

25 Apr 45
Report on Conditions in Regional Areas #17
Compiled by Wartime Survey Office
Domei News Agency

6034 86

Although the number of those who think that we will fight to the last man to win the victory is not nil, it is exceedingly small.

SURRENDER RESPONSE
+
FIGHT TO DEATH (h)
+ effects on O if Japan Defeated

14h (42) th

Special Interview by Seiichi Takeda at FUKUOKA, 24 Nov 45
Respondent: Ashihei Hino, writer.

6004 (13)

Hino: Unfortunately, it's too bad we lost, but from the standpoint of the results, I believe the people are much better off. When I learned of defeat, I resolved to commit hara kiri and was biding my time thinking I would wait until at least I saw what would happen to Japan, but as the American policy has been so humane beyond what I had expected based on common sense and Mac Arthur's orders are being carried out one by one just the way we had always desired, it has made me reconsider my intention to commit suicide. I feel that if left in the hands of the Japanese government it could not have accomplished what the American forces have done so far.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with Mr. KOMAI, otojiro, a damascene artizan
and businessman in KYOTO CITY, 29 Dec 45. SUBJECT: Wartime Morale
in KYOTO and elsewhere.

6019

(8)

"When I heard that a special broadcast would be made from the Imperial Palace, I thought that the Emperor was going to give the order to fight to the last man. Bamboo spears had already been prepared and issued to all the men and women and to even half-grown children and the military had instructed all in their use with the injunction to fight Americans with these weapons until they were driven back into the sea. When I heard the Emperor give the order to surrender I was greatly relieved, but I also felt sorry for him that he had been so long misled by the military."

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with KITAYAMA, electrical engineer, factory
superintendent of FURUKAWA Searchlight factory, at FUKIAGE School
on 22 Dec 45

6014

(1)

"Although I knew we couldn't win the war, I waited to prevent invasion. I didn't believe we'd win but I didn't think we'd surrender. If Emperor hadn't given out rescript I'm afraid we would not have surrendered. People were saying, "Rather than lose war, let's die."

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with Dr. KYOSHI TAKESE, Professor of Psychiatry,
NAGASAKI Medical College on 1 Dec 45.

6021

(3)

"....As long as the victories rolled in the people were willing to tighten their belts but when things went against them their willingness to put out and to sacrifice declined. This began with Guadalcanal and increased with the Marianas campaign. The required sacrifices became greater and the shortage of food helped to make them pessimistic. It is a part of the Japanese character, however, to fight on even literally to the death."

Fight to death

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with Mr. YOSHIO KAMIYAMA, Head of the KAWAGOE
City Liaison Office and Block Leader for his section of KAWAGOE
and Head of his section KEIBODAN.

6012

P-05-C
~~2~~

(4)

Q. You mentioned a little while ago something about Japanese propaganda on the home front. Would you tell me a little more about that?

A. Of course much of the propaganda was about what the Americans would do if they ever landed in Japan. All the women would be raped and the men sent to America to become slaves. Then the army propagandized that they had many planes. The navy said the same about itself. There was lots of talk about the Gods watching over Japan, ceremonies to ask divine blessing and talk about the "Divine Wind" that saved Japan from the Mongol invasion and how that would happen again. The children knew nothing else and they believed it. But most of the adults including myself believed that you could not get enthusiasm through ceremonies. I don't believe in the Gods myself. I thought the propaganda was poor but many believed it.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with Mr. YOSHIO KAMIYAMA, Head of the KAWAGOE City Liaison Office and Block Leader for his section of KAWAGOE and Head of his section KEIBODAN.

6012

(4)

Q. When do you think the Japanese people began to think Japan might lose?

A. The leaders were all bad, and the people didn't like war. Tojo was no good, but when he quit at the fall of Saipan I was sure Japan could not win. Then Koiso would talk of winning and how hard Japan would have to fight all in the same breath and that made people think it was lost. But they kept fighting to the end because of the good propaganda of the Japanese government concerning the events should Japan lose the war. People felt they would be treated like the Negroes in America and their women would all be raped and the men taken away not to return. They felt the Americans would treat them like the Germans treated the people they conquered.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW with Mr. YOSHIO KAMIYAMA, Head of the KAWAGOE City Liaison Office and Block Leader for his section of KAWAGOE and Head of his section KEIBODAN.

6012

(4)

Q. How was the actual morale of the people in your section during the war?

A. Of course everyone was saying not so much that we would win, but that we must win. The shortage of transportation was a real problem, and then people were worried about the financial situation of the Japanese government. The I.R.A.A. (Taisei Yokusan Kai) published pamphlets about American atrocities and what could happen if Japan didn't win the war. They mentioned about cruelties on Guadalcanal and how American tanks ran over Japanese soldiers; I wondered whether we had tanks or not.

INTERROGATION NO: (USSBS NO. 429) -74
(NAV NO. 90)

Subject: Observations on Japan at War.

TRANSCRIPT of Interrogation - (Admiral NOMURA, Kichisaburo, IJN).

- Q. With those who were concerned over the American Air Attack do you think they were more influenced by the reduction in production of war materials or because the cities were being burned and the populace suffering?
- A. Production of airplanes suffered naturally; but that, the people did not know. They did suffer themselves from the air raids but even then, as I told you before, the people did not say peace. Willingly or reluctantly I cannot say, but they were prepared to sacrifice themselves if the Government so ordered. In the country where I lived when things went very badly in February, the small Postmaster said that there was no other way then to kill themselves

Interview with Mr. YAMAMOTO, Yurikumo, retired teacher
of physical training at the HAGI Middle School, 22 Dec 45
SUMMARY: Report on Wartime Morale in HAGI (an unbombed city on the southwest coast of Japan).

6007 (3)

"When changes took place in the Government many of us began to think that the war was not going so well in spite of the repeated assurance of the authorities to the contrary. Thus we began to have doubts as to our leadership. Looking back on it now I feel that our greatest weaknesses were lack of raw materials for waging a great war and the weakness of our scientific training and knowledge when compared with the great countries of America and Britain. We had, of course, the Japanese Spirit ('Yamato Damashii'), but Government propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding it was not sufficient to offset the technical, scientific and material strength of the enemy. Before the order to cease fighting by His Majesty the Emperor everyone in Japan was determined to die fighting in defense of the Fatherland even though our only weapons were bamboo spears. The military issued orders on the preparation of these and instructions were given on their use. Even my wife and I had them on hand and practiced using them. I felt that they would be useless against the modern weapons the enemy possessed, but the military encouraged the public to believe that bamboo spears plus the Japanese Spirit would be sufficient to repulse the attack of the invaders."

Interview with Mr. YAMAMOTO, Yurikumo, retired teacher
of physical training at the HAGI Middle School, 22 Dec 45
SUMMARY: Report on Wartime Morale in HAGI (an unbombed city on the
southwest coast of Japan).

6007

(3)

"When changes took place in the Government many of us began to think that the war was not going so well in spite of the repeated assurance of the authorities to the contrary. Thus we began to have doubts as to our leadership. Looking back on it now I feel that our greatest weaknesses were lack of raw materials for waging a great war and the weakness of our scientific training and knowledge when compared with the great countries of America and Britain. We had, of course, the Japanese Spirit ('Yamato Damashii'), but Government propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding it was not sufficient to offset the technical, scientific and material strength of the enemy. Before the order to cease fighting by His Majesty the Emperor everyone in Japan was determined to die fighting in defense of the Fatherland even though our only weapons were bamboo spears. The military issued orders on the preparation of these and instructions were given on their use. Even my wife and I had them on hand and practiced using them. I felt that they would be useless against the modern weapons the enemy possessed, but the military encouraged the public to believe that bamboo spears plus the Japanese Spirit would be sufficient to repulse the attack of the invaders."

Report on Conversation with KEIO UNIVERSITY STUDENT

6034 112

In regard to the KAMIKAZE spirit, he said that he had seen many of his friends go off on fatal missions with a casual wave of their hands and he was greatly moved by it. If the war had lasted much longer, he expected to be one himself, but so far had received only 30 hours of flying. He said that due to the upbringing in Japan, a person feels that he owes his life to his country and that if his country does not exist, then there is nothing in life for him. Everybody is supposed to be ready to lay down his life for his country if it should become necessary. Therefore when the need for a kamikaze arises it seems very natural to step in. In the time that follows this decision up to the moment of going into action, however, there is great fear and mental anguish. He spoke of it as utterly terrible. In spite of this, however, when the moment actually arrives, they somehow manage to go through with it.