"Fingers burned by U.S. Carriers"
MI — pp 33-38

MI NWC Project

Rough Draft - "Fingers Burnt by U.S. Carriers"

MI-1 pp 33-38

MI-1

→ Pre Midway ←

(War Games & Critique etc)

TRANSLATION OF THOSE PARTS OF "MIDWAY OPERATIONS" VOL __ (OF THE Japanese Defense Agency's Historical Section's history of operations in the Great East Asia War) dealing with the 2nd K Operation – a plan to reconnoiter Pearl Harbor (just prior to the B. of Midway) on nights of 29/30 May 1942 by Type 2 (Emily) flying boats from WOTJE, refuelling from submarines at French Frigate Shoals.

All times and dates herein are (-9) time and East Longitude Date

The history does not mention the exchange of despatches that must have taken place. In any event, Comb F staff officer — arrived Kwajalein on the 19th with orders and concepts, bringing written details of operation of all units in the MI or operation, to explain the Combined Fleet's plans and also to act as GF Secret Order 14, (written) of 12 May

Commencing 28 April 1942, Kopus ①

the Combined Fleet held a four day conference to review the battle lessons of the First Phase of the War (Pearl Harbor to the occupation of Malaysia, the Philippines and the Netherlands East Asia.) Commencing [illegible] All Fleet and Force Commanders who had recently returned from the active operations ~~[illegible]~~ attended as did staff representatives of all local Fleet and Force commanders, still engaged in active operations.* 87 This conference was followed by a four day map-maneuver/war gaming of the Second Phase Operations beginning 1 May:** 1st Period – Tulagi – Port Moresby; 2nd Period – Midway Aleutians; 3rd Period – "F.S Operations" (occupation of New Hebrides – New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa) ~~4th~~ Period – Invasion of Oahu (October 1942) and the Decisive Fleet Battle. – 89/63

On the completion of these Map Maneuvers on the afternoon of 3 June, a Critique of the operating plans was held. ~~that night and the next morning. During~~

During ~~dawn~~ the critique on the day of the 4th, ~~they were startled by the receipt of a radio from TULAGI reporting it was being attacked by carrier~~ aircraft an urgent radio from Tulagi was received [illegible] the TULAGI area. ~~(90)~~

As one of the ~~possible counter measures~~ against this sort of thing ~~for the Midway operation~~, the Combined Fleet decided to carry out a air reconnaissance of Pearl Harbor prior to Midway invasion operation to confirm whether U.S. aircraft carriers were present, or absent, at the end of May or at the beginning of June. This would be done using ~~the~~ new ~~type~~ long range Type 2 ((EMILY)) flying boats which would refuel once enroute from a submarine at a remote island. The same method, called "K Operation" had been used to reconnoiter and bomb Pearl Harbor on March 4th 1942. French Frigate Shoals, 480 miles NNW of Oahu had been used for refuelling the EMILYs by submarine on that occasion. (90) (228)

On ~~[illegible]~~ Imperial ~~Headquarters~~ Directive No 18 of 5 May for the MIDWAY–Aleutians operation, the Combined Fleet's Operation Order #12 for the MI–AL operation was issued in documentary form the same day. On the 8th of May Combined Fleet Secret Radio #29 made revisions in the organization of forces reflecting the loss of the SHOHO in the battle of the Coral Sea and among other ~~revisions~~ stated: 3. The Shore Based Air Force will make a reconnaissance of Pearl Harbor to ascertain enemy forces anchored there using Type 2 (EMILY) flying boats in late May (or by 3 June). 4. Northern Force – Add Subron 1, SHOKAKU and 1 DD of Desdiv 10 – Remove SHOHO. ~~As~~ part of Subron 1 after reconnaissance of the Aleutian Islands area, will by N-5 days conduct an observation patrol of Seattle, the other part to cruise ahead of Cardiv 4 acting as van screen. ⑤ Submarine Force – Delete Subron 1; one submarine will reconnoiter MIDWAY and KURE Islands by N-5 and thereafter make weather reports from the sea area east of Midway. Two submarines of Subdiv 13 will be stationed at French Frigate Shoals and one submarine of that same unit [illegible] at LAYSAN Island with the duty of refuelling flying boats and float planes at these anchorages." (96)

~~The~~ Combined Fleet's (written) order No 12 had not reached the Cinc 6th Fleet at Kwajalein when C.F.'s Secret Radio #29 with change #1 to Ord arrived. Not knowing the contents of the former, the latter created a confusing problem. ~~[illegible] created a real problem. Details are~~ ~~[illegible]~~ but Combined Fleet Staff Officer Comdr Taka Arima (Torpedoes and Submarine operations) was sent to Kwajalein, arriving the 18th to explain the Combined Fleet's plans ~~[illegible]~~ to make operational arrangements with the Submarine and 24th Air Flotilla (the SB Air Force) Commanders (in the Marshalls) with regard to the #2 K Operation. (198) He also brought GF Order #14 (written) (pages 198) → giving details of the operation of all forces in the MI-AL operation.

Comdr Arima was also to meet with —

* The history later records that neither the CinC of the ~~It seems that no representative of~~ the 6th Fleet (Submarines) nor any of his staff ~~[illegible]~~ attended the conference, war game and critique late April – early May 1942. CinC Submarines and his staff had left home waters in flagship KATORI for Kwajalein and TRUK, 16 April, arrived 3 May at their Submarine's advance base at Kwajalein where there were communication and repair facilities.

** ~~All times and dates are Tokyo Standard Time (-9) and date~~ (subtract 21 hours for Midway time and date)

(2)

The conference in Honolulu and the details of the 2K Operation was held around the 14th of May. [illegible]

CH NATOUR

; the need for additional submarines for Radio Beacon, Lifeguard and Oahu weather reporting duties, as had been recognized, was brought out and Crude Submarines assigned ~~[illegible]~~ I-171, 174 and 175 from Subron 3, respectively, to these duties. ~~The details~~ The operational details worked out follow:

agreement with regard to 2K operation

On the 22nd Crude 2nd issued this operation order #3 with regard to search and other operations by his force (which included ~~[illegible]~~ the 14th Air Squadron, the operational control of the two Emily flying boats, the two ~~Emily~~ Type 2 (Emily) flying boats under 14th Air Squadron, in accordance with GF order 14.

1. Operations and training of our units to be moved forward (to Midway after capture))

Unit	#1 unit (CHITOSE AIR)		#2 unit	
Advance Base	WAKE	WOTJE	(WOTJE)	WAKE*
Strength	12 VF, 15 ~~[illegible]~~ land base bombers (Betty)	2 – Type 2 (Emily) flying boats	4 – Type 97 (Mavis) flying boats	2 – Type 2 (Emily) flying boats
date of move to adv. base	N – 9 days	N – 10	special order	special order
Principal mission	patrol ahead of the occupied forces	#2K operations (A) Search to the west and south of Midway* (B)	stand by to move forward to Midway	search sector areas to west and south of Midway*

Note: return of forces will be made by special order

⊙ Later modified to 9, or as many more as possible

* 1400 miles radius from WAKE to cover MIDWAY AREA.

2(1) By special order, the 2 Type 2 (Emily) flying boats and 4 Type 97 (Mavis) will be sent forward to Midway, when they will come under the command of the 14th Air Squadron (14th Air Flotilla)

(3) Searches will be opened as released in Annex 1

(4) The KAMOI (AVP) will support the flying boat operations at Wotje

(2)

It turned out that the area inside the lagoon was too restricted for fully loaded flying boats to take off or for night landings (to cover Midway) take offs as the 1400 mile radius search readily such fine

(in Combined Fleet Order #14)

It turned out that

~~Crude 2nd's Order~~ to Combined Fleet

Crude 2nd's Air Flotilla radio on 22 May is very explanatory:

AIR SEARCHES OF GF ORDER 14 Search Sectors F through I call for search radii of 1200 – 1600 miles from WAKE. DUE TO RESTRICTED LANDING – TAKE OFF AREAS AND MANY CORAL HEADS AT WAKE THERE IS ALMOST NO POSSIBILITY OF TAKE OFF BY FULLY LOADED TYPE TWO FLYING BOATS NOR OF USING THEM FOR NIGHT OPERATIONS THERE. THEIR MAXIMUM RADIUS FROM THAT POINT IS BELIEVED TO BE LESS THAN 800 MILES. THEREFOR PROPOSE TO SEARCH SECTORS F AND G USING WOTJE FOR TAKE OFF RETURNING TO WAKE WHEN OUTBOUND LEG REACHES 1050 MILES FROM WAKE (PLANES WOULD REACH 1050 MILES FROM WAKE AT ABOUT SUNRISE) .....

On the 26th, the Combined Fleet agreed, this time, ~~[illegible]~~ Combined Fleet Secret Radio #271 of 26 May.

~~Make the following modifications to the orders for 2nd period operations~~

~~1. 1-168 make weather reports (to Midway area) from N-5~~

~~2. as soon as Midway is occupied move up 9 flying boats and carry out a broad area search for enemy forces from that point using maximum number of planes~~

~~3. In method of against the enemy, the carrier striking force will be 400 miles, 105° from the Main Body.~~

~~From N+1, advance the Main Body to striking force 200 miles, thereby reducing their distance from the carrier striking force to 200 miles.~~

Instructions delay in handling Combined Fleet Order in Headquarters were [illegible]

For some reason unexplained; Circ Cd Fleet Headquarters at the Japanese Island of Truk or Kwajalein. Therefore, [illegible] planes, where [illegible] communications [illegible] Because the above amended to an operation order which he

In its plan GF used 1400 mile as the radius of search for the Type 2 Fly Boat but its actual radius was around

On 11 March an Army that attempted a photo reconnaissance mission was shot down by US AAC fighters. Here Yamamoto failed in his intelligence collection mission on Midway. His first was scheduled for the same striking attack on Pearl Harbor, but the task being badly, that mission was called off.

M7
87

CinC Yamamoto's announcement of commander at the Battle lessons Critique

The Combined Fleet held a "Combined Fleet Critique of Battle lessons of the 1st Phase operations" ahead the Yamamoto departed for more than three days commencing 28 April 1942.
For this purpose the CinCs, Commdrs who had been assembled were assembled from all fleets and free water and staff representatives of all fleets and free that were still engaged in the operations, these.
On the occasion CinC Yamamoto made an address in which he made clear his own convictions. There is no material today remaining as to what subjects this critique covered nor as to how they were treated. These lessons were unverified but for the MIWA diary we can learn a general trend. While the full text of Yamamoto speech is not available, fortunately we have the notes taken by Commdr SEWAI (to the record) — and the diary of the CofS Ugaki for which to obtain a general overview.

MIWA Diary Apr 28

Wargame Critique

Final day of Battle lessons Critique, a critique of Battles now is pleasant but there substance was very Battle — all were heroes and as if some shortcomings/failures are to be expected. Critique will

Completed Stab

Ugaki

At 830 received the reports of Vadm Nagumo and others of the 1st Air Fleet.

From 930 on continued yesterdays critique

The second phase will be entirely different from the 1st phase operations. From now the enemy will be alert and engaged enemy will be prepared. To take a long view of The Combined Fleet cannot assume a prolonged defensive, the Navy must absolutely on the offensive hand take the offensive and must strike telling blows on the enemy.
The enemy's military power is 5–10 times ours.
we must aim for the enemy's painful places one after the other and by aim for strike with powerful attacks.

GF #14 page 106 outline of Yamamoto

11

Because our naval armaments needs a lot of skilled enlisten trained. Skilled enlisten must be changed — Military expenditure an absolutely an important trouble. Armaments must have complete priority. It is absolutely necessary we be equipped supremely so as not to be defeated.
For this reason it is absolutely necessary for our Air power to overwhelm crush the enemy. Naval Strategy is the one that protects our greater Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Map Maneuver/War Game of Second Phase Operations

The Combined Fleet followed up a 3 day critique of Battle lessons of Phase I with a four day map maneuver/war gaming of the 2nd Phase operations from 1 May 1942 beginning 1 May 1942.
These war games covered the third beginning with the Second Phase until the completion of the decisive fleet engagement. The air annihilation battle and the ~~At the critique at the end of the war games. At the critique Sunday at war games.~~

During the critique on the morning of the 5th a radio was received stating that an enemy carrier planes was attacking the Tulagi area

MI 200/1

MI Series 1/2

3. On completion of the K operation, Subdiv 13, 2 SS at FFS and 1 SS at Ponty of Lagsan 1st will repair formerly flying boats (Type 97 and Type 2) and seaplanes.

4. The I-168 will reconnoiter Kure Island and Midway Island by N-5 and afterwards operate to the E. of Midway 1st making weather reports.

5. Subron 1 (subsequent to N+7 days), Subron 3 (less I-172) and Subron 5 will, after the invasion of Midway and by special orders base at Midway until the defences there have been completed, and will conduct and attack the enemy striking force.

Remarks: The I-168 (on setting out for Midway will be covered later) due to repairs was delayed in its departure from home waters.

Preparation for Sortie

Subron 3 made a quick sortie from home waters on 15 April. Due to this, some unfinished maintenance was put off to sortie. The C/S 3 SS, 1 SUM1, has no recollection of the reason for this hurried sortie but believes it probably had some relation to enemy intelligence concerning the Marshalls area.

200/1 That Squadron headed for a deployment line to the East of the Marshalls when the Doolittle air raid of 18 April occurred and while enroute they were ordered to deploy against this action. Because of this, they were late moving into the Marshalls area. During this time, the flagship, I-8, turned back and returned to Yokosuka due to the illness of the Commander, Rear Adm MIWA, and after taking aboard the new Commander, Rear Adm KONO, headed for Kwajalein. Enroute they were attacked by mistake by a friendly land bomber and returned to Kure for repairs. The I-172 had a breakdown on departure and returned to Kure where large scale repairs lasted until late August. Also the I-168 was in Kure having a main motor change and was therefore unable to make the sortie. However, except for these 3, the rest of Subron 3 assembled at Kwajalein around 10 May and the I-168 left Kure on 23rd after completion of its repairs.

Subron 5 was expecting that during the next period its operations would be in the Southwest area was undergoing upkeep and maintenance. This Squadron's submarines being old had many items that needed repairs. However, on 7-10 May orders came to expedite departure for Kwajalein. Subron 5 hurried its repairs and maintenance and stopped some work to make preparations for sortie but was not

201/1 able to meet the required sortie date. The C/S of Subron 5 SHIBUYA replied (post war) that had they known early that they were to take part in the Midway operations, they would have expedited, in advance, the work and stopped some of the repairs and been able to sortie on the required date.

Once the work was completed Subron 5 headed for Kwajalein but in the meantime no orders of any kind were received regarding that Squadron's part in the MI operations, according to C/S SHIBUYA's recollections. The greater part of Subron 5 arrived Kwajalein on May 26th and immediately began preparations for departure which took place on the 26th. This meant that they could not reach the B deployment line by N-5 days (2 June.) The I-159 suffered a main motor casualty on departure for Kure on 14 May and had to return to Kure for repairs. It departed again on the 19th and received a torpedo attack on the 21st 3 miles East of Cape TAIO but was not hit. Also the I-164 departed alone from Sasebo on the 16th and was not heard from again, being considered lost by July 2nd (I-164 was sunk by the U.S. Submarine TRITON - S.W. of Hokkaido, according to American records)

Subdiv 13's 3 ships having completed work upkeeping, returned to be able to carry aviation gasoline and refuel aircraft, headed for Kwajalein on 8 May. The I-122 had a break down and returned to Kure for repairs, after which it again headed for Kwajalein. The 3 subs arrived there on the 17th, the 19 and the 23rd.

M1D / 116 F — Reserve procedures — Sulos — M1 — 1/1 — course dropped

Studies just before departure and final review of operation plan.

Operational arrangements made at Kwajalein

To 198 F — Staff 6F in MATORI dep Inland Sea Apr 16th to confer with CinC 6th F at Truk and arrive KWAJ May 3rd. Prior to departing Adm Komatsu was informed by GF of the gist of the operations, but no representatives of the 6F took part in the early planning MAY. Also since the GF staff was unfamiliar with the M1 Operation, they took part in the map maneuvers of the M1 Operation in mid April (Subpage 202) Subron 3 sailed for home waters for the Marshalls area. Subron 5 was then at Saseho. None of its staff had attended the Map Maneuvers. Mizumi - C/S 3S recalled that they did not have any of the operation points then sorted for home waters. Subron 5 was then at Saseho and knew nothing of the operations, and hence did not attend the Map Maneuvers according to the recollect of the C/S Shibaya. In early May at the time of the Map maneuvers the Combined Submarine also commanded Subrons 1, 3, 5 and Subdiv 13 but their course in these operations was vague. 6F Did know of duty in K operation set up in the enclosure in the Kwo Subron 5 to "the western Force"

198 F — The GF Recorder for 2nd Phase operations issued on 5 May 1942 was a written document & this was later modified by a radio dispatch on the 8th. For CinC 6th Fleet to understand this revision he had to know the contents of the previous issued document. For this purpose the GF staff probably had to notify 6F of the outline of the document by radio dispatch (on 18 May, GF Staff Officer (Torpedo & Submarine matters) arrived at Kwajalein to explain the Combined Fleet's Operation plans and make necessary arrangements therefor. At that time he carried with him Combined Fleet Secret Order #14 (giving an outline of operations of all forces) (the War Diary of 24SF, located at Kwajalein note it was received on the 20th. It is believed they received the plans outline after the meeting with Arima) At the meeting on the 19th at Kwajalein aboard the 6th Fleet flagship KATORI, staff of 3rd SF also attended and the matters discussed and arranged were not only submarine operations but also 24SF air searches. At that time the conduction between 6 Fleet and 24 SF for the K operation was established since 3 submarines in Subdiv 13 (which had been scheduled by GF) would be required, 6 F designated 3 subs from Combined 3 (1-171, 1-174, 1-175). Of Subron 3's seven subs, the I-172 was under major repairs, the I-168 was to make a reconnaissance of Midway, and the I-8 has returned to home waters for repairs; of the remaining 5 subs, 3 were now allocated to assist in the K operation. For these reasons Subron 3 could not follow this designated "Adv Deployment line" on the scheduled date (N-5). He learned that preparations of Subron 5 had not been completed in time causing their departure for Kwajalein to be delayed so that they also could not follow the G Deployment line by the scheduled date.

Moreover, the preparation of the Defense Plan was delayed but thanks the Combined Fleet's Defense Plan was damaged but Staff Officer Arima could not recognize facts and informally agree; he reported these matters to the Combined Fleet. The Combined Fleet on receiving this report made no counter-plan against these defects in its plan. The reason for this is probably in the estimate of the enemy's plan. The reason for this is probably not so the attack on Midway) at that time that the enemy fleet would probably come out

Reference Post-war - Capt Kuroshima recalls: "Speaking from novel common sense, the formation of the deployment line would move to the East after it had been formed in the west, and the submarine should join up with the deployment line. However, mistakes etc in the estimate of the enemy situation as I planned, the matter of deployment was a result of in the preparation of the submarine were delayed. In addition, the GF direction was careless.

Also as the operation was to carried out by having the main force of the Combined Fleet, the submarine force should have been concentrated as the whole strength of the Combined Fleet.

199 F — Once can say that it all came about due to my carelessness.

The Sub Force (Vanguard Force) on learning the details of the M1 Operations, formulated its plans and on 27 May issued Subron Radio Order #76, as follows

1. Subron 3 (less I-168 and I-172) will by N-5 day take station on A Deployment line (Point HE RO NU 00 — HE RO HO 31) -- (three computing in the K operations will do so on completion of these duties)
2. Undoubtedly pertaining to Subron 5 - but material lost ... and has to do with taking up B deployment line

80 F — In the event the strong enemy force appears in the north, depending on the situation, an appropriate force from the Midway operation force will sent north where it will participate in closing and destroying it.

Should the enemy force appear in areas other than above, appropriate forces from both the AL and M1 Operation forces will be vigilant to close and destroy it.

Defensive arrangements after capture

At Midway, along with speedily restoring to use the airfield there, following its capture, the moving up as quickly as possible of the shore based air force and commencement of Defense mentioned before, as soon that base can be used, the Shore Based Air Force's fighter aircraft will be flown immediately ashore from the carriers that brought them, and assume the duty of air defense.

At the same time the unloading and landing of material and setting up of defenses will be expedited; It is expected that these will be completed in about a week.

The Island's Defense Force will be centered in the 2nd Combined Naval Landing Force that carried out the assault operations there.

81 F — Further, the new air field and base on Sand Island will speedily constructed and a reinforcement of land based air force is planned. Additionally, defense weapons and material will be quickly sent forward to strengthen the defenses of that island. The responsibility for transportation of reinforcements will be principally the 1st Fleet's. (Note It was not planned to use the low speed battleships etc in the next, 3rd period, operations).

Defences of the Aleutian area, particularly the KISKA area, were important points. As mentioned previously, immediately after the occupation flying boats and sea planes would be moved up as searches commenced, defenses would be expedited. Afterwards the responsibility for transportation of weapons and material would be taken to the Northern Force (the 5th Fleet).

Midways Defense Plan

63 F — The process of setting up the plan

The Combined Fleet divided the operation of the second phase into 3 periods, from a first to a third period. The planning endeavors of the second phase was concentrated on the Midway-Aleutian Operation which was the second period. Moreover, the Combined Fleet, in order to study the employment of Hawaii operations which they hoped to carry out in October, tentatively called it the 4th period and added it to the operational plan to be used in the map-maneuver war games. The state of the moon was the principal factor governing the date of the assault. The date of 7th of June was chosen. The Combined Fleet's map-maneuver war games were conducted in home waters in the latter part of April; after completion of their basic study of the plans, there was no time to set up the operations' plans. In this reason the Combined Fleet, itself, formulated the actual, draft plans. These were used in the map-maneuver/war games of the second phase operations in early May where operations from the second period (Midway) through the fourth period's (decisive fleet engagement) were war-gamed. By these procedures the draft second phase operations plans were thoroughly studied as to their concepts and feasibility by the subordinate commands present, and as a result of these were revised in places. Moreover the 3rd period operations (the F.S. (Fiji - New Caledonia - Samoa) operations were also demonstrated, their carefully studied, and the outline plans drawn up; even a concept plan for the fourth period operations was formulated.

64 F — There is no reference material available on the plan for the second period operations but concrete details have become available post war recollections of those who took part in the map maneuvers/war games and actually war gamed the plan. The reasons that 7 June was chosen were (1) The need for the striking force to crush the defenses the previous day. (2) Moonrise there at midnight of the 7th was best suited for the assault landing; since there would be no moon at the time of crossing over the reefs, prior to midnight - and only a waning moon and ...

68 F — 70 F

87 (May 28-31) War Lessons Critique - Map Maneuvers May 1-4 (1)

The Combined Fleet held a critique of "War lessons of the 1st Phase operations" aboard the flagship Yamato, May 28-31, 1942. Assembled there for this purpose were all CinCs and Commanders of Forces who had just returned to home waters from operations in the Philippines, Malaya, NEI and the Indian Ocean; staff representatives of all fleets and operating overseers were also present.* On that occasion Admiral Yamamoto made an address in which he made clear his personal convictions.

There are no records or data available today concerning the critique in which now thoroughly the battle lessons were gone into, but the diaries of the C/S and also the staff operations officer of the Combined Fleet staff reflect, perhaps the trend:

"A critique of battles won is pleasant. -- there was little substance to the discussions. -- all were heroes and courageous --- they give the impression that some shortcomings/failures are to be expected."

Many diaries and resolutions record the gist of Admiral Yamamoto's address to those attending:

"The Second Phase operations will be entirely different from the 1st phase operations.** From now on the enemy will be alert and prepared. The Combined Fleet cannot assume a long delaying defensive." On the contrary, we must take the offensive; we must strike the enemy with telling blows, hitting where it hurts.

The enemy's military power is from five to ten times ours, against this we must increase the intensity of our attacks, hitting the enemy's painful places, one after the other.

For this our naval armaments require a lot of skilled workmen. The previous trend must be changed - armaments must have complete priority and it is essential that our material and equipment be sufficient to avoid defeat.

For this reason it is absolutely necessary that our naval air power to overpower the enemy. Naval Power is the one that protects our Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere."

The above critique was followed (May 1-4) by map maneuvers/kriegspiel games of the operations of the Second Phase - the Midway-Aleutian operations. Afterwards, the invasion of Hawaii and the Aleutians - the air annihilation battle and the decisive fleet action was war-gamed. However this important point was the second phase operations, Midway operation. The C/S of the Combined Fleet as was gone director with the role of Commander Blue (Japanese forces). Capt Matsuda, the CO of the MIDWAY acted as Commander Red (US) forces. Each blue fleet commander was assisted by his regular staff while each of the Red forces were commanded by personnel outside the Combined Fleet. The actual map maneuvers were completed in the 3rd day that afternoon, the 4th. The next morning, followed by a conference to go over details and arrangements.

Neither the Combined Fleet's Midway and Aleutian plans were still draft plans, and were not approved and directed by Imperial Headquarters until 5 May. Copies of the draft plans were distributed to the Commanders Concerned. These map maneuvers/war games were participated in by Force and Fleet Commanders and staff members and their critique gave a detailed understanding of the operations plans and their part in it.

The following are the highlights of the conference on the 4th

SEE (4) ***

* Inexplicably neither CinC 6th Fleet (Submarines) nor any of his staff, or Squadron Commanders were represent.

** Beginning of war to end of invasion operations of M.E. (Indonesian - Malaya area).

*** It was during this critique in the morning of the 4th that Tulagi reported being attacked by Kawanishi carrier planes.

78 War Lessons - Critique - Map Maneuvers May 1-4 (2)

Concept of Operations

The concept was that the MI and AL operations were one; that the deployment under the AF was so that the MI operation aimed the pellets to the AL operation, and regardless of where the enemy appeared, both forces would be able to mutually support each other; the premise of both operations was to obtain strategic surprise for their attacks.

Duties of Patrols to obtain information of the enemy

In Midway operations the enemy took Midway as a base for its air power as able to search a wide zone in the vicinity of the battle area. The used for the search (BY flying boats) which extend to some 600 miles. The capability of the planes of

Against these our shore based air force and the strategic distribution of make it impossible to conduct searches in the battle area near Midway nor the area between Hawaii - Midway the assumed line of advance of the enemy fleet, if it moves out to counter attack. Moreover our SBAF cannot patrol the entire line of advance of our operations forces.

For this reason the Combined Fleet must conduct maximum searches from the homeland and the islands of WAKE, MARCUS and the MARSHALLS.

The Combined Fleet, judging that strategic surprise attacks can be realized by establishing picket lines across the HAWAII - MIDWAY line with the large part of the submarine force, just prior to the start of the invasion operations, dispatched so as to make contact with the American fleet that might move from the Hawaiian area to counter attack.

Once Midway has been occupied air units will be quickly moved forward to that island to continue searches with the Hawaii area as the principal objective, deliberately seek to make contact the enemy fleet that will possibly move out to counter attack. Therefore the airfield construction force, the airfield personnel, the base material will be loaded on transports that will accompany the invasion force's landing force to immediately set up the base there and enable the air searches to commence. The aircraft to be flown to that base (both land based bombers and flying boats) will be standing by at the Marshalls and at Wake.

78 There is little intelligence material relating to the Aleutian area. Therefore, as a first step it will be necessary to conduct reconnaissance of strategic places; then, a seaplane tender will be dispatched in advance to conduct aerial reconnaissance of the selected strategic positions of the Western Aleutian chain and collect intelligence material for the operations. In addition just before the beginning of operations, submarines will be sent to reconnoiter the Aleutians and Alaska, to spy out the location of enemy forces and then make observations of strategic places in the Eastern Aleutian chain and Alaska. As the these two areas are also the location of the enemy's military facilities, it is estimated that the enemy would attack would probably also 'bang' on this area.

79 strategic

79 Angel Kiska is occupied The Combined Fleet will have flying boats standing by for the Kuriles flown to that place and work seaplanes carried in the occupation forces's seaplane tender, commence searches to the eastward of that place. For this purpose 6 flying boats will be added to the invasion force. Aircraft patrol and searches will be conducted during the advance of the northern force, from the northern Kuriles and Hokkaido. Because of the cruising radius of the planes deployed, these patrols will not reach the vicinity of the invasion places to be invaded. Operations in this northern area there will be many limitations on air operations due to fog and it is realized that searches cannot be thorough or complete.

In short, we cannot expect that patrols to obtain information of the enemy could be able to utilize their full potential during the invasion operations by shore based bombers but will be satisfactory once the invasion operations have succeeded.

79 Outline of the Midway occupation

As said before, the Combined Fleet thought that the occupation of Midway would be as a strategic surprise and to this concept was added the provision in the unlikely event the enemy fleet put in an

79/F

War Lessons – Critique – Map Maneuvers May 1-4 (3)

appearance during the invasion operations.

An invasion of that place envisioned that first of all the main carrier force (centered in 6 aircraft carriers) would carry out a surprise attack on that place, destroy the air power on that island and render the airbase there temporarily inoperable. Then the invasion convoy would enter within the 600 mile zone of enemy. Reconnaissance for that base (on N-3 days; N-Day being the scheduled date for the invasion – 7 June)

Thereafter the carrier force would advance to the north of Midway suppress its air power and diligently destroy its defense facilities, and while cooperating with the landing force in its assault landings while prepare for an appearance of the enemy fleet.

The convoy of the invasion force and its direct escort force will assemble at Saipan and cruise direct to Midway but the seaplane tender force will proceed in advance to KURE Island and set up a seaplane base, assume the duties of direct escort and conduct with the landing forces; the rest of the assault force will arrive Midway the night of N-1; the landing will commence and Midway be occupied on N-Day.

The main body of the Invasion Force will have the duty of indirect protection of the convoy force, as it advances to the vicinity of Midway, prepared for the appearance of the enemy fleet.

The battleship force will advance following behind the main aircraft carrier force; minute it will divide into two sections, the main force will follow one days steaming distance behind the main carrier force with the responsibility of supporting the entire operation. The other section of the battleship force will advance southward to the vicinity of 500 miles to the south of Kiska, despised so as to support either operation.

The enemy's military facilities and forces are located in, and to the east of the Eastern Aleutians, it is estimated that there are no military forces or facilities to the west of the central Aleutians. For that reason the carrier force (2 carriers) will make a surprise attack on Dutch Harbor, the strongest base in the area of the Eastern Aleutians, will pin down their forces and while the carriers and submarine forces patrol to the east, we will invade strategic places in the western chain.

On N Day the naval force will land on Tassica Island, and with the cooperation of the Army force will land on ADAK, which is nearly and to the east of KISKA and which is believed would be used as a base for a counter attack; after destroying military facilities on ADAK they would ship to ATTU, occupying and securing that island. In the meantime the carrier force would cooperate with the landings and fighting ashore if necessary.

The section of the battleship force meantime, as stated previously, will be about 500 miles south of KISKA charged with indirect support of these operations.

Outline of contact and destruction of the enemy fleet

The Combined Fleet estimated that there was a good probability that after the assault on Midway, the American fleet would come out from the Hawaiian area to counter attack. In the meantime the movement forward of the shore based air force to that island was to be expedited and by diligent aerial searches together with the picket lines of submarines disposed between Midway and the Hawaiian Islands, be able to make earliest contact and sighting of a counter-attacking enemy fleet. The main carrier force and the decisive battle force of the Occupation Force will stand-by near Midway and when the the enemy fleet appears, they swiftly swoop down on it from the north and under the umbrella of the shore based air force, conduct a decisive fleet battle.

80/F

Also, depending on the situation the major part of the decisive battle forces of the the operation will be ordered to speed south and participate in the fighting. The period during which these air force etc. should be prepared for the the appearance of an enemy fleet is about one week, until the completion of the makeshift defenses of Midway.

(5) War Games – Map Maneuver – May 1-4 etc

64L/64F (crit) The Combined Fleet completed this operations plan in late April and passed it out to persons concerned who had assembled for the critique of the 1st phase operations. Here the second phase operation plan will be set forth, the third phase plan (F S Q) will be omitted.

Note Hereafter MI opns = Midway operation and AL opns = Aleutian operations.

Outline of enemy's strategic geography and estimate of the enemy situation

Midway – see Sketch MAP #6. Eastern and SAND Islands lie in the southern part of a coral atoll some 11 kilometers in circumference. Eastern Island forms a rough triangle 2 kilometers in length and 1.5 kilometers in width and is generally flat (maximum elevation is 13 meters), and has an airfield. Adjoining it to the west is Sand Island, East-West about 3 kilometers and about 2.5 kilometers from north to south and is also flat. Both islands are separated from the reef by about 100 meters, more or less; this water is deep and cannot be closed off. In the southern part of the reef are two small channels through which a boat can pass. In the north western part of the reef there is a large opening but the depths are generally shallow but there is a small channel which connects with WELLS Harbor on the northern part of Sand Island, which medium size ships can use. However WELLS Harbor is narrow and restricted in size. Some 60 miles to the west of that island is KURE Island.

(R) Some 60 miles to the west of Midway:

An estimate of the enemy strength at Midway:

flying boats, fighters and bombers – about 12 each
search distance 600 miles
marines 750
laborers 500
Aircraft Company personnel 80
Misc. vessels, one subchaser and 12 small craft
6 – 5" (12.7 cm)
12 – 3" (7.5 cm) AA
48 12.7 (mm) M/G
48 7.7 mm M/G
6 Searchlights

enemy strength – HAWAII (area)

flying boats 60
bombers 100
fighters 200
capability for emergency reinforcing Midway to twice its present strength
ships capable of operations
aircraft carriers 3-4
auxiliary converted carriers 2
battleships ≥
heavy cruisers 4-5
light cruisers 3-4
destroyers 30
submarines 25

American aircraft carriers

On 12 January 1942 the Lexington was sunk, another regular carrier was sunk on February 20 and the Langley was sunk on 27 February. The Enterprise and Hornet took part in the Doolittle raid and

The following is the estimate of American carriers as of late April.

1. Enterprise, Hornet, Saratoga, Yorktown
2. Lexington appears to have been sunk but may be under repair on the West Coast
3. Wasp – location unknown
4. 6 converted-carriers completed, about half probably in the Pacific but will not be used in 1st line operations
5. Their aircraft skills are generally low and their fighting potential to one sixth of that of our navy; in particular, they are almost incapable of making effective torpedo attacks.

66/F

GIVES A LIST OF US aircraft carriers "according to Jane's"

67
L

(6) War games – Plans –

Aleutian Area (See sketch #7)

ADAK 1½ – KISKA 1½ ATTU 1½

Adak Island has a radio station – military strength stationed there about 10 persons. Adak's Kuluzi Harbor has the capacity to receive a large fleet. It seems probable that a submarine base as well as a seaplane base are under consideration there. Intelligence reports that there are some 200–300 marines on guards there, but this is not conjectured. Having a good harbor, it seems suspicious that construction is suitable for a naval base, create the strong suspicion that construction has started on a submarine and seaplane base.

ATTU has a meteorological station and a radio station and it seems that a considerable defence force is stationed there. It is a suitable place for a seaplane base. Nearby to the east is SEMICHI Island which is flat, has possibility for construction of a large scale land air base. This island lies 1800 miles from Tokyo and according to intelligence reports, new American super-bombing planes would be able to raid Tokyo from here.

(Here is a little of the ground forces in the KISKA–ALEUTIAN Area.)

68
L

June 7th was selected as the day for the assault landing by the combined fleet for the following reasons.

1. The need to lose no time in pinning down the enemy striking force in movements for the landing at Midway
2. 0000 hours of the 7th is the most suitable, as the moon rises there at that time. In other words, there will be no moon the previous half of the night when they cross the reef at Midway when it is absolutely necessary that there be no moon. (Stage of the moon 22.7 days past new moon)
3. The winds are mildest in the Midway area in June
4. Beginning in July the Aleutian area has great amounts of fog and bad weather, making operations there difficult

Note Staff officer Watanabe recalls also that consideration was also given to crossing the reef at low tide

we can be sure, he has been badly hurt.
strategically, logistically and self-confidence
he has real cause for cockiness
said "don't forget that the enemy suffered too so their actions, how most we are not sure, but

Introduction

As his Fleet Intelligence Officer throughout World War II, I was truly impressed by Admiral Nimitz's keen interest and cool appraisals of the actions and reactions of "the other side" during engagements between Pacific Fleet/Pacific Ocean Area forces and their Japanese opponents throughout the Guadalcanal campaign.

I recall one of the daily staff conference in particular during our Guadalcanal campaign when intercepted reports indicated our forces had suffered losses in severe fighting the previous night off Savo Island; Admiral Nimitz, in summary, stated "I'm sure they have also been badly hurt." He then proceeded to review some of the other side's viewpoint as revealed in official history.

Man cannot tell, but we can know, how much the other side has lost. — Kipling

As Admiral Nimitz's Fleet Intelligence Officer throughout the Pacific war I was very impressed by his keen interest and thoughtful appraisals of the actions/reactions of the "other side" to the operations of his forces. This was particularly so during the early carrier task force raids, our first offensive moves in the Pacific.

The "official history" by Japan's Defense Agency (the Japanese) furnished interesting insight into the other side's actions/reactions; the translations of excerpts from that history, that follows, should be an answer to those who had doubts as to the wisdom and effectiveness of those early carrier raids.

The unnamed "staff officer" who wrote quoted appears "the safe side" mind than any man than a dog minds a flea."

UNIT

CENTRAL FORCE | NORTHERN FORCE | SOUTHERN FORCE | RESERVE FORCE

C	19	20	37 30
E	18	20	55 20
F	15	30	83 20

#1
#1
#4