

A Comdr Watts (Comdr Stanley)
Col Robert [unclear] - mil studies - 258
HEADQUARTERS
U S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

5-1

ANNEX B

INTERROGATION NO. _____
(Obtain from G-2)

PLACE Tokyo, Japan
DATE 25 Oct. 1945 TIME 1400

Division Of Origin Bureau of Military Affairs, Navy Ministry.

SUBJECT: Submarine Transportation of Critical Commodities and Local Navy Shipping in the Southern Area.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

on Col. Munson GHQ
Japanese: Capt. Watanabe, Yasuji; Commander Ishiwata, Hiroshi; Commander Doi, Kazuo.

Where interviewed (office) Navy Ministry.

Interrogator: Maj. R. O. Bennett

Interpreter: Lt. (jg) Few.

Allied Officers Present:

845

~~Summary~~: Interview:

The Japanese officers interrogated are assigned to the Bureau of Military Affairs, Navy Ministry. All three appeared to be fairly well informed. Capt. Watanabe was the only officer who spoke English fluently.

Capt. Watanabe stated that the Navy Staff Office (Gunreibu) had final authority in matters of submarine transportation. Requests for submarine transportation were taken up with this office.

The Japanese had no transport submarines at the beginning of the war. The need for them arose at the time of the battle for Guadalcanal.

At that time the Army came to the Gunreibu with the request that essential supplies be transported to the Solomons by submarine. The proposal was opposed at first because it detracted from the power

of their offensive submarine warfare. However it was eventually adopted and as the war progressed supplies were sent to the following areas as well as to the Guadalcanal area; Lae - Salamana, Truk, Marshalls, Wake, Nauree, Ocean Is, and Marcus. The extent of submarine supply to isolated garrisons is indicated by the fact that one-half of the submarines constructed during the war were of the transport type. Some of the submarines constructed were for Army operation and use; a number soldiers was sent to a Navy submarine school for instruction in the operation of the transport submarines. Twenty-seven transport submarines were built in 1944 and 1945. Capt. Watanabe undertook to furnish a complete list of the transport submarines built during the war and those sunk. This list will be submitted on or about 1 November.

To the best of his knowledge, Watanabe believed transportation by submarine between Germany and Japan began in June 1942. The recollection of the three officers was quite hazy on this subject and the detailed records of the traffice were allegedly burned, but Watanabe will furnish such a record of this traffic as he can on or about 1 November. They believed that "5 or 6" Japanese submarines were employed in this traffic and of them "3 or 4 " were sunk. "Several" German submarines were used in this traffic and beginning early in 1945, the Japs attempted to persuade the Germans to put more submarines in this traffic but without success. Commander Doi recalled the sinking of the following Jap subs: the I-30 which was sunk by a mine in Feb. 1944 at the entrance to Singapore harbor as it was returning from a voyage from Germany; the I-29 which was sunk by submarine in Luzon Strait in July 1944 on its way from Japan to Batavia to leave from there for Germany; and the I-52 which was sunk in the Atlantic Ocean in Aug. 1944 on its was to Germany.

Two large German submarines suitable for transport purposes were given to the Japanese by Hitler - one was brought to Kure safely by a German crew in Sept. 1943 and one was received in Germany in Feb. 1944 and was sunk on its trip to Japan operated by a Japanese crew.

Watanabe knew of no existing records of the actual voyages made between Germany and Japan but will attempt to reconstruct such information as he can from personal recollections of himself and others. This is to be ready about 1 November. He believed that in the main the submarines bound for Germany carried rubber and gold and those for Japan carried technical personnel, mechanical drawings, models of machinery. He believed the customary termines in Jap-held territory was Penang or Batavia and in German-held territory, Brest or Wilkelmshaven.

In response to the question of the extend of submarine transportation of critical commodities from the Southern Area back to Japan, Watanabe stated this was planned but not put into operation. Plans were made for the transportation of such commodities but the Navy Staff Office decided that submarines were too scarce to warrant the use of them for this purpose. He believed that none of these planned trips were carried out.

Capt. Watanabe was interrogated about the extent of local shipping in the Southern Area in B ships. However he reported that Commander Ojiro was better informed than he on this subject. Commander Ojiro is presently engages in preparing a report on this matter and recommended seeing him.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 22

Subject: Use of Submarines as Supply Ships.

(Note: Since this subject is outside of the jurisdiction of the Yokosuka Naval Station, inquiry was made to the Navy Ministry. The answer was compiled by the research department there, with the result that a slight delay resulted in receiving the reply).

1. A submarine was used as a supply ship for the first time in August, 1942.

2. The plan and decision to supply provisions and ammunition by submarines was made by the headquarters of the Combined Fleet.

3. The maximum loading capacity (unit: tons) for submarines was as follows:

I-1	30 tons.
I-361	80 tons.
I-351	aviation fuel, 400 tons.
I-16	50 tons.
Ro-35	15 tons.
I-180	30 tons.
Ro-100	10 tons.
Ha-101	50 tons.

4. Special submarines type I-361, type I-351, and type Ha-101 were built for the purpose of carrying supplies.

No special changes were made to fit out combatant submarines for this purpose.

5. The following 24 submarines carrying supplies were lost:
I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-7, I-9, I-13, I-16, I-24, I-32,
I-42, I-52, I-55, I-171, I-176, I-181, I-351, I-362, I-364,
I-365, I-371, I-373, Ro-112, Ro-113.

6. Submarines were used to evacuate personnel from Truk. They were also used to evacuate personnel from Kiska Island, Guadalcanal, Lae (New Guinea), Luzon Island, and Guam.