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REPORT

By Authority of
THE COMMANDING GENERAL
Army Air Forces

16 Mar 44 *LCC*
DATE INITIALS

on the JAPANESE AIR FORCE

FOR THE MONTH ENDING: 29 February 1944.

~~NA~~ - 6376

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JUN 21 1965

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[Signature]
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Colonel, Infantry

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ESTIMATE OF JAPANESE AIR FORCE

1 MARCH, 1944

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RECENT OPERATIONS

1. In the South and Southwest Pacific, the enemy has withdrawn his air defense of the Bismarcks, as he had done previously in the Solomons, and restricted his operations to a static small scale defense of New Guinea, development of air facilities in rear areas, and sporadic night attacks against Allied forward and rear bases on New Guinea.

2. The J.A.F. offered no air defense over the Marshalls and eastern Carolines, and a strong, though ineffective air defense over Truk, Tinian, and Saipan.

3. J.A.F. offensive operations in Burma were negligible in scale and ineffective, while its defensive operations decreased over Burma and Thailand, but increased in China over the Yangtze river valley. Enemy attacks against our forward air bases in China, continued on a reduced scale.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION

1. Estimated identified strength of combat units increased by 5.3 percent during the month, although it is believed that over-all aircraft strength showed relatively little change.

2. Identified strength in the Southwest Pacific, principally in New Britain, New Ireland, and Java, declined by 24 percent during the month. The Burma-Siam-Malaya-Sumatra area decreased by 12 percent. However, strength increased by 78 percent in the Central Pacific, and by 20 percent in China and adjacent areas.

WASTAGE

1. J.A.F. February wastage, or 100 percent of enemy aircraft claimed destroyed plus 5 percent of average monthly operational strength, is estimated at 953 aircraft. If non-combat attrition is estimated at 8 percent instead of 5 percent of average monthly operational strength, which may eventually prove to be a more accurate figure, February wastage would amount to 1102 aircraft.

IDENTIFIED COMBAT STRENGTH

1996
FIGHTERS

1895
BOMBERS

451 FLOAT
PLANES
385 OTHERS

TOTAL 4727

DISPOSITION

AREA	1944	% OF AREA STRENGTH-TOTAL	MONTHLY CHANGE
JAPAN, KURILES, MANCHURIA	1944	41%	+7%
CHINA & ADJACENT AREAS	765	16%	+20%
BURMA, SIAM, MALAYA, SUMATRA	538	12%	-12%
S & SW PACAFIC, JAVA	773	16%	-24%
CENTRAL PACAFIC	687	15%	+78%

TOTALS - 4727 100%

MONTHLY CHANGE IN TOTAL COMBAT STRENGTH +53%

MONTHLY PRODUCTION COMBAT TYPES

575
FIGHTERS

305 BOMBERS
120 OTHERS

TOTAL 1000

FEBRUARY WASTAGE

351 FIGHTERS

176 BOMBERS

426* UNIDENTIFIED
AND OTHERS

TOTAL 953

* PRIMARILY FIGHTERS + BOMBERS

SERVICEABLE COMBAT STRENGTH

1397
FIGHTERS

1326
BOMBERS

271 FLOAT
PLANES
231 OTHERS

TOTAL 3224

PROBABLE INTENTIONS OF THE J.A.F.

1. The enemy is irrevocably committed to the strategic defensive.

2. The enemy will conserve his air strength for the defense of the inner zone on lines that offer the most favorable defensive conditions against air attacks, or combined air and naval action against amphibious attacks.

3. There are indications that following the abandonment of the air defense of Rabaul the enemy has determined to withdraw temporarily from combat to the maximum extent possible on all fronts, in order to build up his air strength against our next major offensive moves, and for the ultimate defense of the Empire.

4. In general, commitments will be made on the perimeter defenses only to the extent that over-all attrition does not seriously exceed production, and in individual instances such as recently at Rabaul, to the extent required to delay an Allied advance until adequate defenses can be built in the rear.

5. The enemy will continue his efforts to secure maximum aircraft production with first priority on fighters, dive and torpedo bombers.

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CAPABILITIES OF THE J.A.F.

1. The J.A.F. has lost the capability for large-scale, sustained offensive action.

2. The J.A.F. because of qualitative and quantitative inferiority, is unable adequately to defend the Empire on its present perimeter.

3. The J.A.F. has the capability for strong defensive action against invading air and amphibious forces, if withdrawn to interior lines, which provide defensive facilities in depth and breadth.

1. The J.A.F. retains the capability for:

a. Strong, land based torpedo and dive bomber attacks against amphibious operations, except in the Bismarcks and Solomons area. However, Allied local air superiority has discouraged such attacks altogether, or reduced them to negligible scale and ineffective results.

b. Offensive action in Burma, China and New Guinea, conditioned as to scale and duration by requirements and losses on other fronts.

c. Effective long-range night bombing attacks upon our bases in the Marshalls.

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TABLE I

ESTIMATED IDENTIFIABLE STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION OF JAPANESE AIR FORCE AS OF 1 MARCH 1944

DISPOSITION	BOMBERS	FIGHTERS	FLOAT PLANES	OTHERS	TOTALS
Japan, Marcus & Bonins	629 (-12)*	680 (-13)	180 (+16)	123 (+19)	1612 (-10)
Kuriles, Hokkaido, Karafuto	67 (+67)	63 (+27)	2 (0)	0 (-4)	132 (+94)
Manchuria, Korea, N. China	78 (+27)	152 (0)	8 (0)	43 (0)	281 (+27)
Central and S. China, Hainan, Formosa, and N. Indo-China	276 (+78)	305 (-11)	24 (+16)	54 (+15)	659 (+98)
Burma, Siam, S. Indo-China	90 (-36)	129 (-73)	8 (-10)	54 (0)	281 (-102)
Malaya, Sumatra, Andamans	153 (+2)	60 (+36)	72 (+6)	17 (+3)	302 (+47)
Java, Timor, Inner Seas, P.I.	84 (-45)	142 (-144)	82 (+19)	21 (+1)	347 (-151)
New Guinea	189 (+95)	150 (+21)	16 (+10)	24 (+18)	379 (+144)
New Britain, New Ireland	8 (-120)	27 (-90)	12 (-22)	0 (0)	47 (-240)
Carolines-Marianas-Palau	321 (+260)	288 (+240)	47 (-21)	31 (+16)	687 (+495)
Marshalls-Wake-Nauru	0 (-89)	0 (-85)	0 (-7)	0 (-3)	0 (-195)
<u>TOTAL</u>	1895 (+227)	1996 (-93)	451 (+15)	385 (+88)**	4727 (+237)

* The changes noted represent the difference between 1 February and 1 March Estimates.

** Others include 306 Observation and Reconnaissance and 79 Flying Boats.

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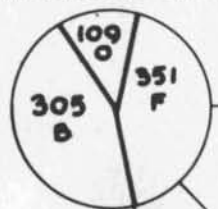
1 MARCH '44

J.A.F. IDENTIFIED COMBAT STRENGTH

FIGHTERS	1996
BOMBERS	1895
OTHERS	836
TOTAL	4,727

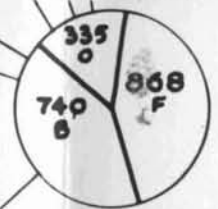
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CHINA + ADJACENT AREAS



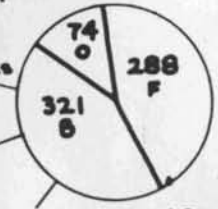
TOTAL 765
16%

JAPAN-KURILES-MANCHURIA



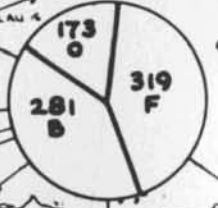
TOTAL 1944
41%

CENTRAL PACIFIC



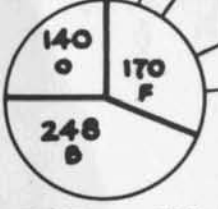
TOTAL 687
15%

S.-S.W. PACIFIC - JAVA

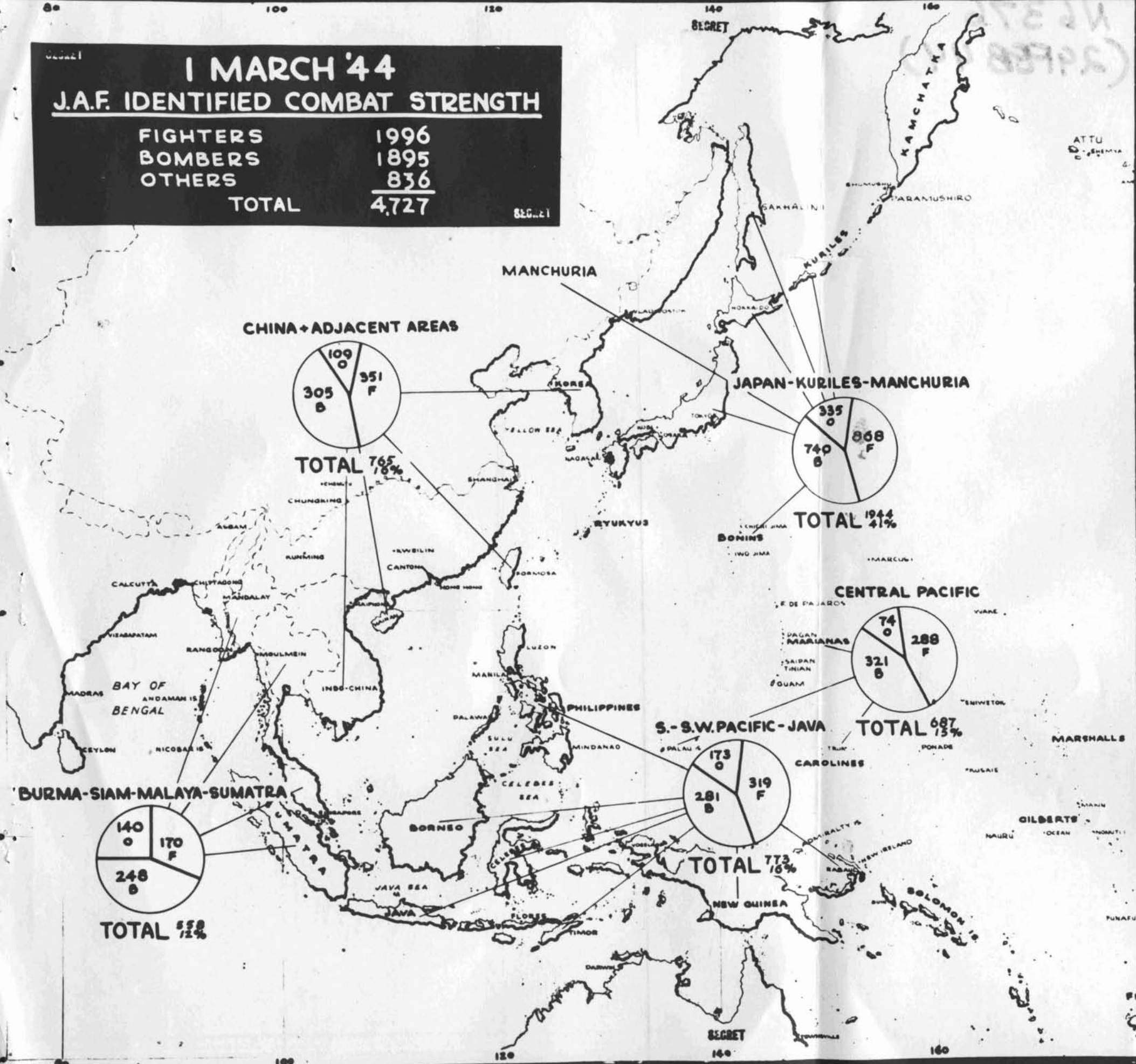


TOTAL 773
16%

BURMA-SIAM-MALAYA-SUMATRA



TOTAL 558
12%



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TABLE II

JAPANESE AIRCRAFT LOSSES

FEBRUARY 1944

<u>Type A/C</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Probably Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Fighters	262	95	66
Bombers	86	2	6
Unidentified* and Others	<u>384</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>118</u>
	732	206	190

* Primarily fighters and bombers.

Of the above aircraft reported destroyed in air combat or on the ground, a total of 407 were destroyed in the South and Southwest Pacific, 291 in the Central Pacific, and 34 in the Asiatic Theater. Not included under "Destroyed" above is a pick up of 94 unidentified aircraft, mainly fighters and bombers, confirmed additionally destroyed in January and bringing the number of enemy aircraft destroyed in January up from 765 to 859.

Wastage of the J.A.F. during February, or 100% of enemy aircraft claimed destroyed in combat operations, plus non-combat losses of 5% of average monthly operational strength, is estimated to have totalled 953 combat aircraft. If non-combat attrition is estimated at 8% instead of 5% of average monthly operational strength, which may eventually prove to be a more accurate figure, total February wastage would amount to 1102 combat aircraft.

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