

HEADQUARTERS  
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO # 234  
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO: (USSBS NO. 606)  
NAV NO. 118

PLACE: TOKYO  
DATE: 20 DECEMBER 1945

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis.

SUBJECT: ALEUTIAN CAMPAIGN, Information on Japanese Second  
Mobile Force and the KISKA Garrison from U.S.  
Prisoners of War.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Lieutenant (junior grade) Wylie M. HUNT, U.S. Naval Reserve, co-pilot of a Navy PBY search plane on patrol southwest of DUTCH HARBOR on the day of the first Japanese carrier raid. He and two crew members were rescued from a life raft by the Japanese heavy cruiser TAKAO after his plane was shot down by the raiding force's carrier fighter cover.

William C. HOUSE, Aerographer's Mate first class, U.S. Navy, the senior petty officer in charge of the U.S. Aerological Detail, KISKA Island. HOUSE stayed in hiding in the hills of KISKA for about 50 days until forced by hunger and cold to give himself up. He remained on the island until 20 September 1942.

Interrogator: Captain J.S. RUSSELL, U.S. Navy.

SUMMARY

The movements of the Japanese Second Mobile Force which attacked DUTCH HARBOR are generally confirmed as is the Japanese lack of intelligence on airfields in the vicinity of DUTCH HARBOR. In the second interrogation some dates, times, units and operations of the Japanese KISKA occupation force are given together with an impression of early U.S. bombing and the Japanese casualties they incurred.

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INTERVIEW with Lieut (jg) Wylie Mallory HUNT, by Captain J.S.  
RUSSELL, U.S. Navy.

- Q. Will you please tell us in your own words the story of your scouting mission from UMNAK on the morning of 3 June 1942?
- A. Our take off time was 0300 on 3 June, course approximately 210°, ground speed about 130 knots; heavy overcast, squalls and light rain. We flew until about 0500 at which time we were attacked by Japanese fighter planes covering a carrier of an attacking force. We were searching by radar and had had no indication of the enemy's presence before the attack. Our starboard engine was shot out in the first attack and our plane set on fire. We were flying at about 1,000 ft., overcast at about 1500 ft. Several fighters made one pass apiece at us. Our course was approximately down wind, but a turn was made and we landed into the wind. The pilot Lieut. (jg) CUSICK received one bullet through his arm. He and the enlisted pilot made the landing. The bow hatch and the tunnel hatch were both open and we did not have time to close them before landing. As a result, immediately upon landing, the plane began to fill rapidly with water and sank a very few minutes after landing. We estimated our position to be 200 miles, bearing 210° from UMNAK field. The plane captain and the remainder of the crew got out the large seven man life raft and attempted to launch this raft. I stopped and picked up the small two man life raft and launched it. I then assisted the first pilot away from the burning plane and into the raft. After we were aboard the raft, we saw that the crew were having trouble getting the large raft launched. In the small raft, besides Lieut. (jg) CUSICK and myself, were BROWN S1c, third mechanic of the plane and CREAMER, AOM3c, gunner. The large raft had bullet holes in it and would not float so two more men swam over and hung on to the side of the two man raft. These men were the plane captain, SILER, and the enlisted pilot, MORRISON. SILER stayed with our raft for a few minutes and then, seeing the large raft still afloat, swam back to it and tried once again to make it seaworthy. He was unable to do so and as we were drifting quite rapidly with the high wind, he was unable to reach us again. MORRISON remained holding to the side of the raft for approximately one hour before he died of exposure. Lieut. (jg) CUSICK died from his wound and the cold about one hour after MORRISON. The three of us left in the raft drifted for approximately five hours more, until about noon, at which time we were sighted by a Japanese cruiser operating with the attacking force.

It steamed over and picked us up. (Note: Although not established by Lieut. (jg) HUNT, this was the heavy cruiser TAKAO). The cruiser which picked us up, I recognized as a heavy cruiser with five turrets.

The three of us were in pretty bad shape at the time we were picked up due to the cold. BROWN was almost unconscious in the water. The Japs threw a line down, which CREAMER secured around BROWN's waist and the latter was hauled up to the deck of the cruiser by the Japanese crew. CREAMER and I made our own way up a steel ladder which they lowered to us. I was able to get up the ladder until my waist was even with the deck and then couldn't get any further. As soon as we were aboard ship, we were given a hot bath. Our clothing was removed and kept and we were dressed in Japanese clothing. We were then taken below deck. We were given hot food and drink (hot saki and hot milk.) A doctor examined each of us. We were then given blankets and a place to lie down. Our compartment below deck was fairly large sized with a partition in the center. We were kept apart with three guards standing continuous watch so that we could not talk to one another. I was kept on one side of the partition and the two enlisted men on the other, who were themselves separated by a canvas partition. The two crew members were then allowed to go to sleep. I was permitted to rest for about an hour, at the end of which time three Japanese officers came down and began asking me questions. At this time they were particularly interested in knowing how many planes we had in the DUTCH HARBOR Area, how many ships and of what class there were in the vicinity, whether or not we had advance notice of their coming, and the location of dispersal points for the planes in the area. I had been in the DUTCH Harbor Area for a period of only about one week and pleaded ignorance to all the questions they asked. This interrogation lasted for about three hours. I was then permitted to go to sleep, but was awakened again about 1900 for another seige of about the same duration and covering the same subjects. The following day, questions were repeated through most of the day.

On the third day, I was left alone until shortly after noon. At this time a Japanese Lieut. Comdr. aviator came down and began asking me questions. He told me that he was from one of the aircraft carriers and that he had participated in both of the attacks upon DUTCH Harbor. I gathered from his conversation that he had been in the flight which was jumped by Army fighters over UMNAK. He appeared to be enraged over this. He started out by cuffing me about the head several times with his fists and striking me with a stick he carried. He then told me that I must tell where the Army planes which had attacked them that morning were coming from. I insisted I did not know; that I did not know the Army had a landing strip in the DUTCH Harbor Area. He persisted in his questions and abuses for about thirty minutes. He then left and a short time later some of the ship's officers came down and took the two enlisted men of my plane crew, who had been in the room with me, away to some other part of the ship.

They then tied me down in a chair with a rope about my neck and, with two Japanese sailors with fixed bayonets standing on either side, they handed me a slip of paper with three questions written on it. The first question was: How many Fighter Planes are there in the DUTCH Harbor Area and where are they based? Second question: What is the strength of the American Surface Units in the DUTCH Harbor Area? Third question: How many patrol planes are there in the DUTCH Harbor Area and where are the dispersal bases at which they are kept? I was told that I must answer these questions or be killed. I answered that I could not tell them the answers to these questions as I did not know. I was then untied, blind-folded, and taken up on the weather deck. A lead weight was tied around my waist and I was led out upon a small platform extending from the side of the ship out over the water. The blindfold was then removed from my eyes and the same slip of paper, with the questions which they wanted answered written upon it, was handed to me. I was told that if I did not answer the questions I would be shoved over the side. I asked the interpreter if there was a priest or minister aboard ship; that I would like to see him if there was. He sent for his dictionary to look up the words and then told me that there was no priest nor minister aboard ship. I then told them that I did not know the answers to the questions that they had asked. Upon this reply the interrogating officer left and a few minutes later returned and told me they were convinced I was telling the truth and that I would not be killed. During the rest of my stay on board ship until the 25th of June, (east longitude date), I was treated quite well.

We arrived at OMINATO on the 24th of June, (ELD), and stayed on board ship until about 2100 on the 25th, at which time we were taken to the railroad station and put on a train which took us to the OFUNA interrogation camp near TOKYO.

- Q. Have you any idea of the cruiser's employment while you were on board?
- A. Yes. It seemed to me that we cruised about in the ALEUTIAN vicinity for about five days.

After about five days we apparently joined up with some other units of a Japanese fleet of carriers, cruisers and destroyers. I couldn't tell what the size of the force was since I had only an occasional glimpse through a port-hole.

- Q. What were your movements during your time in JAPAN?
- A. I was kept at OFUNA seven months and was then transferred to YOKOHAMA Branch Camp #2. I stayed there five months and then was moved to ZENTSUJI prison camp on the Island of SHIKOKU, where I stayed until June 1945. This camp was then broken up and all the American Officers were transferred to the ROKUROSHI prison camp on HONSHU ISLAND, not far from FUKUI and ONO where we were when the war ended.

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Naval Analysis Division

20 December 1945

Interview with William Charles HOUSE, AerMlc, 393-07-82, USN  
By Captain J.S. RUSSELL, USN

Q. Will you please tell me about your capture on KISKA and what you saw while still on the Island?

A. At about 0214, 7 June 1942, (west longitude date, zone plus 11 time) the Jap landing force came around NORTH HEAD and opened fire. They were using 13 mm machine guns. The bullets sprayed through our quarters for a time and then stopped. We burned our codes and evacuated. As we were going up the hills behind the weather station we were fired at twice more, but we took cover in a ravine. We soon got above the cloud level and into the fog. Occasionally from our position we could see, through breaks in the clouds, different parts of the island and part of the harbor. As we got near the top of the ridge we could see the landing force to the east of us. They had made prisoners of two of the men, a pharmacist's mate and a cook, men by the names of Coffield and McCandless. The other eight of us split up as we went up the ravine. I got separated from the rest and was alone from this time on.

Q. Where did you go?

A. I spent the day in a ravine northwest of KISKA Harbor. That evening I came on down to a point just west of REYNARD Cove. Some Japanese troops came in from a gun boat and took up positions near me that night. I thought they were too close, so I moved inland and stayed for about ten days a half mile up in the hills west of REYNARD Cove.

Q. Do you know the name of the gun boat?

A. No sir, it was just a small gun-boat, a patrol boat. The first PBV came over on Thursday (I remember Sunday was the 7th. We were keeping west longitude dates.) It was mid-morning -- I had no watch, but I would estimate the time as being about 10 o'clock--and then later that day there were three more PBVs that came in from the northeast. The planes used two approaches, one through the pass from the west, the other down the Island from the volcano. The first PBV was very lucky to get out. He didn't expect to see anyone, I don't believe, and if the Japs had ever opened up on him it would have been too bad as he was flying low. I never thought he would get through but he did. There was a ship sunk in the harbor at KISKA. I don't know just when it was.

Q. Do you know the name of the ship?

A. No sir. It's still there. The mast was the only part of it above water when I left.

Q. Did you see her sink?

A. No, she was already sunk when I went in to the Harbor area the latter part of July, but the bow was still out of water. By the time I left, in September, she had settled completely and just the mast was out. I stayed in hiding in the hills inshore of REYNARD Cove about ten days, but, as the Japs fired at the planes making approaches from the northeast, there was too much shrapnel falling round my area, so I moved. We had some food and clothing and stuff cached in a tent in a ravine, north north-west of the weather station. I started off for this cache and by the time I got to the vicinity of the cache it was dark. There was a machine gun position somewhere nearby. I found many footprints and cigarette butts so gave up the idea of finding the cache. In the harbor area I could see many Japanese walking around and working on buildings so I came over the hills to the west side of the pass. It was raining, so I went into a cave in a hill on the north slope of the pass. There was a small lake there with two streams running out of it. I stayed in this area until 26 July. It was from about 17 June to 26 July that I stayed in the vicinity of the cave and lake, and during that time I could see the Bl7s coming over. About July the Japs brought in "Zeros" on floats, - about seven. Approximately the third night after we first saw the Japs, they brought in about six flying boats. Well, it was on the 26th of July that I decided my situation was hopeless and I gave myself up.

Q. What did you do for food while you were in hiding?

A. Just munched on grass and worms and whatever I could pick up. I think it was 1515 26 July, TOKYO time and date, when I gave myself up. When I came in there was a gun boat off shore at the main camp, and the Japanese were at their air raid stations. One Bl7 was coming in so they left me with a sentry while they manned their guns. There was no anti-aircraft fire. After securing from air alert they took me to the main camp. I was not interrogated that day. They gave me some soup beans and rice. The next day a doctor came to my place of confinement and looked me over. He told me that the other nine men of the U.S. weather station had been captured and already sent to JAPAN. I was confined in the old power house. After about two weeks they decided I should work.

Q. Where did you work?

A. I worked around the camp digging sod for camouflage. I peeled off sod and put it on the roofs of buildings. I think it was about 12 August that we had a surface bombardment from U.S. ships. They alerted and manned all their guns and kept all their people away from the barracks and out in the hills for two or three days following the bombardment. About the 16th of August some Bl7s laid several strings of bombs probably 100 pounders. The bombs did very little damage because the ground was so soft. Craters about 5 feet wide and 30 inches deep were made. Air

raids quieted down to a B17 coming over when it was a nice day but they never seemed to hit anything. They would just splash water on a ship when they dropped bombs, it seemed.

At one time in August I counted thirty-four ships in KISKA Harbor. Two were cruisers and about eight or so destroyers. The Japanese operated about seven large submarines from a tender, the LYONS MARU.

Q. How many midget submarines?

A. I never saw them.

Q. When did you leave KISKA?

A. That was on 20 September. On 12 September we saw a P-38 come over. It dove through the over-cast right over the signal tower and the Japs on the tower saw it and leaped off. About the 13th leaflets were dropped saying the garrison would be bombed out. On the morning of the 15th I was shoveling sand on a truck. I started work about 8 o'clock and about 0815 a raid started. We went off in the hills and when we came back I saw that it was a good bombing. The holes were about eight feet across and about four or five feet deep.

Q. You didn't know at that time that we had established a field at ADAK?

A. I had an idea but I wasn't sure.

Q. Tell me what you know of the raid on 15 September?

A. The first wave came over at about 0815, three waves followed in rapid succession. Several storage houses and the power house I was sleeping in were hit. An air-raid shelter where the radio men were staying was caved in.

On the afternoon of 20 September I was put aboard the NAGATA MARU, an ex-NYK liner.

Q. What size was it?

A. About 8 or 10,000 tons.

Q. Was she a passenger or cargo ship?

A. Cargo.

Q. What did she bring?

A. She brought troops and some Aleuts to KISKA in July, stayed around all summer and then brought troops from KISKA to ATTU in September. I think the ship got in about 12 September because they were in the harbor when the big raid came.

Q. Did the NAGATA MARU burn coal or oil?

A. She was a coal burner, speed about 9 knots. She sailed alone for JAPAN that night via South Pass. We went west to the

KAMCHATKA Peninsula and then down the west side of the KURILES.

Q. At what port did you first stop?

A. We stopped at OTARU, HOKKAIDO.

Q. What did you do at OTARU?

A. The Aleuts were discharged, 39 of them, and we took on coal. From there we went to HARODATE and stayed all night, anchored inside the harbor. The next morning we went out with a convoy of about six ships escorted by corvettes. The escorts dropped depth charges at about 1000 as we went through TSUGARU Straits. We anchored every night from there on traveling only during daylight. We came in to YOKOSUKA but I was kept in the hold. I was taken ashore at about 1000 6 August after I had been blindfolded. We went by electric train to OFUNA. It was a Naval Interrogation Camp. There I was interrogated only once. On 22 January I was taken to YOKOHAMA and lived in a warehouse opposite the OSAMA shipyards. I worked at the Mitsubishi shipyards in down-town YOKOHAMA.

Q. How long were you in that area?

A. Until May 1944. During the spring of 1943, the LYONS MARU came into dry dock. I tried to start a conversation with some of the sailors and one or two talked. They had evidently just left KISKA but I couldn't get much out of them.

Q. Any damage to the LYONS MARU?

A. No sir. I looked it over thoroughly. There was no evidence of shrapnel or bombs. I left YOKOHAMA on 12 May 1945 and arrived at KAMAISHI the 14th of May. I went to work in the Nippon Steel Company mill in the rolling section. On 14 July, 1945 the mill was shelled and put out of commission. From then on we spent our time digging out water mains, installing water lines and telephone lines. The second bombardment was similar to the first. Of about 200 prisoners of war, we lost about 32 men. The Japanese wouldn't let us get out of the yard during these bombardments. We had to keep working. I took shelter in the foundation of the rolling mill. The U.S.S. RESCUE came in to KAMAISHI Harbor and picked us up 15 September.

Q. Can you give me an estimate of the numbers and types of planes the Japanese used at KISKA?

A. Early in July, I saw the first seaplane fighter fly over my hideout. They were then just testing them out. After that they kept two float fighters in the air all the time as pickets. Before those airborne came down, two more went up and carried on. Shortly after 28 July, there were eight float fighters, and about two float reconnaissance planes in KISKA Harbor. The reconnaissance planes did very little after the fighters came in. They would just take off and hide until after the fighting was over.

Q. What was the maximum number of flying boats you saw?

A. About seven of them.

Q. Tell me anything you know about how they operated?

A. They would take off about dawn and return at 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon. They were patrolling all the time.

Q. What do you know of the damage to the flying boats? Can you remember any specific cases of sinking?

A. A storm washed one on the beach. The rest just disappeared. When I left in September this wrecked one was still on the beach and one flying around. There was one Jap pilot who seemed to be the hero of the float fighters. He was supposed to have shot down two B17s while there.

Q. Could you make a guess on Japanese personnel killed?

A. About 100 around where I was. On 15 September there were 40 or 50 including some brought off the ships, sailors I guess.

Q. Can you say anything more about Japanese ships in KISKA?

A. Not much more than I have said before. There were several gunboats used for patrolling the harbor and offshore. About 5 August a ship came in with about 5 float fighters on it. It stayed in port only a few days. The NAGATA MARU was used as a shuttle ship between ATTU and KISKA during the summer. Her crew were merchant marine plus about 40 Navy men in gun crew, searchlight and signal details. She carried a 5 inch gun on the bow, about a 3 inch gun on the stern and a big searchlight on the bridge. She had no torpedoes and no seaplanes.