q.7. Is weather intelligence considered part of intelligence or operations?
- A. Part of intelligence work, but it is separate. There is a central weather unit at HQ.
- Q.8. Will you outline your duties in 1st Section of KOKU HOMBURU, July 1944?
- A. To investigate technical data on enemy aircraft.
- Q.9. Actual examination was done at TACHIKAWA?
- A. HOMBURU passed information on to the technical dept of HOMBURU and also to TACHIKAWA.
- Q.10. This information sent to TACHIKAWA is compiled by whom?
- A. Generally from reports of overseas diplomatic representatives. (He is speaking not of crash intelligence but of written data on our planes)

Transcript of Interrogation (Lt. Col. ASHIHARA, T.)

- Q.11. Did HOMBU get copies of U.S. and BR. technical magazines during wartime? Trade magazines?
- A. Yes. They were usually 6 months old and not useful.
- Q.12. Were special teams sent from TOKYO HQ to examine crashed allied planes?
- A. The technical officer, only as far down as the Division (SHIDAN) receives reports of crashes. He goes there and investigates. If there is a new piece of equipment, HOMBU will ask for it. If he can examine it there, he simply sends HOMBU a report on it.
- Q.13. Were any parts sent to civilian aircraft factories for re-search?
- A. A part received at TACHIKAWA may be sent on to civilian researchers if TACHIKAWA considers it worthwhile.
- Q.14. Did the Navy (Air) have a similiar organization at YOKOSUKA?
- A. The 3rd Section (similiar to Army 2nd Section) gets similiar reports. I believe the actual work is done at YOKUSKA technical laboratory.
- Q.15. Fleet and Army ground forces?
- A. The same system is used by both.
- Q.16. Outline your principal duties at KOKU SOGAN.
- A. At the SOGUN, I was in the operational intelligence dept.
- Q.17. Col. MIYASHI report says he was in both technical and operational intelligence. What were the functions of the two (2) branches?
- A. As a HOMBU representative, I was in technical intelligence. As a SOGUN representative, I was in operational intelligence. I held both positions at the same time.
- Q.18. How many men were on the SOGUN staff, (Operational Intelligence)?
- A. At least 5, at most 8 officers - 3 petty officers, 1 civilian agent, 10 girls (for filing of reports and telegrams). The number varied because everyone was overworked and many became ill.
- Q.19. What was the HOMBU staff?
- A. One staff took care of both units, the same staff.
- Q.20. We will concentrate on SOGUN. Describe in detail type of reports that SOGUN received from G.H.Q.
- A. They cover 5 divisions:
1. Army Air Unit reports (from lower units)
 2. Army Land Force reports.
 3. Diplomatic reports.

4. Navy reports.

5. Civilian reports.

Q.21. What type of information did lower units send to TOKYO, to either HOMBU or SOGUN?

A. Nothing lower than a division sends in reports. Division gathers and rewrites reports from lower units.

Q.22. What were the subjects covered through the SHIDAN?

A. The enemy location and strength, technical aircraft data, captured documents, enemy tactics, results of own attacks.

Q.23. What subjects were covered in reports from land units?

A. Land units report enemy attacks (air), losses (own), number of raids, direction of attack, plane types, (these reports were not accurate), location of enemy crashes, a list of the contents of the plane. These came through DAI HONEI to HOMBU.

Q.24. What subjects were covered by Diplomatic reports?

A. (1) Usually fragmentary on new aircraft types, performance and equipment.

(2) Location and number of enemy air units.

(3) New tactics.

Q.25. Were diplomatic agents asked to supply information regarding morale and economic capabilities of enemy countries?

A. Occasionally.

Q.26. What reports on American aircraft and armament production were received from 1944 on?

A. Regarding U.S. production, we got nothing better than radio broadcasts.

Q.27. Did you believe them?

A. We considered them generally accurate. The fragmentary reports on B-29's enabled technicians to estimate their size and performances.

Q.28. Did you know that B-29's were going to operate from China bases long before they got there?

A. Yes, We thought they would be able to fly from China bases.

Q.29. What type of reports did the Navy send in?

A. Mainly about U.S. carrier task forces and carrier-based planes.

Q.30. What reports were received from civilian agencies?

A. These were not important - damage, bomb types, number of planes etc., reported through Home Ministry (NAIMU SHO). These reports from Home Ministry went to DAI ICHI SOGUN and also to the I.H.Q.

Transcript of Interrogation (Lt. Col. ASHIHARA, T.)

Q.31. After all this information was collected, what types of reports were prepared by the SOGUN for dissemination?

A. There were 3 methods:

- (1) Wireless for urgent information (new tactics, new aircraft, etc, and enemy movements). These were sent to GUNS and also directly to the 3 BOKU SENTO HAIKO SHIDAN (home island air defense divisions).
- (2) By document - less urgent matters. Later this became impossible and these, also, were sent by radio.
- (3) Short messages were sent by air courier.

Q.32. Were many copies of documents sent to the KOGUN to provide for distribution?

A. These went down only to Division Headquarters. They then reproduced items pertinent to lower units.

Q.33. What subjects did SOGUN report on to lower units?

A. Information from PCW and captured documents, technical intelligence, order of battle.

Q.34. Were studies made of U.S. flak characteristics and sent down to lower units?

A. These reports came from flyers initially and were sent to Division Headquarters (SHIDAN). There they were analyzed and a report sent to SOGUN. They in turn made further analysis and sent out instructions.

Q.35. What information regarding plane and ship recognition was compiled and sent to lower units?

A. I.HQ printed pamphlets which were sent to SOGUN and they took care of distributing aircraft information. These contained photographs and performance data, when known.

Q.36. Were consolidated estimates of enemy losses compiled and distributed up or down from your office?

A. Yes. Estimates were distributed down as well as up.

Q.37. What studies did SOGUN make of enemy intentions?

A. Generally in 2 divisions:

- (1) Studies of enemy tactics were done by defense experts, not in my group.
- (2) Larger moves were estimated by I.HQ and their estimates were used by SOGUN.

Q.38. At LEYTE, we found a good study on future attacks by B-29's, number of aircraft in CHINA, tonnage capabilities, number of sorties, and amount of expected damage to Japan. (1) Did SOGUN prepare it? (2) If not, who did?

A. Likely, I.HQ did it because the SOGUN was not established at the time of the LEYTE landing.

Transcript of Interrogation (Lt. Col. ASHIHARA, T.)

- Q.39. What section of DAI HONBEI probably prepared it?
- A. The 2nd Section.
- Q.40. How much Photo Interpretation and information did SOGUN get?
- A. In July, 1945, the photo unit, only, of SHIMOSHIZU (an observation training division) was attached directly to SOGUN. This occurred too late to be effective and operations were limited by the range of the planes, which flew only as far as IWO JIMA. Prior to July, there was no photo unit at SOGUN. The GUNS and SHIDANS had photo units in their observation units working mainly for their own Headquarters. Copies of photos finally arrived at SOGUN, but too late to be useful.
- Q.41. How much information was passed to the Navy and Ground forces by SOGUN?
- A. Mainly, information to the Navy concerned attacks on home islands. To Army land forces the same information was sent from SOGUN through I.HQ. Only matters which concerned either group were passed to them.
- Q.42. Did the Japanese AAF make a study of German Intelligence methods?
- A. Reports on aircraft types, date, and defense tactics, but not much on attack methods.
- Q.43. But how about German Intelligence organization and procedures?
- A. Regarding their organization, we realized that we could learn from them; but details of their methods did not come in from our agents there.
- Q.44. On what basis were intelligence officers chosen for higher Headquarters? (SOGUN, I.HQ, etc.)
- A. Unfortunately, there was no set training for new officers. New ones would be checked for qualifications, but they learned by experience.
- Q.45. What influence did information furnished by SOGUN or HOMBURU have on planning (strategic)?
- A. The SOGUN had little influence and were on the defensive most of the time. HOMBURU had difficulty assembling information toward the end of the war and had little influence.
- Q.46. Did Col. MIYASHI and Col. ASHIHARA participate in Tactical planning?
- A. I had only intelligence duties, but MIYASHI as head of Section did participate. (as Operation's Officer)
- Q.47. What information regarding Allied intentions and capabilities did SOGUN consider most reliable?
- A. Information regarding intentions was considered most important. This came best through communication intercepts; also, by analysis of past attacks and ship movements.

Transcript of Interrogation (Lt. Col. ASHIHARA, T.)

Q.46. Did you consider these sources accurate as to our landing intentions?

A. There were no alternatives, but to rely on this information.

Q.49. In 1939 to 1941, at the Academy, what courses did you teach?

A. Morale Training (Student Administration, not a training course).

Q.50. Were any subjects taught at TOYOKA dealing with intelligence?

A. Included in the general outline was very general instruction in intelligence methods applying to land forces. We needed something for air intelligence, but nothing was developed. I believe this is responsible for our losing the war (the small importance placed on intelligence generally).

Q.51. Have you a copy of the manual used in instruction?

A. Yes. I will send it to you. ("SAKUSEN YOMU REI" - name of book)