How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle:

Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

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Table of Contents

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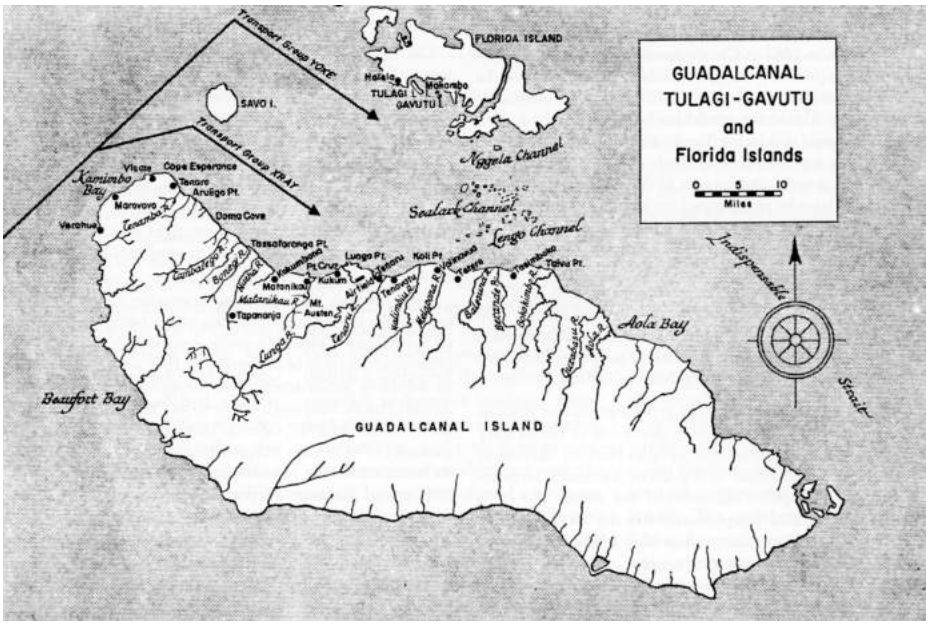
Operation Watchtower's relevance today

by Staffs, Marine Corps University

The 2016 unclassified edition of the *Marine Corps Operating Concept* states,

> We must be a *Lethal Force* with a 21st century approach to combined arms that integrates information warfare and seeks to destroy and defeat our enemies across five domains—air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace.[1]

This vision of a "single battle" approach to meet the challenges of an emerging security environment, while complex, is not new. The Navy-Marine Corps Team faced a similar challenge in the summer and fall of 1942. The strategic victory at the Battle of Midway provided the United States an opportunity to halt Japanese expansion throughout the Pacific and embark upon an offensive campaign that would change the course of the war. The first step would be an amphibious assault on Guadalcanal that would test the soundness of the doctrine created during the interwar period. It would also set the stage for important changes in Marine Corps and Navy command relationships, more effective integration and employment of new technology (such as radar), and the development of a joint operating concept that would be employed for the remainder of the war in the Pacific. The purpose of this case study is to provide a historical example of the Navy-Marine Corps Team working with their Army brethren in the ground and air forces to adapt to a demanding operating environment in which America's military was challenged across all domains and emerged victorious.



Guadalcanal is in the Solomon Islands. *(Photo from Henry I. Shaw, Jr.,* **First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal.** *Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1992.)*

Known as Operation Watchtower, this protracted, multi-domain campaign offers many lessons to commanders as practitioners interested in the risks and opportunities of expeditionary advanced base operations at the far end of a long and fragile logistics chain. As America's first counter-offensive against the unbroken chain of decisive Japanese land victories, Watchtower tested the combined/joint forces' ability to conduct and sustain amphibious operations; to seize, secure, protect, and control littoral terrain including islands, straits, and extensive shorelines; and to ultimately deny the use of this terrain to a determined enemy's air-ground-naval force.

Although it took less than 48 hours to gain a foothold on Guadalcanal, it would take nearly six months of hard fighting and the lives of many thousands of Marines, soldiers, airmen, and Sailors as well as the loss of numerous ships and aircraft before the campaign was successfully concluded. As an early attempt at sea control and power projection by an integrated naval expeditionary force, Watchtower offers a sobering and compelling case study on the importance (and difficulty) of executing the single naval battle concept.

Open areas, jungle growth—a varied area of operations. *(Photo from Henry I. Shaw, Jr.,* **First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal.** ***Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1992.)***

The single naval battle concept is not about seeking a decisive "single battle" to achieve victory at sea or on land but rather the integration of all elements of sea control and naval power projection into a cohesive "whole" that shares a common, unifying purpose and that runs from top to bottom through all formations.

The significance of the Guadalcanal Campaign extends well beyond its impact on the war in the Pacific and our amphibious doctrine. Guadalcanal was about more than Guadalcanal. Although replete with stories of individual heroism, superb tactical leadership, technological experimentation, and contributions of all elements of the MAGTF, this case study explores the operational interrelationship between sea control, power projection, and achieving a single naval battle through cross-domain operations. When applied to both current and future challenges, new lessons emerge from the Guadalcanal Campaign that reinforce the enduring utility of history as a laboratory for learning.

RADM Richmond K. Turner and MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift review Operation WATCHTOWER's landing plan. *(Photo from Henry I. Shaw, Jr.,* **First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal.** ***Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1992.)***

Note

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concept: How an Expeditionary Force Operates in the 21st Century*, (Washington, DC: September 2016).

>Editor's Note: The three-part case study will be available in May at http://www.usmcu.edu/lli/marine-leader-development/discussion-topics.

USMC

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part A: July – October 1942

"We found the most important technique of amphibious warfare to be the willingness and ability to cooperate in spite of differences of opinion or viewpoint between individuals, between branches in each Service and between the different Services themselves, including Allied Services. Many different types of tactical elements are involved in amphibious operations. Each type has its own particular use. If they are any good, the men of all those elements believe they are the particular group who will most contribute to success. Their opinions and efforts must always be considered and appreciated. Conflicts between the different elements (which are inevitable) must be adjusted in order to produce a smooth working team."

~Admiral Richmond K. Turner, USN (RET) Presentation at
the Navy General Line School
5 December 1949

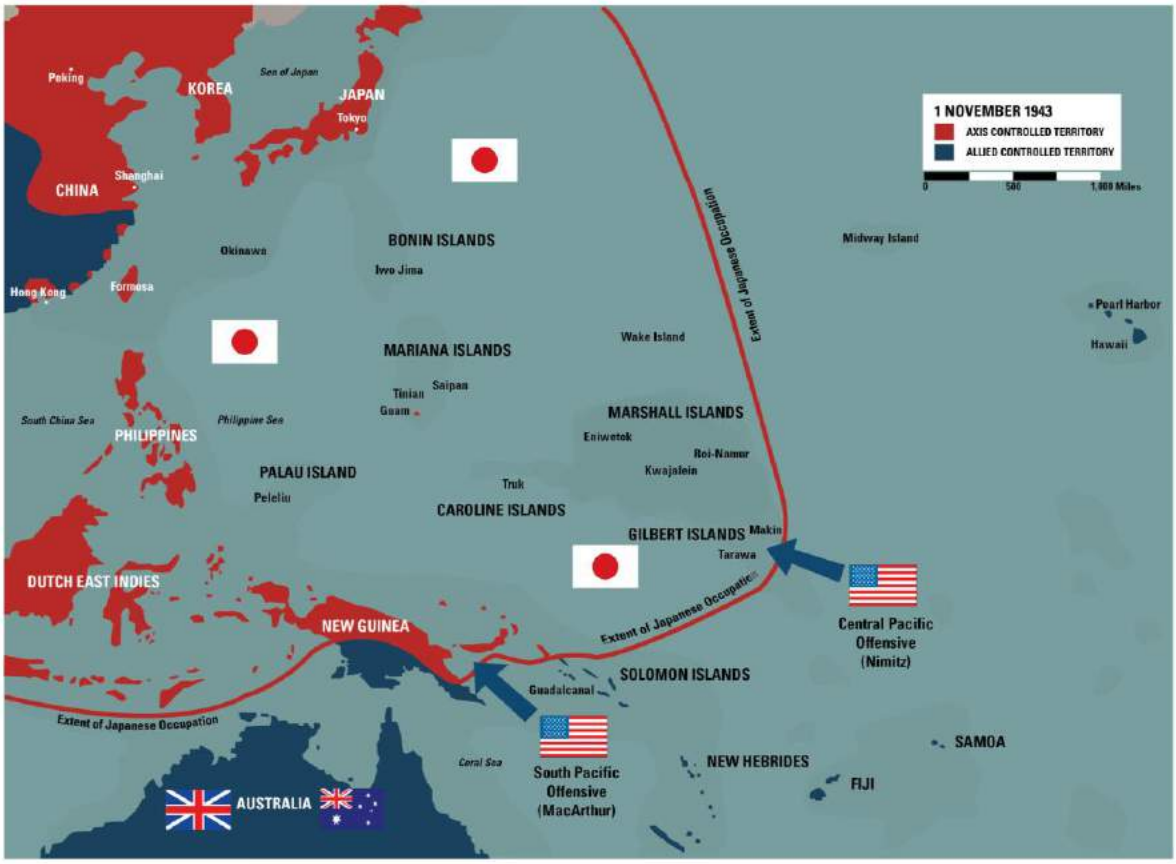
"Despite its outstanding record as a combat force in the past war, the Marine Corps' far greater contribution to victory was doctrinal; that is, the fact that the basic amphibious doctrines which carried Allied troops over every beachhead of World War II had been largely shaped—often in the face of uninterested and doubting military orthodoxy—by U.S. Marines, and mainly between 1922 and 1935."

~General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC
Commanding General, 1st Marine Division

Context[1]

As late as Summer 1942, most Americans had never heard of Guadalcanal. The remote island would likely have forever remained obscure if Imperial Japanese troops had not begun construction of an expeditionary advanced base with a planned airfield there in summer 1942. Australian Coastwatchers reported Japanese military activity on the island's north side in July 1942, drawing the attention of the Allied Joint Chiefs of Staff. With an airfield on the island, Japanese air power could threaten the Allies' planned logistics nodes in Australia and New Zealand. It also would pave the way for the seizure of Port Moresby on the southwest corner of Papua New Guinea, a major trade center and prime staging point for the Japanese to cut Australia off from Southeast Asia and wage an air, naval, and ground attack against the continent. With the news of the expeditionary base and airfield, an undeclared "red-line" had been crossed, and the Allies' leadership believed in the necessity of a military response (map 1).

[1] This case study draws heavily from Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), which captures the six-month Guadalcanal campaign. This three-part case study also contains a bibliography and instructor's discussion guide.



Map 1. Japanese Limit of Advance in the Pacific

Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift and the 1st Marine Division were already en route to Wellington, New Zealand, in June 1942, where they expected to have about six months to prepare for an Allied counteroffensive in the South Pacific. During their three-day transit, however, Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations and Joint Chiefs of Staff member, dispatched a plan to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief of Pacific forces, (CINCPAC), codenamed Operation Watchtower. Admiral King's plan called for the "seizure of the Santa Cruz Islands, Tulagi, and adjacent positions" in the Solomon Islands chain.[2]

Initially, General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, argued for his respective Service to carry out Watchtower because the island chain originally fell within General Douglas MacArthur's area of responsibility—the Southwest Pacific area, or SOWESPAC—giving the U.S. Army a viable claim to lead the operation. Admiral King insisted, however, that the operation could not be executed unless it was under the command of CINCPAC and Admiral Nimitz. Faced with this quandary, the Joint Chiefs redrew the boundary and Watchtower was tasked to Admiral Nimitz and his staff at CINCPAC, which delegated it to Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific.[3] The stage was thus set for the Navy-Marine Corps team to initiate the first counteroffensive action in the Pacific (map 2).

[2] James D. Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno, The U.S. Navy at Guadalcanal* (New York: Bantam Books 2011), 19.
[3] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 20.

Map 2. Joint Area of Operations, South Pacific, 1942

Command Relationships

Admiral King was well "aware that, officially, a 'Germany first' strategy was operative. But his close involvement in negotiations and personal relationship with George Marshall enabled him to create the leeway to run the Pacific [war] as he saw fit."[4] And in Admiral Nimitz, King believed he had the right commander to win while also protecting Navy equities in what he saw as the "Navy's theater."[5] Admiral Nimitz proved to be "the Pacific war's essential man, the figure through whom all decisions flowed, on whom all outcomes reflected, and whose judgment was respected from Main Navy all the way down the line."[6] Vice Admiral Ghormley, with his headquarters in New Caledonia, would serve as the overall commander from his flagship, the transport USS *Argonne* (AS 10) anchored in Noumea Harbor. Admiral Nimitz, with the support of Admiral King, directed, albeit temporarily, that Vice Admiral Frank J. Fletcher of Midway fame assume the command of Task Force 61 in support of Vice Admiral Ghormley. Vice Admiral Fletcher directed operations on board the carrier USS *Saratoga* (CV 3), one of three carriers forming his task force. As planning got underway, Vice Admiral Ghormley planned to exercise "strategic control . . . but refused to interject himself in the operational planning process," as he thought this task belonged to Fletcher.[7] The emerging problem was that Vice Admiral Fletcher, the expeditionary force commander, controlled the aircraft carriers assigned to provide the air support necessary for Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, the amphibious force commander, who would offload the 1st Marine Division, led by Major General Vandegrift. Inherent tension in resource prioritization and tasking between sea control and multidomain

[4] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 12.
[5] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 12.
[6] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 10.
[7] David J. Ulrich, *Preparing for Victory: Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps, 1936–1943* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 132; and James Joseph Henry IV, "A Historical Review of the Development of Doctrine for Command Relationships in Amphibious Warfare" (masters thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2000), 54–55.

power projection operations was evident from the very start. Internal command relationships in addition to the coordination of subordinate and interrelated elements had to be worked out at multiple levels, particularly if there was to be a firm understanding of how all the forces involved were to achieve their assigned objectives and purpose in a mutually supportive way (figure 1). The discussions and debates between students and instructors alike during academic exercises and war games at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and during the development of amphibious warfare doctrine in the 1930s were about to meet the hard reality of combat operations against a tough and determined enemy.

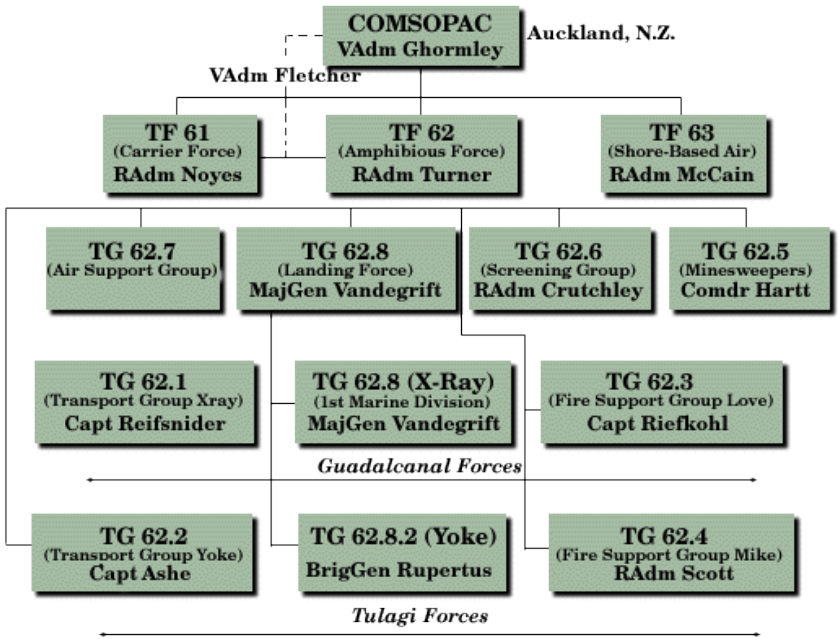


Figure 1. Operation Watchtower Task Organization and Command Relationships

Fleet Tactical Publication (FTP) 167[8]

In 1939, the British military writer Basil H. Liddell-Hart, in his studies on the Allies' failure at Gallipoli, had declared that a "landing on a foreign shore in the face of hostile troops has always been one of the most difficult operations of war. It has now become almost impossible."[9] Liddell-Hart's ominous warning was about to be tested. Vice Admiral Fletcher hurriedly assembled Task Force 61 in less than three weeks, with many of the more than 80 ships involved—carriers, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, troopships, and cargo ships—having never sailed alongside one another before.

Many ships' crews had received their orders only hours before setting sail. Though the Navy-Marine Corps relationship was theoretically seamless, the 1938 edition of the Navy's landing operations doctrine, FTP-167, was not yet an integral part of this partnership. The doctrine, technology and, most of all, the training that enabled smooth air-sea-ground coordination was

[8] *Landing Operations Doctrine: United States Navy, 1938*, FTP 167 (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Operations, Division of Fleet Training, 1938).
[9] Richard B. Frank, "Innovation and Determination Ashore," *Naval History Magazine*, 21, no. 4, August 2007.

still nascent. The naval Services attempted to define the parameters of air-sea-ground coordination through the development of amphibious warfare doctrine during the interwar period dating from 1922 to 1938. The doctrine, which was highly offensive in nature and heavily reliant upon the destruction of an enemy's capabilities through the rapid seizure of a defended (or undefended) beachhead by way of fire superiority, maneuver, aggressive assault, and sustained logistics, required coordination and integration of Navy and Marine Corps assets. Once ashore, part of the Marines' mission—aside from the destruction of the enemy—was to protect the Navy by seizing coastal gun emplacements and airfields. Unlike Liddell-Hart's "indirect approach" made popular during the First World War, amphibious warfare doctrine and the seizure of small islands or coastal objectives was better characterized by a direct approach and frontal assaults.[10]

The final doctrine the sea Services settled on had its roots in amphibious failures of the past, including Gallipoli during World War I. The key was ensuring the landing force was self-sufficient, meaning the landing force, in addition to its infantry units, had its own logistics support as well as its own artillery, armor, and engineers.[11] Early experiments with using aircraft and naval gunfire in support of ground forces as a substitute for artillery during the landing was another critical doctrinal advancement. Speed, aggressiveness, the rapid buildup of men and supplies, and the acceptance of inevitable casualties, the Marines believed, enabled the quick seizure of an objective and lessened the vulnerability and exposure of landing craft and transport ships to enemy counterattack.[12]

The Marine Corps consolidated its lessons learned in the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* in 1934.[13] Revised several times, the manual addressed the problems associated with command relationships, naval gunfire support, combat unit loading, air support, ship-to-shore movement, and shore party control.[14] The manual formed the basis for FTP-167.

Coral Sea and Midway

The road to Guadalcanal was paved with both success and failure as the Navy suffered through two costly engagements during the summer of 1942 in an attempt to establish a foothold in the Pacific following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During the first engagement in the Coral Sea in early May, the U.S. and Imperial Fleets never came within sight or firing range of each other, and instead sent wave after wave of aircraft to locate and attack opposing ships. The Japanese benefitted the most from the engagement by sinking an American carrier—the USS *Lexington* (CV 2)—and destroying 74 aircraft. In the end, though, Japanese losses were high: a light carrier and 80 aircraft. Although a tactical failure for the United States, it was victory at the strategic level because the Japanese could not land its invasion force at Port Moresby.[15]

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[10] LtCol Frank O. Hough, Maj Verle E. Ludwig, and Henry I. Shaw Jr., *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 1, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal* (Washington, DC: Historical Section, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1959), 13–22, hereafter *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*.
[11] Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal,* 13–22.
[12] Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal,* 13–22.
[13] Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal,* 13–22.
[14] Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal,* 13–22.
[15] "The Battle of the Coral Sea," Naval History and Heritage Command, 2 February 2018.

At Midway during the first week of June, U.S. Navy codebreakers alerted Admiral Nimitz to the Japanese Imperial Navy's plan to capture Hawaii. Before this could happen, Japan first had to destroy U.S. naval forces at Midway and capture the island. In response, Nimitz positioned three of his carriers loaded with 233 aircraft roughly 300 miles off the island, avoiding detection when the Japanese fleet sailed for Midway. When Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo attacked Midway on 4 June, the large American armada moved in behind the Japanese fleet and attacked without warning, destroying four Japanese carriers and 332 aircraft. Admiral Nimitz's losses totaled 147 planes and another carrier, the USS *Yorktown* (CV 5).[16] In a short span, Nimitz had become acquainted with the capabilities of the Japanese Imperial Navy and the limitations and weaknesses of his own fleet.[17]

Movement Overseas

While the U.S. Navy fought at Coral Sea and Midway, the 1st Marine Division, mobilized for movement in March 1942, began conducting individual and small unit level training to meet the Marine Corps initial operating capability standards. After training exercises in Maryland in March and April, the division deployed administratively out of San Francisco in two echelons with the expectation that it would arrive in Wellington, New Zealand, on or about 14 June (division headquarters, 5th Marines, and select division units) and 11 July (1st Marines, 11th Marines, and remaining division units), respectively. At Wellington, the division established several bases in preparation for amphibious training and its first combat mission, though Major General Vandegrift did not anticipate its involvement prior to 1 January 1943.

On 26 June, the unexpected happened when the division received orders to prepare for combat operations in the South Pacific with a tentative start date of 1 August. Needing time to get the second echelon to Wellington, Vandegrift was able to secure a new date for operations. In the meantime, he worked out a timeline to get all personnel and equipment to Wellington before embarking for rehearsal exercises. The accelerated timeline and a strike of longshoremen in Wellington deprived the Marines of an opportunity to embark with their equipment during rehearsals as limited cargo carrying capacity and the assumption that there would be ample time to plan and re-embark had forced Vandegrift to either leave or transport the division's major end-items including artillery pieces, vehicles, engineering equipment, and stocks of food, clothing, and ammunition in other cargo ships separate from the Marines.[18]

Regardless, Major General Vandegrift, with roughly 19,000 Marines (now augmented by the attached 2d Marines), boarded 19 troopships and four destroyer transports with what supplies they could embark (figure 2). Rear Admiral Turner's amphibious force sailed from Wellington for the Koro Islands, Fiji, on 22 July, where the Navy-Marine Corps team would spend five days rehearsing the landing. Poor prior reconnaissance, however, failed to reveal the coral reef

[16] "Battle of Midway: 4–7 June 1942," Naval History and Heritage Command, 2 February 2018.
[17] For a recent treatment of Midway, see Craig L. Symonds, *The Battle of Midway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[18] See William H. Bartsch, "Operation Dovetail: Bungled Guadalcanal Rehearsal, July 1942," *Journal of Military History* 66, no. 2 (April 2002): 443–76.

surrounding the Koro Islands and prevented the majority of landing craft from reaching the beach.[19] This would not be the last issue confronting the Navy and Marine Corps concerning intelligence, particularly as it relates to Japanese forces and island geography. A limited number of photographs and eyewitness estimates provided by Australians visiting the island was the primary source of information planners used to develop and execute the landing plan. A turn of the century issue of *National Geographic* magazine provided another barely useful source for terrain analysis. This breakdown in intelligence liaison chains prevented planners from receiving valuable photographs and maps needed to fill the many costly shortfalls.[20]

Figure 2. First Marine Division boards transports to Koro Islands

As the embark phase continued in earnest, Vice Admiral Fletcher, Rear Admiral Turner, Major General Vandegrift, and Vice Admiral Ghormley's chief of staff, Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, attended a commander's meeting aboard the USS *Saratoga* to discuss their orders for the first time. The most shocking details of the operation were not necessarily the objectives, but rather that Vice Admiral Ghormley had not seen the order and did not attend the meeting, sending Rear Admiral Callaghan in his place.

During their discussion, Fletcher raised the prospect of not keeping his carriers in place "more than two days" in support of the 1st Marine Division's offload, prompting Vandegrift and Turner

[19] Henry I. Shaw Jr., *First Offensive: The Marine Campaign For Guadalcanal*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1992), 13.
[20] David J. Ulbrich, "Thomas Holcomb, Alexander A. Vandegrift, and Reforms in Amphibious Command Relations on Guadalcanal in 1942," *War and Society* 28, no. 1 (May 2009): 113–47, https://doi.org/10.1179/072924709791329126.

to respond that the planned five-day offload was risky enough. After giving it further consideration, and understanding the importance of getting the Marines their supplies, Fletcher agreed to three days to complete the offload. As the meeting continued, the troops conducted their rehearsals, which did not go well (figure 3). After landing only one-third of the landing force and encountering every problem imaginable, Turner abruptly ended the rehearsals, collected his landing craft, and joined the rest of Task Force 61 on 31 July to sail for Guadalcanal.[21]

Figure 3. Rehearsals off the Koro Islands

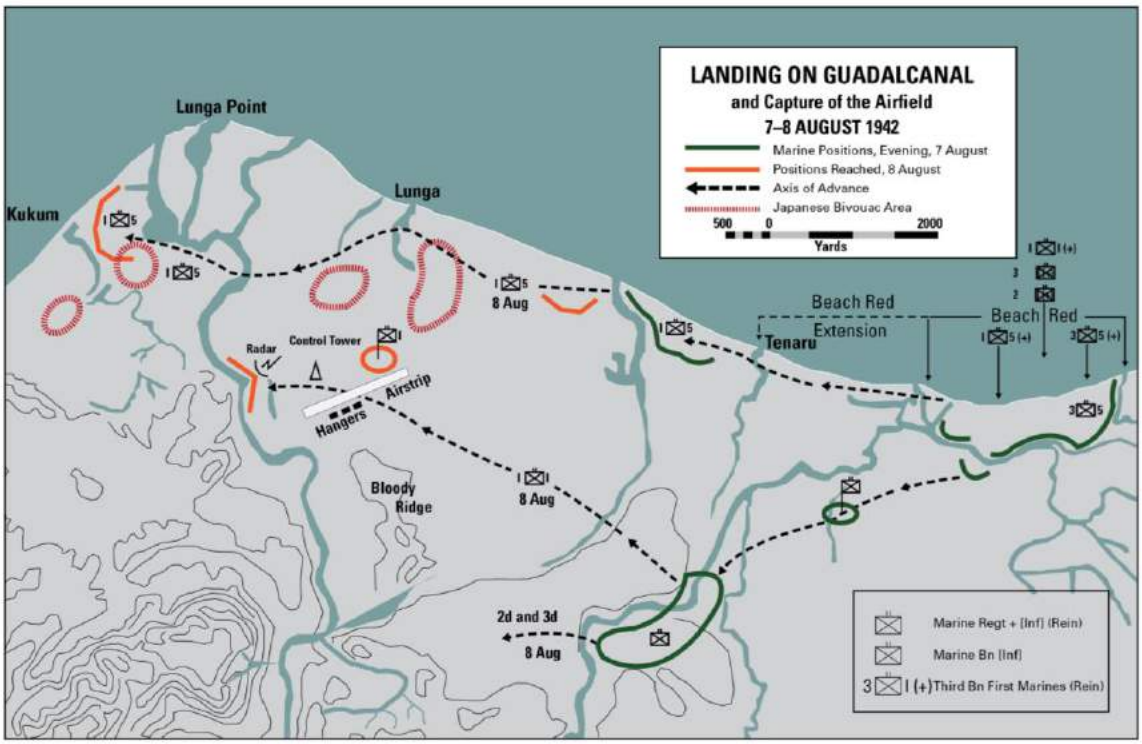
Major General Vandegrift finalized the plan to simultaneously seize two objectives. The first objective, focusing on Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo Islands, would be assaulted by Combat Group A, consisting of the 5th Marine Regiment, the 1st Raider Battalion, elements of the 2d Marine Regiment, and the 1st Parachute Battalion, all under the command of Brigadier General William H. Rupertus (see Annex A). Securing Tulagi precluded the Japanese use of a seaplane base to threaten U.S. Navy transports and surface warfare ships entering the bay. The second objective, the mission of Combat Group B led by Vandegrift, involved the rest of the division. Combat Group B would establish a beachhead codenamed "Cactus" on the north shore of Guadalcanal, east of Lunga Point, seize the partially constructed expeditionary airfield there, and

[21] Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 264–65. For a recent biography of Fletcher, see John B. Lundstrom, *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral: Frank Jack Fletcher at Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006). No scholarly book-length biographies of Turner and Ghormley exist.

establish a perimeter defense to protect it against Japanese counterattack. Major General Vandegrift intended to complete construction of the airfield for the Allies' use.[22]

The Landing

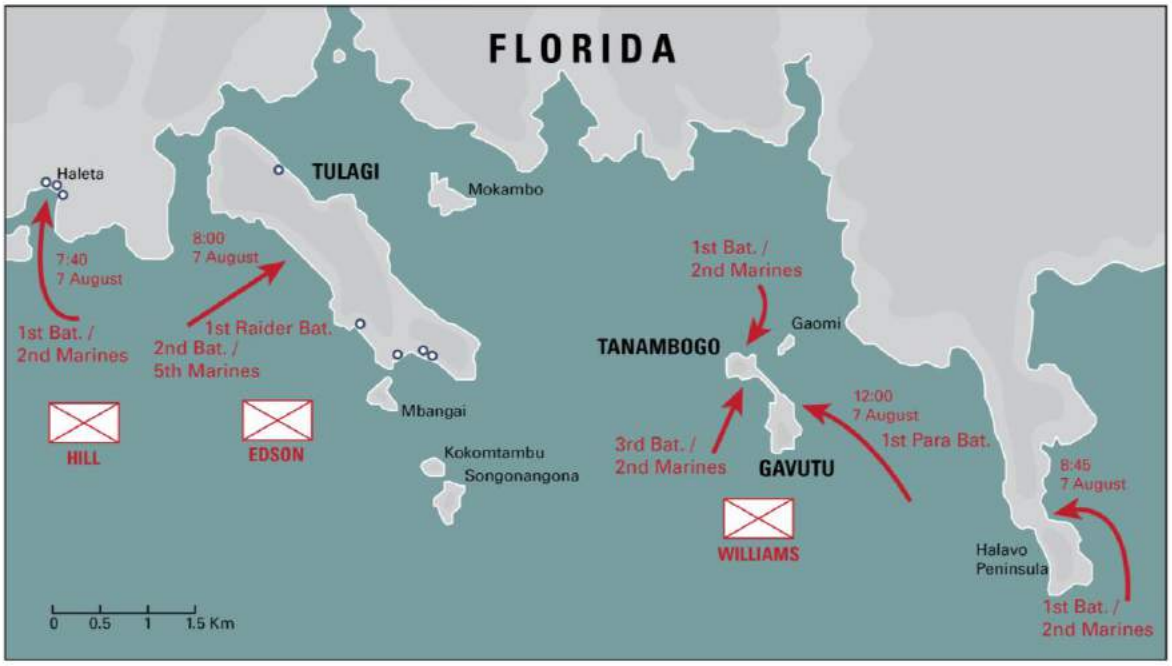
On 7 August, nearly three hours before the first Marine from Vandegrift's Combat Group B crossed Red Beach, naval gunfire from the cruiser USS *Quincy* began shelling the coastline to destroy suspected enemy positions and provide cover to assaulting Marines. Scores of landing craft delivered hundreds of Marines to several beach landing sites in the first wave without incident. With no enemy in sight, the Marines headed directly for the outskirts of the airfield located less than five kilometers from Red Beach (map 3).



Map 3. Action on Guadalcanal 7-8 August 1942

For Combat Group A, resistance on Tulagi, Tanambogo, and Gavutu was greater than Brigadier General Rupertus had anticipated. Japanese defenders and Korean laborers took up positions in a network of caves and concrete pillboxes out of sight of the Marines. Fiercely resisting the Marines as they moved through the island's dense jungle, the defenders did not intend to give up Tulagi without a fight. Japanese swarm attacks on Marine positions throughout the night, which were meant to cause chaos and confusion, was a tactic Marine small unit leaders at Guadalcanal would become accustomed to (map 4).

[22] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 6.



Map 4. Combat Group A actions on D-Day

As Vandegrift made slow progress, Ghormley's flagship intercepted Japanese radio transmissions from Tulagi calling for reinforcements.[23] The Japanese high command stationed at the massive imperial naval base at Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, launched heavy and light bombers with fighter escorts toward Guadalcanal. Vice Admiral Fletcher's carriers, which were located 100 miles south of the Cactus beachhead, launched fighter aircraft to intercept the Japanese 20 miles northwest of the island. With time, space, and distance factors working against the Allies, Japanese aircraft scored a direct hit on a U.S. destroyer. The attack concerned Ghormley and Fletcher. Already short one-quarter of his carrier aircraft, Vice Admiral Fletcher's focus on the survivability of his carriers dominated his calculations, particularly after the losses at Coral Sea and Midway. Guided by Nimitz's direction on assuming a posture of calculated risk, Fletcher had to consider that, while more Marines and soldiers were on the way from the United States, only four carriers remained in the Pacific with no additions expected for at least a year.[24]

At this point in the campaign, different visions of the operation began to show. On the one hand, Major General Vandegrift assumed that this portion of the campaign should be seen primarily as an amphibious operation supported from the sea. On the other, which could be said to be held by Admiral Nimitz, Vice Admiral Ghormley, and Vice Admiral Fletcher, was that this was a naval campaign to gain sea control in the area and featured an amphibious assault to deny the Japanese a base and gain the U.S. a base.

Vice Admiral Fletcher, convinced the risk of losing another carrier outweighed any potential gain, withdrew his carriers from the area earlier than planned. Notifying Rear Admiral Turner

[23] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 7–10.
[24] Lundstrom, *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral*, 357–82; and Ulbrich, "Thomas Holcomb, Alexander A. Vandegrift, and Reforms," 122–23, 127–28.

that the carriers intended to head farther south, the decision left Turner's transports and the 1st Marine Division without air cover or additional surface support to complete the landing. When Turner summoned Major General Vandegrift to his flagship to inform the division commander of Fletcher's withdrawal, "Vandegrift fumed at Fletcher's obstinacy and ignorance regarding the tactical necessities of amphibious assaults."[25] Fletcher, however, "regarded the preservation of the carriers as more important than any of his other duties, including his responsibility as Expeditionary Force Commander to oversee the success of the landings and to protect the irreplaceable assault shipping and MajGen Vandegrift's marines."[26] Without a vision for a *single naval battle*, "Ghormley had no independent knowledge of the actual risks to the carriers and felt bound to take Fletcher at his word."[27]

Back on Guadalcanal, Colonel LeRoy P. Hunt's 5th Marines, made up of his 1st and 3d Battalions, moved off the beach and into the jungle, crossing the chest-deep Ilu River before negotiating its steep embankment (figure 4). Colonel Clifton B. Cates' 1st Marines followed soon after. Thanks to the handiwork of the division's engineer battalion, the 1st Marines crossed the Ilu by way of a wood bridge complete with two amphibian tractors supporting its central span. In trace of the infantry regiments were Colonel Pedro del Valle's 75mm pack howitzers of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 11th Marines. The 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, with its 105mm cannons, remained in general support of the division.

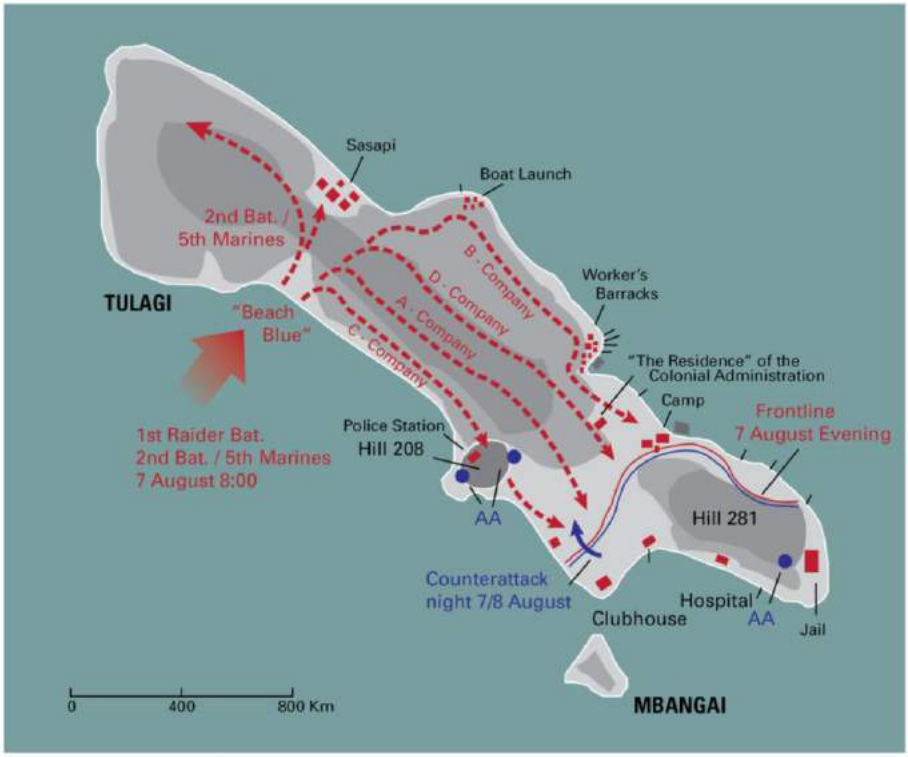
The enemy's absence concerned the Marines. The Coastwatchers revealed later that the island's defenders, most of whom were Korean laborers, had fled west during the previous week's bombing raids by U.S. Army Air Corps Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses. Those remaining left when the amphibious task force appeared over the horizon, narrowly escaping the D-Day pre-assault bombardment. Although eerily quiet on the big island, the Marines could hear the fighting across the Sealark Channel to their north. Fortunately for the Marines, the Japanese command at Rabaul had underestimated the strength of the 1st Marine Division and opted not to reinforce any of the Solomon Islands. In all, Japanese intelligence estimated no more than 2,000 Marines were on Guadalcanal and even less on Tulagi, Tanambogo, and Gavutu.[28]

[25] Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory*, 134.
[26] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 94.
[27] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 52.
[28] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 12.

Figure 4. First Marine Division landing at Guadalcanal

Meanwhile at Tulagi, steady yet costly progress brought Lieutenant Colonel Merritt A. Edson's 1st Raider Battalion to the former British residency overlooking Tulagi's harbor by nightfall. Edson ordered his men to dig in for the night across from a hill overlooking their final objective; a ravine on the island's southern tip. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, with the support of the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, however, continued its push to the northern side of Tulagi, clearing the entire sector by sundown. Now a supporting effort, Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Rosecrans moved his battalion into position for Lieutenant Colonel Edson's pending attack (map 5). Japanese attacks against the Marines, all ending in defeat, nonetheless proved costly. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and 1st Raider Battalion suffered a combined total of 155 wounded and killed on the first day.[29]

[29] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 10.



Map 5. Combat Group A actions on Tulagi

Casualties were not limited to enemy contact alone. Thick jungle vegetation, compounded by heat and humidity, slowed foot movement and took its toll on poorly conditioned Marines. Intermittent rain showers soaked uniforms and equipment, adding unneeded weight and fatigue to their exhausted bodies. Canvas pack straps cut into shoulders; wet boots softened and pulled skin from the bottoms of feet. Cuts from thorns and sharp blades of grass created sores, which led to infections. Along with dehydration and heat exhaustion, these would be just a few of the environmental conditions the Marines would have to become accustomed to combating and enduring.

The next morning, Major General Vandegrift consolidated the division's positions on Guadalcanal. After seizing the vacated and incomplete airfield and establishing a beachhead for the throughput of additional Marines, shore party personnel unloaded supplies as fast as landing craft could make the turnaround from ship to shore. Without a beachhead large enough to handle the influx of rations, ammunition, vehicles, and fuel at an accelerated rate and with the small number of Marines and sailors dedicated to shore party duties, the offload turned Red Beach into a dumpsite—and a lucrative target for the Japanese. Almost as soon as supplies arrived, they had to be moved off the beach. Fortunately, the lack of Japanese opposition enabled Vandegrift to shift the supply beaches west to a wider beachhead, solving a last half of the congestion problem. By the evening of 8 August, Vandegrift moved what supplies he could into the developing

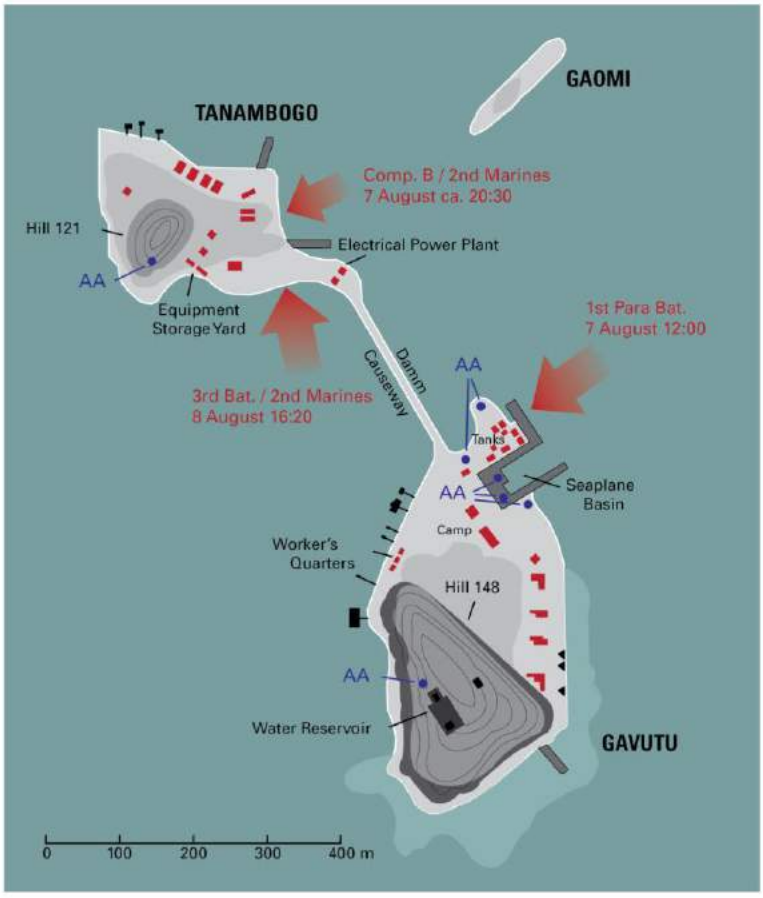
perimeter around the airfield. Approximately 11,000 Marines were ashore on Guadalcanal and another 6,075 at Tulagi.[30]

Another problem related to logistics was enemy intelligence estimates. Believing there would be a large number of Japanese defenders waiting for the Marines, Vandegrift moved too much combat power ashore at the cost of logistics support, airfield development, and defense capabilities (e.g., radars, engineering equipment, etc.). The lack of clear intelligence had a significant impact on load planning, which in turn impacted the operational tempo.

At Tulagi, the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, came ashore to provide reinforcements. After the 1st Raider Battalion's successful attack and with mop-up operations complete, the Marines declared the island secure. The intensity of the fighting to seize Gavutu and Tanambogo, connected by a slender hundred-yard causeway, mirrored that of Tulagi (map 6). With the objective areas considerably smaller than Tulagi, the Marines had to limit their use of naval surface fire support and close air support. Nevertheless, after naval surface fire from the light cruiser USS *San Juan* (CL 54), in addition to support from two destroyers and the carrier USS *Wasp*'s (CV 7) Grumman F4F Wildcats, Marines from the 1st Parachute Battalion landed on Gavutu early afternoon of D+1. Japanese defenders, hidden in caves, fired on the second and third landing waves with telling results. Thirty-Two Marines from the 1st Parachute Battalion were killed with an untold number wounded, including the battalion commander, Major Robert H. Williams.[31]

With casualties climbing, Company B from the 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, passed through Gavutu and attempted to seize Tanambogo, but was unsuccessful. After a night of close combat on both islands, the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, broke the stalemate and secured both outposts shortly after landing. A total of 144 Marines died during the three days of fighting on Tulagi, Tanambogo, and Gavutu with another 194 wounded. By time the Marines had declared all three outpost islands secure, little more than 30 of the 1,000 Japanese defenders had survived. The fighting, however, was far from over.[32]

[30] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 12.
[31] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 13.
[32] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 10.



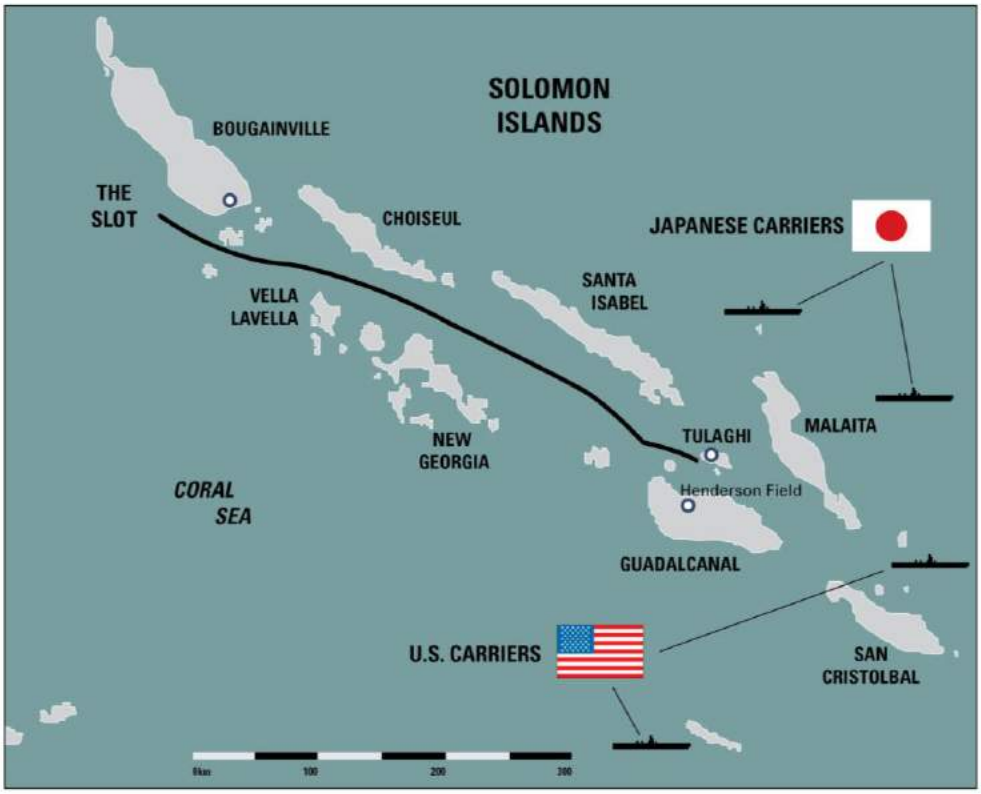
Map 6. Combat Group A actions on Tanambogo and Gavutu

In the air, Japanese bombers penetrated Vice Admiral Fletcher's anti-air screen enough to cripple several Allied ships, including sinking the destroyer USS *Jarvis* (DD 393). To evade antiaircraft fire, however, enemy bombers dropped their payloads from 20,000 feet, reducing their accuracy and the damage to U.S. ships. Fletcher's withdrawal left Rear Admiral Turner in a precarious tactical situation, who was thus faced with the no-win decision to either: 1) continue the offload of the 1st Marine Division without air cover; or 2) leave the area abruptly with the Marines' off-load only half complete. Turner "was aware that the cargo discharge was far from complete and without information on the surface action" remained on station without air cover to offload supplies.[33] With ships still half-full and Major General Vandegrift's Marines left with only 17 days' rations, including captured Japanese food, and four days' supply of ammunition for all weapons, Turner's task force left Guadalcanal. One cynical Marine officer remaining on the island dubbed his unit the "First Marooned Division."[34]

Without air cover and sustainment, Major General Vandegrift focused on a "counterlanding on Guadalcanal to retake the airfield" and "secured the Lunga River mouth area with its airfield site,

[33] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 119.
[34] Merrill B. Twining, *No Bended Knee: The Battle for Guadalcanal—The Memoir of Gen. Merrill B. Twining, USMC (Ret.)*, ed. Neil Carey (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1996), 73.

about a mile inland, by stationing his battalions to protect his lodgment from attacks by the sea, or along the immediate coast from east or west."[35] Although the Marines held the advantage in force ratio, the incomplete intelligence picture coupled with a large area to defend meant Vandegrift had to spread his force out, allowing the Japanese to focus on the thinner portions of the line and from the point at which the terrain supported an attack (map 7). To make matters worse, with Combat Group B spread thin, he only had one battalion as a reserve for an emergency.



Map 7. Naval forces on the evening of 8 August 1942

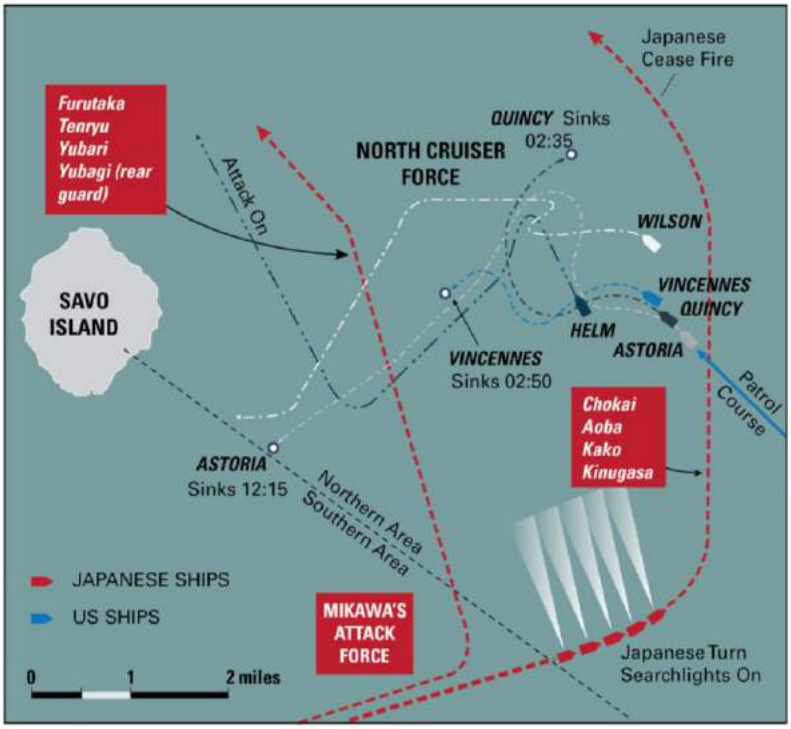
Battle of Savo Island[36]

On the night of 8 August and into the early morning hours of 9 August, five heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, and a destroyer from the Japanese Navy counterattacked Rear Admiral Turner's three cruiser-destroyer groups blocking the approaches to Tulagi and Guadalcanal in Savo Bay. The Imperial Japanese Navy's superior night fighting skills defeated two of Turner's covering forces without losing a single ship of its own. Allied losses were significant: the heavy cruisers USS *Vincennes* (CA 44), USS *Astoria* (CA 34), and USS *Quincy* (CA 39) from the United States and the Australian HMAS *Canberra* (D 33) topped the list of ships sunk or damaged. The air and naval battle in the Sealark Channel also cost the U.S. Navy nearly two dozen fighter aircraft.

[35] Frank, "Innovation and Determination Ashore," 2.
[36] See Bruce Loxton with Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Shame of Savo: Anatomy of a Naval Disaster* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

Though Japanese ships lacked the newly introduced air-sea search radars fielded on American warships, they did possess the highly effective Type 93 "Long-Lance" torpedo. From more than 10 miles away, a Japanese vessel could launch a barrage, while only registering as a blip on the Navy's SC/SG radars. The overconfident American naval officers had yet to realize the high levels of tactical proficiency that their counterparts in the Imperial Japanese Navy had mastered.

The Battle of Savo Island began when ships of the Japanese 8th Fleet managed to slip past two American destroyers positioned to provide early warning and detection of approaching enemy vessels (map 8). The U.S. ships' radars did not detect the Japanese assault force entering the channel due to the intermittent radar sweeps that occurred throughout the night. The Americans did not fully understand radar technology, and did not run the systems continuously. The Japanese forces managed to cruise into the channel, slip past the destroyers, and wreak havoc on Task Group 62.6.



Map 8. Battle of Savo Island

The distrust of the new radar systems stemmed from a lack of understanding of the equipment and its capabilities. Submarines, which also were available for tasking in the Pacific, were notably absent from Operation Watchtower. Naval warfare's mechanical and technological evolution had superseded the contemporary doctrine of seeking decisive battle. In essence, the Navy had laminated new technology (radar) and platforms (submarines) onto old concepts of operation. In the end, technology had outpaced operations and tactics, which now had to catch up.

Although a stunning victory, the Imperial Japanese Navy withdrew for fear of a U.S. air attack. From this point onward, the Japanese Navy would operate close to Guadalcanal only at night. The impact of Vice Admiral Fletcher's withdrawal was critical, but no more so than the U.S. Navy's inability to fight a night surface action.

Engagements Afloat and Ashore

Almost simultaneously with the departure of Rear Admiral Turner's transports, "the Japanese began a pattern of harassing air attacks on the beachhead."[37] Fletcher's and Turner's departure left Major General Vandegrift's force temporarily without air and surface support, critical supplies and equipment, and exposed the 1st Marine Division to Japanese air raids and naval surface fires for the unforeseeable future. Vandegrift surmised that the division was in a "most alarming position," particularly since a Japanese counterlanding was a real possibility without a secure coast.[38]

Despite the unpredictable attacks, and without the necessary heavy engineering equipment, the division's engineers managed to complete work on the airfield with abandoned Japanese equipment and materials. On 12 August, Major General Vandegrift opened Henderson Airfield. Naming it after a Marine aviator, Major Lofton R. Henderson, the first aircraft to land and take off carried wounded Marines, the first of 2,879 to be evacuated from Guadalcanal. The airfield was now the centerpiece of Vandegrift's strategy and his defensive perimeter. It, like his defenses, needed continuous work as it lacked a taxiway. Potholes caused by pre-landing bombardment, Japanese attacks, and inadequate water drainage during frequent, torrential downpours added to the problem. With the airfield barely operational, repair materials arrived in the same planes evacuating the wounded. In some respects, opening the airfield mitigated the Navy's absence and gave the Marines new hope once their aircraft were based there.

On Hawaii, Admiral Nimitz received reports that a large Japanese task force, formed around the Japanese 17th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Harukichi Hyakutake, was massing at Truk, Caroline Islands. Naval intelligence determined that Hyakutake had assembled the task force to recapture the airfield and to destroy the 1st Marine Division. Reports included the presence of the heavy carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* and the light carrier *Ryujo*. Analysts assumed Major General Kiyotake Kawaguchi's 35th Infantry Brigade was likely to be the main assault force with the infamous 28th Division, an infantry regiment commanded by Colonel Kiyono Ichiki in the lead. Based at Guam, Colonel Ichiki's assault echelon, one battalion of 900 soldiers, departed the Solomons on six destroyers. With little room on the ships, the battalion was forced to carry less ammunition and supplies. In addition, a follow-on echelon of 1,200 soldiers was to join the assault battalion. Major General Vandegrift's concerns about a potential counterlanding was now a reality. Estimates reported back to the Imperial Japanese Headquarters fell short of the actual Marine strength on the island, but this seemed insignificant to the Imperial

[37] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 13.
[38] Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal,* 260.

Defense Minister Hideki Tojo. He issued the order for Colonel Ichiki's assault unit to seize the airfield as part of a grander offensive to dislodge the Allies from the Solomon Islands.

Battle of the Tenaru, 21 August 1942

Before the Japanese surged into the South Pacific, the Australians had placed radios and observers to recruit locals to help report the imperial forces' movements. On Guadalcanal, Major Martin Clemens and Sergeant Major Jacob C. Vouza, British Solomon Islands Constabulary, were the eyes and ears of the Allies at the end of "The Slot." They would provide early warning and detection of enemy activity to the division; the Marines, in turn, would rely heavily on their reports to launch aircraft in time to engage Japanese bombers and naval vessels.

Around 14 August, Major Clemens and Sergeant Major Vouza walked into the 1st Marine Division command post to meet with Major General Vandegrift and his staff. The Coastwatchers had been providing reports on Japanese movement, and they pinpointed Japanese positions east of the airfield where several Marine patrols reported seeing the Japanese forces. Then, on the night of 19 August, Colonel Ichiki's lightly loaded imperial soldiers landed near Taivu Point, 25 miles east of Vandegrift's closest defensive positions. In what would be the first significant contact between the Marines and Ichiki's regiment, a security patrol from Lieutenant Colonel Leonard B. Creswell's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, ambushed a Japanese force near Taivu. Up to this point, the only Japanese killed were special naval infantry. The Marines identified those killed in the Taivu ambush as army troops with fresh uniforms and communications gear, marking them as new arrivals to the island. Marines defending the perimeter along the Ilu River, often misnamed the Tenaru River, prepared for a much larger enemy force heading their way.

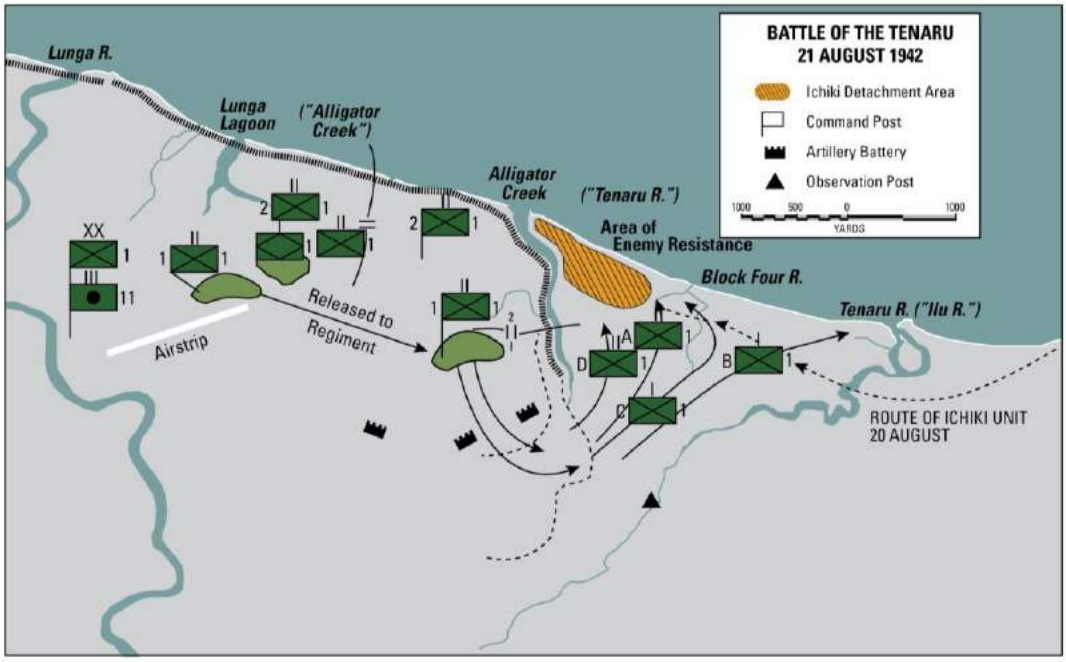
The next day, the Japanese launched their attack on the Marines' eastern flank. Ordered to "quickly recapture and maintain the airfield at Guadalcanal," Ichiki vowed his regiment would fight "to the last breath of the last man."[39] Under the impression he was up against no more than a few thousand Marines, Ichiki decided not to wait for the rest of his regiment, still in transit to Guadalcanal, and marched from Taivu to Henderson Field. Sergeant Major Vouza alerted the Marines to Colonel Ichiki's pending attack. Captured and later tortured by the Japanese, Vouza would escape by chewing through his bindings and fleeing into the jungle.

After finding his way to Lieutenant Colonel Edwin A. Pollock's 2d Battalion, 1st Marines' lines near the mouth of the Ilu River on 20 August, Vouza reported that an estimated 250–500 Japanese soldiers were not far behind him. Hours later, at 0130 the next morning, Colonel Ichiki commenced his assault. As the Japanese moved within small arms range, Marine rifle and machine gun fire cut into their formation. After a brief pause and a salvo of concentrated mortar fire on the Marine lines, the Japanese tried again to storm the objective. This time, in addition to rifle and machine gun fire, Marine 37mm guns devastated each assault element with canister fire,

[39] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20.

halting their advance. This ended Ichiki's bid to penetrate Pollock's perimeter; 2/1 held its position and prepared to counterattack.[40]

At first light, Lieutenant Colonel Creswell moved his battalion upstream and waded approximately 50 feet across the shallow Ilu to Colonel Ichiki's exposed left flank. Grumman F4F Wildcats from Marine Attack Squadron 223 (VMF-223) covered the battalion as it moved behind a platoon of tanks. The counterattack pushed remnants of the enemy force back until Ichiki's force broke contact and fled east toward Taivu Point. Just before sunset, the fighting ended. More than 800 Japanese soldiers lay dead and a disgraced Ichiki burned his regimental colors and shot himself.[41]



Map 9. Battle of the Tenaru

Despite his ability to land forces with minimal interference from the U.S. Navy, Rear Admiral Raizo Tanaka, whose transports had brought Colonel Ichiki's regiment to Guadalcanal, called the assault a mistake and a tragedy that "should have taught us the hopelessness of bamboo spear tactics."[42] Following the Battle of the Tenaru, Major General Vandegrift expressed his pride in the division's first real engagement with the Japanese (map 9). Inspired, he wrote to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, that "these youngsters are the darndest people when they get started you ever saw."[43] Individual and unit confidence

[40] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20.
[41] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20.
[42] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20.
[43] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20–21.

rose as a result of the battle. They were now professionals and eager to demonstrate their newfound enthusiasm and spirit.[44]

During the next two days, the 1st Marine Division became intimately familiar with the enemy soldier's fighting spirit and ferocity. But the Marines also had proved their mettle by decimating Colonel Ichiki's attacking force. For the Marines, "the psychological repercussions of the Tenaru action were far-reaching. That victory, and the actions on Tulagi and Gavutu two weeks earlier, had put an end to the myth of the Japanese soldier as an untouchable jungle warrior."[45]

Regardless of the division's solid performance during the Battle of Tenaru, Major General Vandegrift remained concerned about a larger and better-equipped imperial force landing on Cactus. This most recent unopposed landing could only mean that more Imperial Japanese Navy transports would deliver troops, equipment, and supplies soon. Vandegrift knew that his combat power would be steadily eroded if Allied air, surface, and logistical support did not arrive soon. But for this to happen, the U.S. Navy had to establish sea control off Guadalcanal, and that required the naval task force to challenge the Japanese fleet.

Exacerbating this problem, the Marines still did not have a clear picture of how many imperial soldiers roamed the island or from where they were operating. Vandegrift did know this however; the airfield was *the* key piece of terrain the division had to retain. With this information, Major General Vandegrift went against the doctrinal approach to building a defense in depth and, instead, dug-in a perimeter defense around the airfield. Using the adjacent rivers and undulating jungle terrain as boundaries and natural obstacles, the Marines reinforced their defenses with what little man-made obstacles they could construct.

Rear Admiral Turner approached Vice Admiral Fletcher with the idea of using his carriers to shield the transports during the supply runs to Guadalcanal. But Fletcher insisted the carriers' "best protection was constant movement and finding concealment in thick weather whenever possible," adding that he did not want his carriers idling off the shores of Cactus within range of medium-range Japanese bombers armed with deadly torpedoes.[46] Fletcher anticipated a larger Japanese force with carriers emerging from Rabaul and argued that his task force must remain free of less essential support requirements to be ready to respond quickly to the anticipated Japanese carrier threat. Still seeking the decisive naval battle and surmising that Major General Vandegrift would soon have an expeditionary airfield operational, Vice Admiral Fletcher also knew that Admiral John S. McCain Sr., commander of Navy, Army, and Marine Corps air in SOPAC, was promising the Marines' aircraft for their employment, which could possibly be employed to help obtain sea control—*if the Cactus airfield was held*. Fletcher, however, did return and provide escort cover for the USS *Long Island* (CVE 1) that was hauling the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's aircraft.

[44] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 20–21.
[45] Ian W. Toll, *The Conquering Tide: War in the Pacific Islands, 1942–1944*, vol. 2, The Pacific War Trilogy (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 75.
[46] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 59.

The Cactus Air Force[47]

By 12 August, Henderson Field had cleared inspection to begin receiving aircraft. Two squadrons from Marine Aircraft Group 23 (MAG-23) launched from the escort carrier *Long Island* located 200 miles southeast of Guadalcanal on 20 August and arrived at Henderson Field that afternoon (figure 5). VMF-223 was the first to touch down, followed by 12 Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless dive bombers from Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 232 (VMSB-232). These were the first elements of what the Marines would come to call the "Cactus Air Force."

The Marines of MAG-23 immediately took to the sky against the Japanese naval threat. On 22 August, Bell P-400 Aircobras from the Army's 67th Fighter Squadron arrived at Henderson Field. Also operating from Henderson, Navy scout bombers from the USS *Saratoga*'s Scouting Squadron 5 (VS-5) turned back a Japanese convoy of warships and destroyers on 24 August, a feat the squadron and others repeated several more times. The growing number of aircraft at Henderson Field and the increasing complexity of air operations there warranted a resident commander.

Figure 5. Cactus Air Force on Henderson Field

On 3 September, Brigadier General Roy S. Geiger, commanding general of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW), arrived on Guadalcanal to take charge of air operations. Major General Vandegrift turned over day-to-day management of the aerial defenses to Geiger and shifted his focus to the ground action. This command relationship between the two officers was a precursor to the MAGTF concept.

[47] See Thomas G. Miller Jr., *The Cactus Air Force* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

The Japanese bombing raids and shelling from cruisers that started the day after the Tenaru fighting continued. Henderson Field quickly became so congested with planes queued for take-off (highly lucrative targets) that, when an alarm would go off signaling the approach of the Japanese, chaos would ensue and planes and crews sought cover. To counter this, Marines and Navy Seabees broke ground on a second expeditionary airstrip codenamed "Fighter One" to distribute air power (figure 6). Additionally, the concept of a third airstrip (Fighter Two) was under consideration. This improved the survivability and lethality of their air power by dispersing it on two expeditionary airfields.

The Tokyo Express, also known to Marines as the "Cactus Express" or "Tojo Express," "landed small numbers of Japanese troop reinforcements and supplies on the beaches west of the American perimeter night after night," but could not successfully execute a major landing.[48] The Marines soon realized the advantages distributed airpower provided: the Japanese could not "land an entire division" under their current logistical and operational constraints and the Imperial Japanese Navy "could not bring transports into Ironbottom Sound as long as planes based at Henderson Field [and Fighter One] could attack them as they approached."[49]

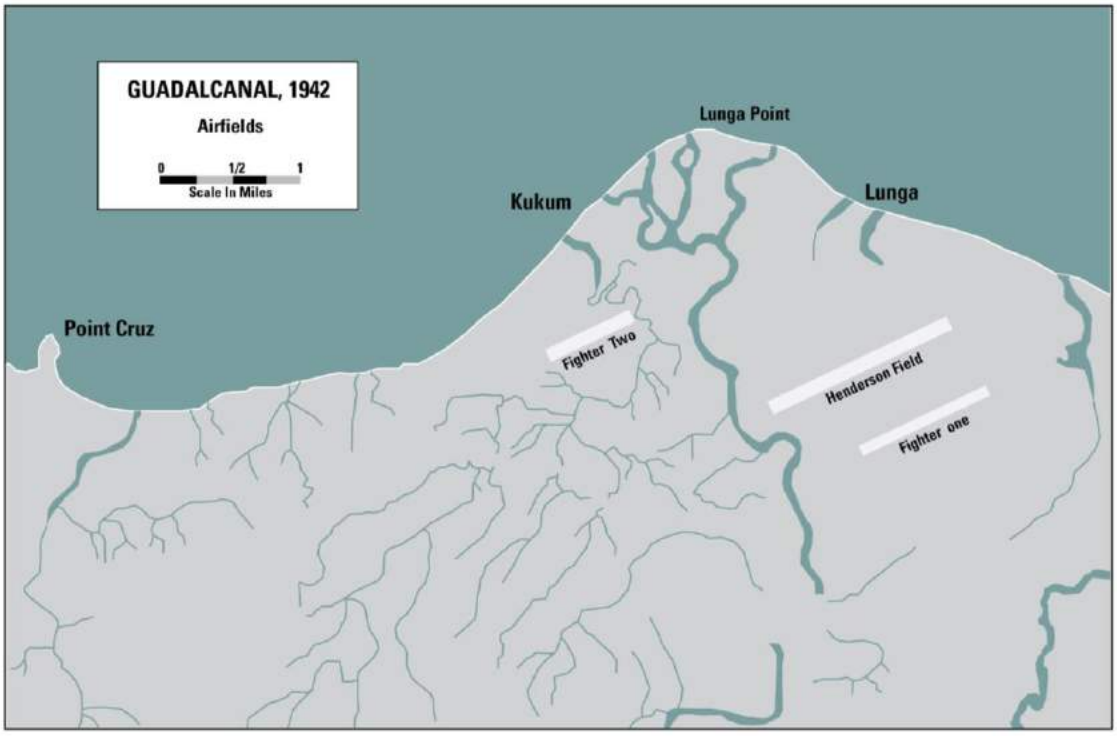


Figure 6. Airfields on Guadalcanal

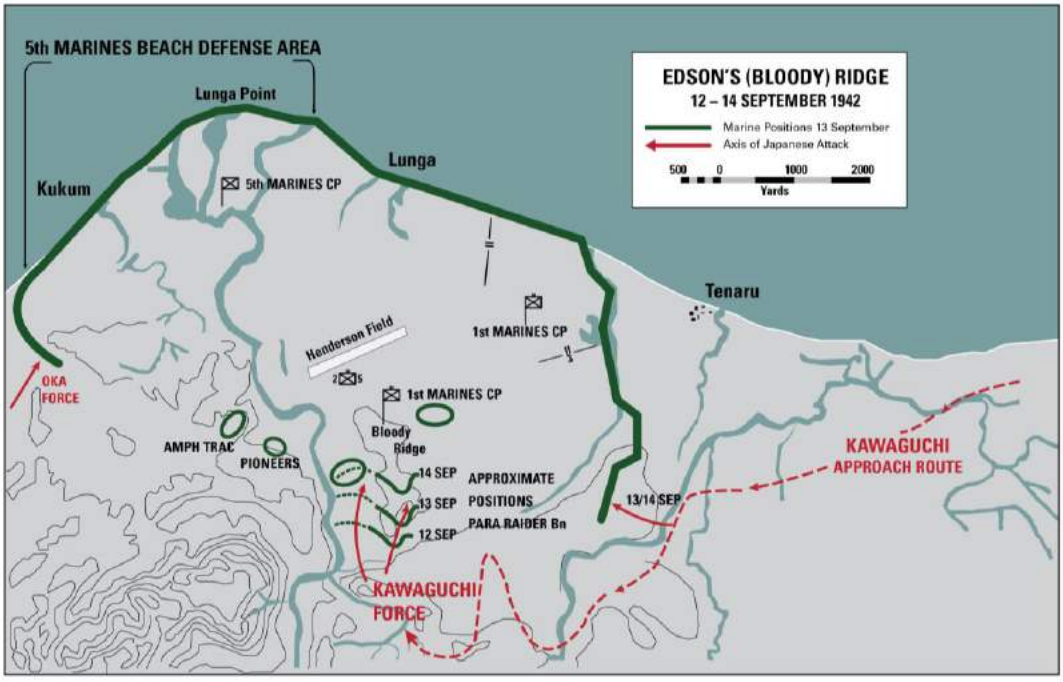
Edson's Ridge

Rear Admiral Turner and Admiral McCain arrived on Guadalcanal on 11 September to discuss the latest intelligence with Major General Vandegrift. The admirals learned that "the Japanese

[48] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 133.
[49] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 133.

were amassing overwhelmingly powerful naval, air, and ground forces at Rabaul and Truk for a major effort to retake Guadalcanal," just as Vandegrift had foreseen.[50] It was not until Turner and McCain witnessed the environment, however, and observed the effects Japanese bombardments had on the Marines that Major General Vandegrift could fully communicate to his fellow commanders how exposed his troops really were. The shortcomings of support and lack of unity of effort toward a *single naval battle concept* stemmed from Vice Admiral Ghormley and his staff. Ghormley's pessimism and indecisiveness leached into his correspondence with Admiral Nimitz, hinting at his "moral abdication of responsibility for the fate of Major General Vandegrift's command" and developing belief that his forces were "insufficient" to accomplish the mission in the Solomons.[51] It should also be noted that Vice Admiral Ghormley suffered from exhaustion, having been on post for several months. The stress took its toll on him. Although not an excuse for his moribund leadership, it does point to the reality of the human condition during wartime.[52]

During 12–14 September, Marines repelled the Japanese counterattacks at "Bloody Ridge" to retain Henderson Field (map 10). The hard-won Marine victory boosted morale and reinforced the opinion that Marines could beat the Japanese in the jungle. However, nervousness and doubt consumed Ghormley. Intercepted dispatches revealed that the Japanese now knew more than 2,000 Marines were on Guadalcanal, and they intended to launch Imperial Japanese Navy and Army divisions to retake the island. Rear Admiral Turner reassured Vandegrift that the 7th Marines would arrive soon, but could not help but interject his own thoughts on how these troops should be placed and advise on their tactical employment, irritating Vandegrift further.



Map 10. Bloody Ridge

[50] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 227.
[51] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 227.
[52] Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory*, 141–43.

Disjointed command relationships, inherent obstacles to cooperation, and lack of a single naval battle vision continued to frustrate the Allies. Major General Vandegrift alone seemed to have hit upon an "understanding of how land, sea, and air power [could] interrelate."[53] Rear Admiral Turner departed Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu, for Cactus on the morning of 14 September with 7th Marines embarked aboard his transport ships. He wanted to avoid any area in which a Japanese carrier could be operating to avoid their fighter planes. But in trading one threat for another, however, he ran the gauntlet of nine Japanese submarines that were then hunting for Allied naval shipping. The imperial submarines found the slow moving U.S. convoy, targeting and striking the USS *Wasp* (CV 7). With the *Wasp*'s destruction, only one U.S. carrier remained in the South Pacific, the USS *Hornet* (CV 8). This is exactly what "Admiral Fletcher dreaded."[54] In addition to the loss of the USS *Wasp*, Japanese Long Lance torpedoes blew the USS *O'Brien*'s (DD 415) bow off and put a 32 foot by 18 foot breech in the USS *North Carolina* (BB 55).

The Imperial Japanese Navy leadership chose to employ submarines in packs to destroy high payoff targets such as tankers, carriers, and transports. The U.S. Navy targeted similar vessels, but Naval Submarine Support Command, Pearl Harbor was dispatching their submarines on lone missions for weeks at a time. Vice Admiral Ghormley did not have access to submarines to attach to his task forces or task with ambushing the Tokyo Express. Despite the loss of three naval ships, "Turner's resolution paid off, and at 0700 on the morning of 18 September, the 7th Marines and their supporting artillery unit, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, began landing."[55] He also "brought with him tanks, artillery, motor transport, medics, aviation ground crews" and the 6th Naval Construction Battalion—professionals at construction work.[56] This addition of combat power would enable Vandegrift to improve the airfields, construct fortifications, and improve infrastructure.

By this time, the jungle was starting to take a harsh toll on the Marines and sailors, particularly as their most deadly enemy on Guadalcanal was malaria not the Japanese. More than 8,580 would suffer from the debilitating effects of the disease. At any given time from August 1942 to February 1943, as many as 10 percent of the men were on sick call. Atabrine was the only prophylactic available, and it was reluctantly taken by the Marines and sailors until the establishment of a Malaria Control Unit in November.[57] After several weeks of life in this environment, Marines suffering from a poor diet and the stress of having to maintain a constant state of alertness experienced drastic weight loss and a steep decline in their fighting efficiency.

Operations along the Matanikau, 23–27 September 1942

Reports from patrols and Japanese prisoners indicated an imperial force had established a beachhead just east of the Matanikau River, west of 1st Division's perimeter. Major General Vandegrift had unsuccessfully attempted to dislodge the Japanese before but the imperial resistance far exceeded their initial estimates. The growing strength of the enemy on the island emboldened Vandegrift's sense of urgency to seek out these forces but with a more deliberate

[53] Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 283.
[54] Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 289.
[55] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 251.
[56] Larrabee, *Commander in Chief*, 289.
[57] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 259–60.

approach. The division was strong in the defense, but could not just sit and wait for the enemy to strike.

Back in Noumea, capital of New Caledonia, on Vice Admiral Ghormley's flagship, Admiral Nimitz, Major General Richard K. Sutherland (MacArthur's chief of staff), Major General Millard F. Harmon (commanding general, U.S. Army Air Forces in theater), and General Henry H. Arnold (U.S. Army Air Forces and Joint Chiefs member) held a conference on 28 September and "exposed all of the cross-service and cross-theater tensions in the South Pacific, and indeed the entire global conflict."[58] General Arnold reiterated President Roosevelt's "Germany First" agenda, much to the group's annoyance. Vice Admiral Ghormley said, "The chief problem with Guadalcanal" was maintaining the logistical support.[59] Major General Sutherland proposed that Guadalcanal be abandoned in favor of channeling resources to the U.S. Army for the reinforcement of Port Moresby and the capture of Rabaul, which was not helpful. Admiral Nimitz could only do so much to stop the subterfuge and infighting, refocusing the group on the problem at hand, which was supplying the advanced sea base and defending and operating its airfield. It would take much more than Nimitz, however, to bring about alignment among the Services to win in the Solomons. The tough enemy, who owned the sea at night and was determined to own the air, was *forcing* the bickering Services to work together, as the lash-up at Henderson Field and Fighter One demonstrated (figure 7).

On 29 September, Nimitz flew via B-17 to inspect Espiritu Santo, Guadalcanal's support base. Soon after seeing the rough and shoddy operation, he boarded the aircraft for Cactus to talk with Major General Vandegrift about the current situation and to see first-hand combat operations ashore. During his visit, Admiral Nimitz stressed to Vandegrift that the division's mission was to hold the airfield *at all costs* and promised all the support he could muster. Major General Vandegrift was well aware of the competition for resources and pressed Nimitz for the materiel and personnel support required to ensure this was done. The logistical plan for Guadalcanal was a microcosm of the global challenge the War Department had to meet.

Vice Admiral Ghormley's inability to choose where to fight the Japanese or to visualize a single naval battle was leaving each of the Services to fight their own fight; and none were going particularly well. Vandegrift understood the importance of reinforcing Guadalcanal, but could not convince his naval counterparts how operations ashore could enable them to establish sea control. He and Rear Admiral Turner thus disagreed on the employment of 7th Marines earlier in the month, and still could not agree on the employment of the 164th Infantry Regiment from the Americal Division. The 7th Marines, previously garrisoned in Samoa before joining the fight on Guadalcanal, and 2d Marines, reserved for Ndeni by Ghormley, were spread thin across the South Pacific. Dispersing Marines among the islands without a coherent plan illustrated the indecisiveness and lack of understanding of Ghormley and his staff. And all of this was exacerbated by Rear Admiral Turner continuing to insist upon the tactical placement of land forces ashore even though he neither understood their tactical employment nor the enemy disposition.

[58] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 126.
[59] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 125.

Figure 7. River Crossing on Guadalcanal

Japanese "High Speed Convoy" and Battle of Cape Esperance

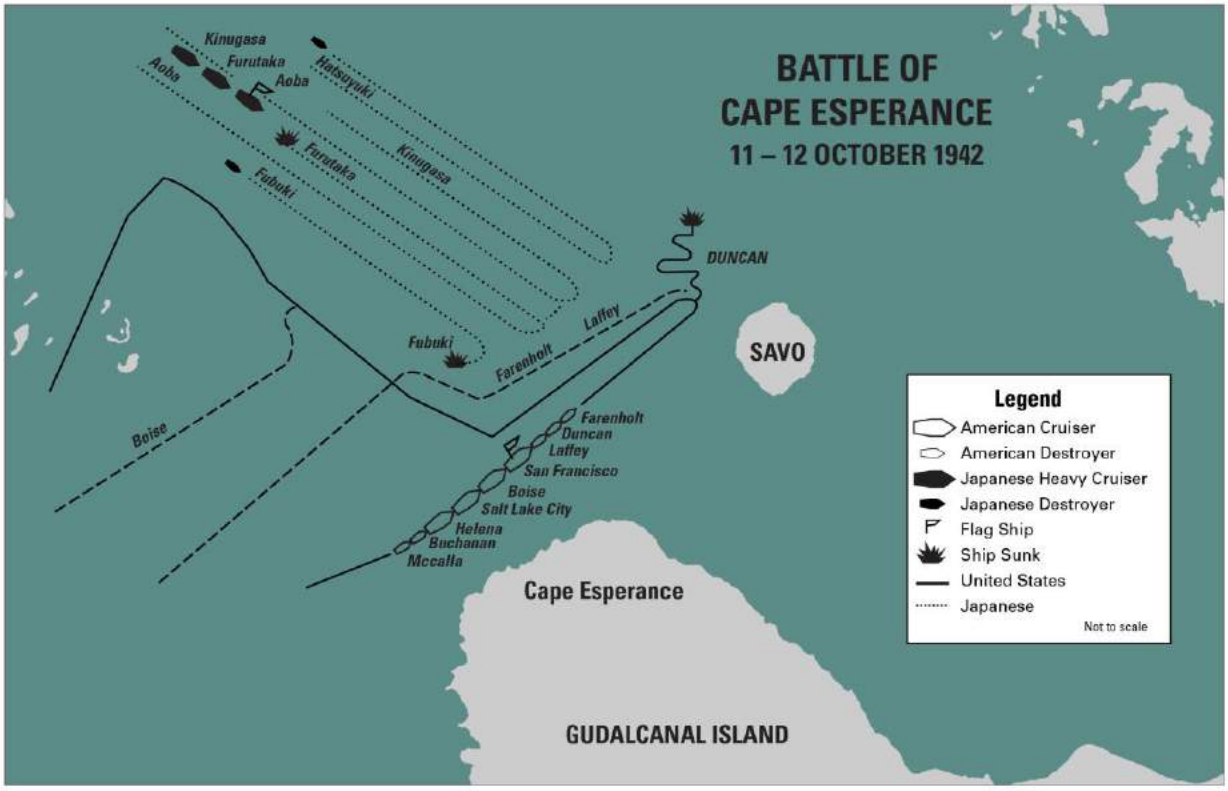
The Imperial Japanese Navy, during the last weeks of September and October, delivered 10,000 Japanese troops at night without incident near Tassafaronga and Cape Esperance.[60] The Japanese Army determined this was an inadequate means of massing combat power and demanded the Imperial Navy land an entire division ashore if they were to recapture the airfield. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto thus authorized five transports, a "High Speed Convoy," and several cruisers to destroy the airfield. "On October 11 and 12, attacks by the planes of the 11th Air Fleet would suppress Henderson Field and enable the tenders to reach Tassafaronga, while the cruisers struck the airfield."[61] Leading the operation, Admiral Aritomo Goto split his forces in two; the cruisers sailing ahead of the reinforcement group, comprised mostly of troop transports.

Vice Admiral Ghormley, prodded by Admiral Nimitz, sent a message to Rear Admiral Scott on 5 October that read, "Have striking force operate in position of readiness to attack enemy vessels landing reinforcements at Cactus."[62] As Admiral King's headquarters published in an earlier evaluation, to "use our surface ships more boldly as opportunity warrants," Scott would ambush the high-speed convoy and test his "doctrine that would give them the chance to beat the Japanese at their own game."[63] Scott did not completely understand the SC/SG radars either, but

[60] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 155.
[61] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 159.
[62] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 156.
[63] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 160.

he did realize their potential if exercised and incorporated into gunnery. Bracketing salvos through mechanical optics was not quick enough if his force was going to defeat the Imperial Japanese Navy ships. He put his task force through a series of gunnery rehearsals, determined an engagement area, and incorporated the SG radar into the fires plan. Rear Admiral Scott hunted the high-speed convoy through his ships' float planes as his task force stayed out of range from the Japanese bombers.

From south of Guadalcanal, Task Force 64 closed on the engagement area North of Cape Esperance to interdict the Japanese ships in the early evening. In a single column, Task Force 64 attempted to "cross the T" of the Japanese convoy (map 11). Rear Admiral Scott massed his fires from the cruisers' guns on the lead Japanese ships. This attempt fell apart quickly as the lead ship in Task Force 64's column succumbed to a rudder malfunction and disrupted the formation. Even equipped with the SC radar, Scott's flagship did not have a clear picture of the battle. Prior to sailing for Cape Esperance, he ordered only the SG radar to be used and to not operate the SC radar for fear of false readings. Moreover, no one outside the radar section understood the technology. The pandemonium that ensued caused great confusion aboard Scott's flagship and played havoc with the other ships. As James Hornfischer writes, "Miscommunication compounded a previous miscommunication and the engagement . . . spun into chaos, beyond control of any single commander."[64]



Map 11. Battle of Cape Esperance

[64] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno*, 172.

Despite suffering casualties inflicted by imperial vessels and friendly fire, Task Force 64 emerged victorious on 12 October. Unfortunately, they did not prevent the Japanese reinforcement group from landing near Doma Cove and unloading "artillery, vehicles, men, and supplies" and escaping "before the rise of morning."[65] Rear Admiral Scott's change in tactics, audacity, and offensive mindset had a demystifying effect on the Japanese Navy's invincibility.

Consolidation and Growth

By the end of October, the Allied forces would gain momentum in the campaign even though the Marines on Guadalcanal would not see the positive effect. The Japanese were losing more pilots, planes, and ships faster than the schools, factories, and foundries in Japan could replace them. Their supply could not meet the demand, and the imperial command knew that their counteroffensive plan had to be bold to work effectively.

The logistical challenges, ship losses, and the availability of only one aircraft carrier were but a few of the complications Vice Admiral Ghormley and his staff were wrestling with on a daily basis. They grew ever more pessimistic toward Operation Watchtower, subsequently the COMSOPAC did not lead his staff or put his commanders in a position to take the fight to the enemy. Fortunately for the 1st Marine Division, Ghormley eventually approved Major General Vandegrift's request for U.S. soldiers to reinforce Cactus instead of sending them off to Ndeni. On 13 October, the "164th Infantry Regiment, North Dakota National Guardsmen," landed at Guadalcanal.[66] The soldiers went straight from the beach to fighting positions and were warmly welcomed and quickly ushered into the fight alongside their Marine brothers. That night, the newcomers and first "marooned" division endured the most earthshaking suppression seen yet from Japanese 150mm howitzers, 500-pound bombs, and Japanese 14-inch guns.

The Imperial Japanese Navy were employing a new munition, the Type 3 shell containing 470 individual bomblets initially designed to use against aircraft. Now, with the use of two gunnery officers, one airborne and one fixed in an observation post on Mount Austen, the Japanese Navy could search for and traverse their guns across Henderson Field and the soldiers and Marines' fighting positions, effectively combining arms. These cross domain operations using "battleships in direct support of the Army was a rare departure from the typical Imperial Japanese Navy way."[67] Soldiers and Marines hunkered down as far as they could in their bunkers and foxholes while enduring the thunderous concussions making the ground shake and their bodies feel like Jell-O.[68] The Japanese continued their multi-armed suppression for several more days, pummeling the Americans while the High-Speed Convoy continued unloading imperial soldiers on the island without impediment

Meanwhile, Rear Admiral Scott's Task Force 64 steamed back to Espiritu Santo to refuel and make repairs. The shellfire from the Japanese ships and bombers pockmarked the airfield, ignited

[65] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 188.
[66] Allan R. Millett, *In Many a Strife: General Gerald C. Thomas and the U.S. Marine Corps, 1917–1956* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 200.
[67] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 195.
[68] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 139.

the aviation fuel drums, and destroyed many U.S. planes. Vandegrift radioed for air and surface support, but Rear Admiral Fitch in Espiritu Santo was the only commander able to render aid. Fitch launched a squadron of SBD bombers and some transports to lift much needed fuel to assist the Marines and soldiers' defense. Unimpressed with the support he received from COMSOPAC, Major General Vandegrift sent a direct message to Admiral Nimitz, Vice Admiral Ghormley, and Rear Admiral Turner:

> Despite destruction of four hostile transports and departure of remaining two estimate that enemy landed about ten thousand troops yesterday on Cactus with considerable equipment and supplies bringing total force ashore to at least fifteen thousand. . . . Our force exceeds that number but more than half of it is in no condition to undertake a protracted land campaign due to incessant hostile operations and labor connected with the development of this base over a period of ten weeks. . . . The situation demands two urgent and immediate steps: take and maintain control of sea areas adjacent to Cactus to prevent further enemy landing and enemy bombardment such as this force has taken for the last three nights; reinforcement of ground forces by at least one division in order that extensive operations may be initiated to destroy hostile force now on Cactus.[69]

Rear Admiral Halsey Replaces Vice Admiral Ghormley as COMSOPAC

Wracked by uncertainty and indecisiveness, Ghormley and his staff were stunned by the turn of events. As Vice Admiral Fletcher fixated on the Imperial Navy's threat toward the sea lanes between Ndeni and Guadalcanal, while protecting (and hiding) the only U.S. carrier in the South Pacific, the task force failed to respond to the vast Japanese combat power massing on Cactus and the conditions of the 1st Marine Division and 164th Infantry Regiment. The defeatism echoed in Ghormley's message to Admiral Nimitz regarding Major General Vandegrift's recommendations frustrated Nimitz and his staff to the breaking point. On 14 October, Nimitz sent Rear Admiral William F. Halsey to the South Pacific on an inspection tour, after which he informally polled his staff on whether Vice Admiral Ghormley should be relieved. Admiral Nimitz's staff responded unanimously: Ghormley had to go. After receiving approval from Admiral King, Nimitz sent a telegram to Noumea naming Rear Admiral Halsey as the new SOPAC commander. As Halsey's plane landed on the water near the USS *Argonne* (AS 10), he saw four boats coming out to greet him and grew suspicious. He was handed a telegram by a naval officer and opened it at once, exclaiming, "Jesus Christ and General Jackson. . . . This is the hottest potato they ever handed me!"[70]

[69] MajGen A. A. Vandegrift and Robert B. Asprey, *Once A Marine: The Memoires of General A. A. Vandegrift, U.S. Marine Corps* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Association, 1982), 177.
[70] E.B. Potter, *Bull Halsey: A Biography* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 160.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part A

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the interrelationship between sea control and maritime power projection?[71] What is the difference between the two? Describe the commander's role in achieving the single naval battle? How could Vice Admiral Robert Ghormley have achieved this under the constraints of his time?

More foundational than the commander's role in creating the single naval battle is the makeup of the commander who is capable of creating the single naval battle. What traits do they possess? Should they have a perspective that is formed primarily from service at sea or on land? Could someone have both? Beyond their personal schema, what should their primary responsibility be? If Vice Admiral Ghormley was in Noumea the whole time, could he fully appreciate the conditions on the ground and at sea to make the decisions necessary to create the single naval battle? What about the Navy's tradition of command by negation? Is it realistic to think that Ghormley would overrule Vice Admiral Jack Fletcher when his subordinate was closer to the action and had a better understanding of what was going on? By having Fletcher responsible for the aircraft carriers as well as the overall operation, did Ghormley create a friction point for the operation where there was not an honest broker in the operating area who could reconcile the risks and requirements of the land and sea forces? What does this mean for contemporary operations where the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) may be in Bahrain or Yokosuka, Japan? Will the supporting/supported construct hold up if the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) is threatened during the conduct of a landing? What about the officer in tactical command? What is their schema when they are the Carrier Strike Group commander? What about when they are a one-star Marine Expeditionary Strike Group commander?

2. Describe technology's impact on operations during Watchtower. What happens when new technologies and platforms are laminated onto existing concepts of operation? Provide some examples of this. At what point do lessons learned from previous experience and in a different context actually become a hindrance to successful mission accomplishment?

3. Does Vice Admiral Fletcher deserve the criticism he has received from Marines over the years? Did he accomplish his mission? Is achieving the single battle more or less difficult with modern technology and command and control systems?

What were Fletcher's risk decisions based on? Did the good fortune during the Battle of Midway make him more or less risk averse? Admiral Nimitz gave the following instructions to Admiral Raymond Spruance and Vice Admiral Fletcher before Midway: "In carrying out the task assigned in Operation Plan 29-42 you will be governed by the principle of calculated risk, which

[71] Sea control operations are the employment of forces to destroy enemy naval forces, suppress enemy sea commerce, protect vital sea lanes, and establish local military superiority in vital sea areas.) See also land control operations in *Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations, JP 3-32*. Power projection (maritime power projection — power projection in and from the maritime environment) includes a broad spectrum of offensive military operations to destroy enemy forces or logistic support or to prevent enemy forces from approaching within enemy weapons' range of friendly forces. See *JP 3-32*.

you shall interpret to mean the avoidance of exposure of your force to attack by superior enemy forces without good prospect of inflicting, as a result of such exposure, greater damage to the enemy. This applies to the landing phase as well as during preliminary air attacks."[72] After the disaster at Pearl Harbor and the losses at Midway, is it realistic to expect Fletcher to not be overly cautious with the precious few aircraft carriers and capitol ships that remained in the Pacific? There is no mathematical formula that would provide a definitive answer between the importance of the mission, the 19,000 lives in the 1st Marine Division, and the remaining aircraft carriers in the Pacific. This is a risk decision that a commander must make. How would you weigh the probability and severity associated with these things being lost? What about the risks associated with inaction? What would an operational Japanese bomber base on Guadalcanal have meant for the campaign in the South Pacific?

[72] Adm C. W. Nimitz, commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to commander striking forces, "Letter of Instructions," Midway 1942.com, 28 May 1942.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part B
Noumea Conference
Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General Holcomb, flew to Cactus on 21 October to see for himself how his Marines were faring. Holcomb and Major General Vandegrift discussed various topics, the most important being the command relationships between the amphibious task force commander and the landing force commander. The next day, Holcomb and Vandegrift flew to Noumea to meet with Vice Admiral Halsey and to receive and give a round of briefings on the Allied situation. After Vandegrift had described his position, he argued strongly against the diversion of reinforcements intended for Cactus to any other South Pacific venue, an element of Rear Admiral Turner's strategic vision. Major General Vandegrift insisted that he needed all of the Americal Division and another 2d Marine Division regiment to beef up his forces, adding that more than one-half of his veterans were worn out by three months of fighting and the ravages of jungle-incurred diseases. Halsey told the Marine general: "You go back there, Vandegrift. I promise to get you everything I have."[73]

Admiral Kincaid, the new commander of Task Force 61, and Rear Admiral G. D. Murray, commander, Task Force 64, steamed toward the Japanese carrier task force with Halsey's guidance in mind, "Strike-Repeat, Strike." The U.S. Navy must impose a blow so detrimental to the Imperial Japanese Navy that it could not recover. This carrier battle inflicted severe damage to both opponents and "tactically the Americans fared worse. . . . They found solace in their estimate that the Japanese had lost nearly twice as many planes as they [had]."[74]

The Noumea Conference on 23–26 October yielded two significant victories for the Marine Corps. First, Vice Admiral Halsey made a carte blanche promise to Major General Vandegrift that the U.S. Navy would provide the necessary logistical support required to sustain the fight on Guadalcanal. Second, and the most profound and influential to our amphibious assault doctrine today, was the change in operational control of the landing force or expeditionary force following the ship-to-shore stage. The historic change to FTP-167 stated, "The landing force commander should be on the same command level as the naval task force commander and should have unrestricted authority over operations ashore."[75]

When Vandegrift returned to Guadalcanal, Lieutenant General Holcomb moved on to Pearl Harbor to meet with Admiral Nimitz, carrying Vice Admiral Halsey's recommendation that, in the future, landing force commanders once established ashore would have equal command status with Navy amphibious force commanders. At Pearl Harbor, Nimitz approved Halsey's recommendation, which Holcomb had drafted, on the spot; and in Washington, DC, Admiral King followed suit. In effect, then, the command status of all future Pacific amphibious operations was determined by the events of Guadalcanal.[76]

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[73] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 351.
[74] Potter, *Bull Halsey*, 166.
[75] Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory*, 149.
[76] Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory*, 141–53.

Within a week, Halsey moved his headquarters from the cramped spaces aboard the USS *Argonne* to the well-ventilated French administration buildings ashore. Moreover, Halsey took the following actions: 1) he dropped Ndeni as an objective, 2) he worked to sort out the logistical debacle in Noumea, and 3) he reassigned the carrier task forces USS *Enterprise* (CV 6) and *Hornet* under Task Force 61. The new task force commander, Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kincaid, received Vice Admiral Halsey's order "to sweep north of the Santa Cruz Islands and seek battle with the enemy."[77] With a main effort (the 1st Marine Division [Rein] on Guadalcanal) and a vision for a single naval battle, the American forces in the South Pacific had shifted to a position to take the fight to the Japanese overnight. Halsey also pulled several staff members from the *Enterprise* to augment the beleaguered staff inherited from Vice Admiral Ghormley, declaring, "It's a goddamn mess. . . . Look around and see what's to be done, and do it."[78]

Battle for Henderson Field

Japanese forces began moving toward their attack positions before Major General Vandegrift and Lieutenant General Holcomb departed for the Noumea Conference with Vice Admiral Halsey. Until Vandegrift returned, Brigadier General Geiger led the division against the onslaught of attacks against the southern and western parts of the perimeter. For three days, the Japanese launched wave after wave of assaults, but could not exploit the penetration point made in the soldiers' and Marines' lines.

On 20 October, an enemy patrol accompanied by two tanks tried to find a way through the line held by Lieutenant Colonel William N. McKelvy Jr.'s 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. A sharpshooting 37mm gun crew knocked out one tank and the enemy force fell back, while they continued shelling the Marine positions with artillery. Near sunset the next day, the Japanese tried again, this time with more artillery fire and more tanks in the fore, but again a 37mm gun knocked out a lead tank and discouraged the attack. On 22 October, the enemy paused, waiting for Lieutenant General Masao Maruyama's force to get into position inland. The following day—the day of the Sendai's main attack—the Japanese dropped a heavy rain of artillery and mortar fire on McKelvy's positions near the mouth of the Matanikau River.[79]

Near dusk, nine 18-ton medium tanks clanked out of the trees onto the river's sandbar and just as quickly eight of them were riddled by the 37mm guns. One tank got across the river, a Marine blasted a track off with a grenade, and a halftrack finished it off in the ocean's surf with its 75mm gun. The enemy infantry was smothered by Marine artillery fire as all battalions of the augmented 11th Marines rained shells on the massed attackers. Hundreds of Japanese were killed or wounded and three more tanks were destroyed. Later, an inland thrust farther upstream was easily beaten back. The abortive coastal attack did almost nothing to aid Lieutenant General Maruyama's inland offensive, but did cause Major General Vandegrift to shift one battalion, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, out of the lines to the east and into the 4,000-yard gap between the Matanikau position and the perimeter. This move proved providential since one of Maruyama's

[77] Toll, *The Conquering Tide*, 147.
[78] Potter, *Bull Halsey*, 163.
[79] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 35–36.

planned attacks was headed directly toward this area. Although patrols had encountered no Japanese east or south of the jungle perimeter up to 24 October, the Matanikau attempts had alerted everyone. When Maruyama finally was satisfied that his men had struggled through to appropriate assault positions, and after delaying his day of attack three times, he was ready. The Marines were waiting.[80]

An observer from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, spotted an enemy officer surveying Edson's Ridge, and scout snipers reported smoke from numerous rice fires rising from a valley about two miles south of Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. Puller's positions. Six battalions of the Sendai Division were poised to attack around midnight, as the first elements of the enemy hit and bypassed a platoon-size outpost forward of Puller's barbed-wire entanglements. Warned by the outpost, Puller's men waited, straining to see through a dark night and a driving rain. Suddenly, the Japanese charged out of the jungle, attacking Lieutenant Colonel Puller's positions near the ridge and the flat ground to the east. The Marines replied with everything they had, calling in artillery and mortar fire and interlocking machine gun fire to cut down the enemy infantrymen. Fortunately, the enemy's artillery, mortars, and other supporting arms were scattered back along the Maruyama trail; they had proved too much of a burden for the infantrymen to carry forward.[81]

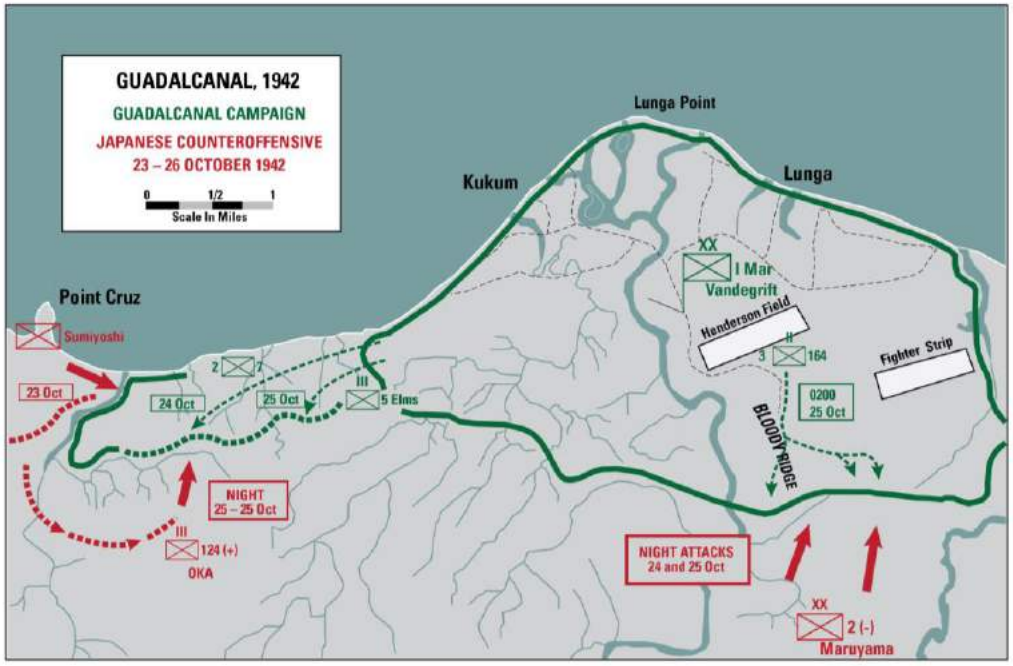
A wedge was driven into the Marine lines, but eventually straightened out by repeated Marine counterattacks. Puller soon realized his battalion was being hit by a strong Japanese force capable of repeated attacks. He called for reinforcements and the Army's 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Hall, was ordered forward, its men sliding and slipping in the rain as they trudged a mile south along Edson's Ridge. Puller met Hall at the head of his column, and the two officers walked down the length of the Marine lines, peeling off an Army squad at a time to feed into the lines. When the Japanese attacked again, as they did all night long, the soldiers and Marines fought back together. By 0330, Hall's battalion was completely integrated into the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines' lines and the enemy attacks were getting weaker and weaker. The American's return fire—including flanking fire from machine guns and Weapons Company, 7th Marines' 37mm guns remaining in the positions held by 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, on Puller's left—was just too much to take. Near dawn, Lieutenant General Maruyama pulled his men back to regroup and prepare to attack again.[82]

With daylight, Lieutenant Colonels Puller and Hall reordered the lines, putting the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, into its own positions on Puller's left, tying in with the rest of the Army regiment. The driving rains had turned Fighter One into a quagmire, effectively grounding Cactus aircraft. Japanese planes used the "free ride" to bomb Marine positions. The Japanese fired their artillery incessantly, with a pair of destroyers adding to the bombardment until the 3d Defense Battalion's 5-inch guns drove them off. As the sun bore down, the runways dried and afternoon enemy

[80] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 36–37.
[81] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 37–38.
[82] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 38.

attacks were met by Cactus fighters, which downed 22 Japanese planes with a loss of three of their own.[83]

As night came on again, Lieutenant General Maruyama tried more of the same with the same result. The Army-Marine lines held and the Japanese were cut down in droves by rifle, machine gun, mortar, 37mm, and artillery fire. To the west, an enemy battalion mounted three determined attacks against the positions held by Lieutenant Colonel Herman H. Hanneken's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, thinly tied in with Puller's battalion on the left and the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, on the right. The enemy finally penetrated the positions held by Company F, but a counterattack led by Major Odell M. Conoley, the battalion's executive officer, drove off the Japanese. Again, at daylight the American positions were secure and the enemy had retreated. They would not come back; the grand Japanese offensive of the Sendai Division was over (map 12).[84]



Map 12. Japanese Counteroffensive

About 3,500 enemy troops had died during the attacks. Maruyama's proud boast that he "would exterminate the enemy around the airfield in one blow" proved an empty one. What was left of his force now straggled back over the Maruyama trail, losing, as had the Kawaguchi Detachment in the same situation, most of its seriously wounded men. The Americans, Marines and soldiers combined, probably lost 300 men killed and wounded; existing records are sketchy and incomplete. One result of the battle, however, was a warm welcome to the 164th Infantry from the 1st Marine Division. Major General Vandegrift particularly commended Lieutenant Colonel

[83] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 38.
[84] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 38–39.

Hall's battalion, stating the "division was proud to have serving with it another unit which had stood the test of battle."[85]

Colonel Cates sent a message to the 164th's Colonel Bryant E. Moore, saying that the 1st Marines "were proud to serve with a unit such as yours."[86]

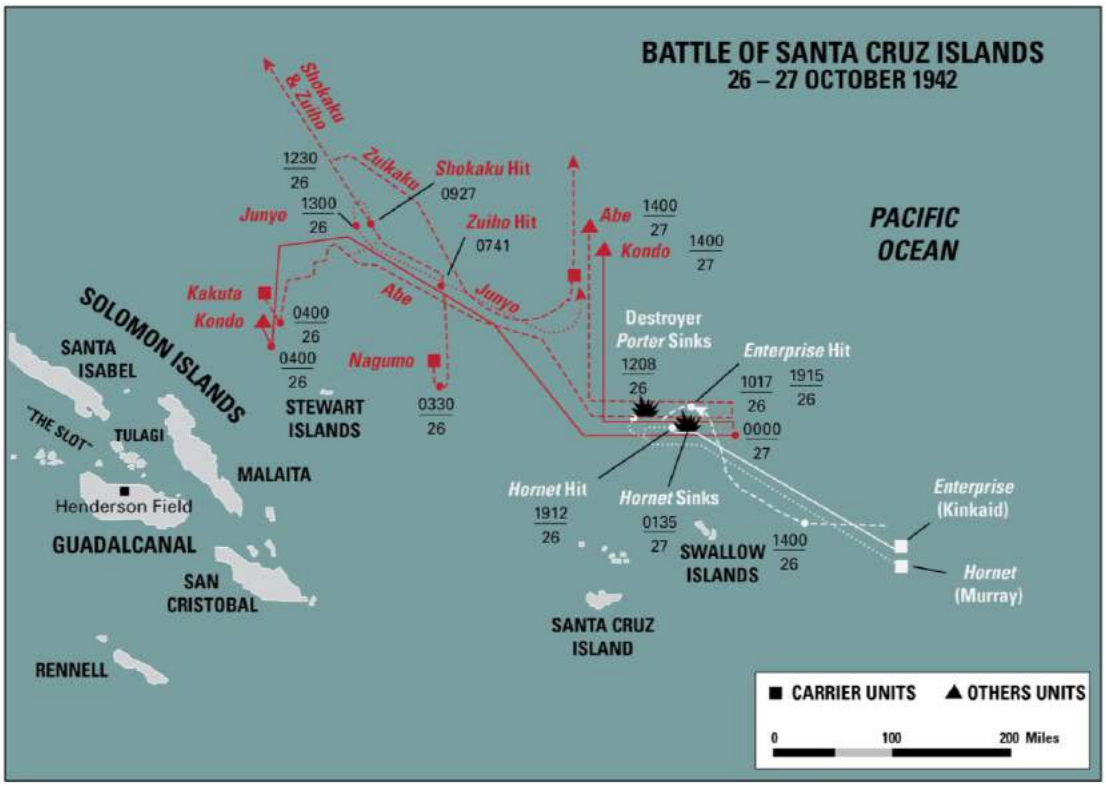
In the end, communication difficulties and misreporting prevented the Japanese from effectively coordinating their efforts or massing their forces to breach the perimeter. Additionally, a Japanese unit misidentified a pyrotechnic signal that signified the capture of the airfield and reported it back to Rabaul. This report triggered an Imperial Japanese Navy carrier task force to race south in support of the Imperial Japanese Army. Allied radio intercepts heard the calls and alerted COMSOPAC Vice Admiral Halsey. The next carrier battle was on the horizon and his carriers needed to intercept the Japanese before they could get in range of Guadalcanal.

Battle of Santa Cruz Islands

While the soldiers and Marines were battling the Japanese ashore, a patrol plane sighted a large Japanese fleet near the Santa Cruz Islands to the east of the Solomons. The enemy force was formidable—four carriers, four battleships, eight cruisers, and 28 destroyers—all poised for a victorious attack receiving the erroneously interpreted signal indicating Lieutenant General Maruyama's capture of Henderson Field. Vice Admiral Halsey's reaction to the inviting targets was characteristic; he signaled Rear Admiral Thomas Kinkaid, with the *Hornet* and *Enterprise* carrier groups located north of the New Hebrides to attack.

Early on 26 October, American SBDs located the Japanese carriers at about the same time Japanese scout planes spotted the American carriers. The Japanese carrier *Zuiho*'s flight deck was damaged by the scout bombers, cancelling flight operations, but the other three enemy carriers launched the strikes. The two air armadas tangled as each strove to reach the other's carriers. The *Hornet* was hit repeatedly by bombs and torpedoes; two Japanese pilots also crashed their planes on board. The damage to the ship was so extensive that the *Hornet* was abandoned and sunk. The *Enterprise*, the battleship USS *South Dakota* (BB 57), the light cruiser *San Juan*, and the destroyer USS *Smith* (DD 378) were also hit; the destroyer USS *Porter* (DD356) was sunk. On the Japanese side, no ships were sunk, but three carriers and two destroyers were damaged. One hundred Japanese planes were lost; 74 U.S. planes went down. Taken together, the results of the Battle of Santa Cruz were a standoff (map 13). The Japanese naval leaders might have continued their attacks, but instead, disheartened by the defeat of their ground forces on Guadalcanal, withdrew to attack another day.

[85] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 38–39.
[86] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 39.



Map 13. The Battle of Santa Cruz Islands

The damaged suffered by the Japanese forced their remaining ships back to Truk. Thrusting Rear Admirals Kinkaid and Murray's task forces at the Japanese carriers was Vice Admiral Halsey's "first major tactical decision as COMSOPAC."[87] The action inspired his commanders across the battlespace to take bold action as Halsey's actions created the sinews that would tie their operations together.

Unbeknownst to Vandegrift, on 24 October, President Roosevelt went against his own strategy of "Germany first" and authorized the prioritization of equipment and materiel to hold Guadalcanal. The importance of Cactus had reached the apex of the command structure; the Marines were not alone now. Halsey re-tasked Army and Marine regiments originally planned to garrison outposts like Samoa and Ndeni to Guadalcanal. The additional combat power going to 1st Marine Division would not only bolster the defense of Henderson Field and Fighter One, but would also allow them to pursue the enemy from the air. Vice Admiral Halsey's reinforcements arrived just in time: "In the second week of November, the opposing forces each had 30,000 men facing one another, although the Americans held the advantages of concentrated positions, immediate air support by the Cactus Air Force, a better logistical situation, and much greater firepower."[88]

For the first time during the campaign, the Americans were operating in a fashion that incorporated every branch of the Armed Services toward the goal of a single objective:

[87] Vandegrift and Asprey, *Once a Marine*, 189.
[88] Millett, *In Many a Strife*, 205.

Guadalcanal. The Naval Construction Battalion and Marines broke ground on another airstrip west of Kokum, named Fighter Two. Fighter Two would allow greater dispersion and lethality of the Cactus Air Force when the Tokyo Express rolled down The Slot. The arrival of the 1st Marine Aviation Engineer Company also increased the capacity of the three operational airstrips. There was no question now: the American forces on Guadalcanal would hold the airfield and expel the Japanese troops from the island. As both Japanese and American carrier forces limped back to their respective sea bases to make repairs and rearm, the Imperial Japanese Navy was preparing a flotilla of transports to deliver reinforcements and supplies to Guadalcanal. But the Allies were now fighting a *single naval battle*.

Admiral Nimitz Orders the Establishment of the Combat Information Center

In November 1942, Nimitz ordered the establishment of the Combat Information Center (CIC) aboard Navy vessels to "receive, assimilate, and evaluate information."[89] The after action reports he and his staff reviewed led to the realization that the task force commanders did not possess an accurate and timely picture of the tactical situation. The new SG radar systems, fire direction centers, the bridge, and firing batteries were not working harmoniously. What Rear Admiral Scott rehearsed prior to the Battle of Cape Esperance became the nexus of what Nimitz published in *Tactical Bulletin 4TB-42*. Admiral Nimitz explained, "Clearly what the CIC would do, but not how it would do it".[90]

Aboard the destroyer USS *Fletcher* (DD 445), Commander William M. Cole and Lieutenant Commander Joseph C. Wylie Jr. had developed an operating procedure that increased their ships' lethality and responsiveness. Cole would remain on the bridge with the weapons officer and Wylie acted as the connecting file between the radar room and bridge. Wylie described the radar picture to the ship's captain and weapons officer, which in turn allowed the commanding officer to determine the ship's actions and helped the weapons officer prioritize targets. This adaptation inspired Admiral Nimitz to bring Lieutenant Commander Wylie back to Pearl Harbor to further develop and refine the Navy's doctrine.

[89] Trent Hone, "Guadalcanal Proved Experimentation Worked," Naval History Magazine 31, no. 6, December 2017.
[90] Hone, "Guadalcanal Proved Experimentation Worked."

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part B
Questions for Discussion

1. In his seminal and influential *Marine Cops Gazette* article, Colonel Wayne Sinclair writes, "The greatest challenges and most far-reaching opportunities for the MAGTF commander lie in his ability to orchestrate and synchronize the efforts of numerous, diverse entities along a single critical path toward an overarching campaign objective."[91] Compare and contrast the efforts of Vice Admirals Ghormley and Halsey to do this for Operation Watchtower.

2. Guadalcanal was seized by the Americans to achieve the strategic purpose of protecting the lines of communication between Australia and the United States. What other options were available to Ghormley and Nimitz to achieve that same purpose short of a protracted land campaign that would strain their limited resources? What impact would the modern concepts of integrated planning and design thinking likely have had on the planning and conduct of the campaign? With the capabilities envisioned in the *Marine Operating Concept*, could a Marine commander offer other options short of amphibious assault to the joint force commander?

3. Major General Vandegrift understood that retaining the airfield was necessary for his defensive scheme to succeed. What tactical conditions would he need to achieve for the airfield to serve a broader offensive purpose in a naval campaign that was ultimately seeking the defensive strategic end of protecting lines of communication? What tensions are created when commanders at different levels of war seek different outcomes?

4. Was Halsey in error when he committed to provide the support necessary to sustain the fight on Guadalcanal; a battle that was arguably straining resources necessary for and forcing the modification of the "Germany First" strategy? What is the balance of the commander's obligation when the success of one's own force and mission detracts from other higher priority objectives?

5. Senior American naval officers demonstrated that they did not understand the interaction of surface radar and long range torpedoes during the Battle of Savo Island. What obligation does a senior officer have to be proficient in emerging warfighting technology no matter how distant from their professional background? During the interwar years some aspiring officers, such as Admiral King, sought experience in submarines and learned to fly airplanes. What analogs to airplanes, radar, and long-range torpedoes exist today and how much experience should commanders have with them?

[91] Wayne Sinclair, "In Search of the Single Battle" *Marine Corps Gazett*e, February, 2007, 64-68.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part C
Renewed Confidence in the Allies' Ability to Hold Guadalcanal

By early November, radio intercepts, Coastwatchers, and other various forms of reconnaissance had confirmed the massing of imperial ships loading troops and equipment at Truk and Rabaul that were expected to reinforce Guadalcanal. The Tokyo Express had more runs to make as "Yamamoto was marshaling resources to deliver an entire division to the embattled island."[92] By the end of October and throughout the month of November, Vandegrift's joint force systematically hunted Japanese units lurking in the jungle. On occasion, the Cactus Air Force provided corrections for U.S. Navy vessels firing on Japanese positions in support of Vandegrift's push west, as the Allies learned to master cross domain operations.[93] Sustaining a prolonged offensive against the Japanese forces and defense of Henderson Field could not last forever. Major General Vandegrift needed his troops to force the Japanese artillery back far enough that they could not range the airfield. Maintaining the airfield and air superiority above would ensure the Allies could achieve dominance on the island.

On 1 November, the 5th Marines, reinforced by the newly arrived 2d Marines, attacked across bridges engineers had laid over the Matanikau during the previous night. Inland, Colonel William J. Whaling led his scout snipers and the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, in a screening movement to protect the flank of the main attack. Opposition was fierce in the shore area where the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, drove forward toward Point Cruz, but inland the 2d Battalion and Whaling's group encountered slight opposition. By nightfall, when the Marines dug in, it was clear that the only sizable enemy force was in the Point Cruz area. In the day's bitter fighting, Corporal Anthony Casamento, a badly wounded machine gun squad leader in Lieutenant Colonel Merritt Edson's 1st Battalion, had so distinguished himself that he was recommended for a Navy Cross; many years later, in August 1980, President James E. "Jimmy" Carter approved the award of the Medal of Honor in its stead.[94]

The attack continued the next day with the reserve 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, moving into the fight and all three battalions of the 5th Marines moving to surround the enemy defenders. On 3 November, the Japanese pocket just west of the base at Point Cruz was eliminated; more than 300 enemy had been killed. Elsewhere, the attacking Marines had encountered spotty resistance and advanced slowly across difficult terrain to a point about 1,000 yards beyond the 5th Marines' action. There, just as the offensive's objectives seemed well in hand, the advance was halted. Again, intelligence reported that a massive enemy reinforcement attempt was pending; this forced Major General Vandegrift to pull back most of his men to safeguard the all-important airfield perimeter. This time, however, he left a regiment to outpost the ground that had been gained, Colonel John M. Arthur's 2d Marines, reinforced by the Army's 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry. At sea, Rear Admiral Turner ordered his destroyers to provide naval surface fires in support of the Marines' push west. The few destroyers off the coast did little to affect the Japanese ashore or to deter the 40 plus imperial vessels steaming to Guadalcanal.[95]

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[92] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 245.
[93] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 243.
[94] "1 November 1942: The Blood Fight for Guadalcanal Continues," WW2Today.com, 2013.
[95] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 41.

Emphasizing the need for caution in Vandegrift's mind was the fact that the Japanese had again been discovered in strength east of the perimeter. Lieutenant Colonel Hanneken's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, on a reconnaissance in force toward Koli Point, could see the Japanese ships clustered near Tetere, eight miles from the perimeter. His Marines encountered strong Japanese resistance from obviously fresh troops and he began to pull back. A regiment of the enemy's 38th Division had landed, as Hyakutake experimented with a Japanese Navy-promoted scheme of attacking the perimeter from both flanks.[96]

As Hanneken led a fighting withdrawal along the beach, his battalion began to receive fire from the jungle inland too. A rescue force was soon put together under Brigadier General Rupertus: two tank companies; the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines; and the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 164th Infantry. The Japanese troops, members of the 38th Division and remnants of Kawaguchi's brigade, fought doggedly to hold their ground as the Marines drove forward along the coast and the soldiers attempted to outflank the enemy in the jungle. The running battle continued for days, supported by Cactus air, naval gunfire, and the newly landed 155mm guns.[97]

Vice Admiral Halsey flew to Guadalcanal on 8 November to meet with Vandegrift to discuss the situation and to witness first-hand the naval surface fires delivered by Japanese destroyers. Reports stating "a massing of air strength at Buin, which would launch concentrated attacks three days before the landings" prompted Rear Admiral Turner to prepare his task force for the pending battle.[98] Turner hurriedly loaded his transports in Espiritu Santo with 7,000 troops, supplies, and ammo and rushed reinforcements to Guadalcanal.

Turner knew that Task Force 16's USS *Enterprise* was too far south and would not be able to provide air support in time. The Cactus Air Force would have to continue to serve as the sole air component and to "Turner's immense credit, he did not forsake the protection of Henderson Field in favor of his amphibious shipping."[99] He stripped his screening vessels from the transports and combined them with the heavy cruisers that escorted his transports. Rear Admirals Scott and Callaghan's task forces merged into one, designating the unit Task Force 67.4 and Callaghan was put in command, as he had 15 days seniority on Scott, though Callaghan's familiarity with the SC/SG radar paled in comparison to Scott's. The fighting admiral was unable to affect or shape the last-minute combined task force with the hard-learned lessons of the previous weeks and kept to his small sphere of influence aboard the USS *Atlanta* (CL 51).

The battle was starting to take its toll on the Japanese: "Though their troops were starving and their pilot ranks thinning, the Japanese had by no means given up on Guadalcanal."[100] The enemy commander received new orders as he was struggling to hold off the Americans. He was to break off the action, move inland, and march to rejoin the main Japanese forces west of the

[96] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 41.
[97] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 42.
[98] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 250.
[99] Frank, *Guadalcanal*, 433.
[100] Hornfischer, *Neptune's Inferno,* 250.

perimeter; a tall order to fulfill. The two-pronged attack scheme had been abandoned. The Japanese managed the first part; on 11 November, the enemy force found a gap in the 164th Infantry's line and broke through along a meandering jungle stream. They left behind 450 dead over the course of a seven-day battle; the Marines and soldiers had lost 40 dead and 120 wounded. Essentially, the Japanese who broke out of the encircling Americans escaped from the frying pan only to fall into the fire. Rear Admiral Turner finally had been able to effect one of his several schemes for alternative landings and beachheads, all of which Major General Vandegrift vehemently opposed. At Aola Bay, 40 miles east of the main perimeter, the Navy put an airfield construction and defense force ashore. While the Japanese were still battling the Marines near Tetere, Vandegrift was able to persuade Turner to detach part of this landing force, the 2d Raider Battalion, to sweep west to discover and destroy any enemy forces it encountered.

In its march from Aola Bay, the 2d Raider Battalion encountered the Japanese who were attempting to retreat to the west. On 12 November, the raiders beat back attacks by two enemy companies and then relentlessly pursued the Japanese, fighting a series of small actions during the next five days before they contacted the main Japanese body. From 17 November to 4 December, when the raiders finally came down out of the jungle's ridges into the perimeter, Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson's men harried the retreating enemy. They had killed nearly 500 Japanese. Their own losses were 16 killed and 18 wounded. The Aola Bay venture, which had provided the 2d Raider Battalion a starting point for its month-long jungle campaign, proved a bust. The site chosen for a new airfield was unsuitable as it was too wet and unstable, and the whole force moved to Koli Point in early December, where another airfield eventually was constructed.[101]

The buildup on Guadalcanal continued. Guarded by a cruiser-destroyer covering force, a convoy ran in carrying the 182d Infantry, another regiment of the Americal Division. The ships were pounded by enemy bombers and three transports were hit, but the men landed. Vandegrift needed fresh men badly. His veterans were truly ready for replacement; more than a thousand new cases of malaria and other related diseases were reported each week. The Japanese who had been on the island any length of time were no better off; they were, in fact, in worse shape. Medical supplies and rations were in short supply. The whole thrust of the Japanese reinforcement effort continued to be to get troops and combat equipment ashore. The idea prevailed in Tokyo, despite all evidence to the contrary, that one overwhelming coordinated assault would crush the American resistance. The enemy drive to take Port Moresby on New Guinea was put on hold to concentrate all efforts on driving the Americans off of Guadalcanal.

On 12 November, imperial bombers flew south toward Cactus. Marine F4F Wildcats and Army Aircobras took off from Henderson Field when alerted to the Japanese planes' presence 100 miles out. The Allied air power and navy ships kept the enemy bombers from reaching the airfield. In some instances, so pervasive had Vice Admiral Halsey's offensive spirit permeated the command, that death-defying American pilots even used their landing gear to pound Japanese

[101] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 42.

bombers into the waves after running out of ammunition. The heroics of the pilots spared Henderson Field for another day, but a Japanese armada still approached. On Friday, 13 November, superstitious sailors waiting to encounter the Imperial Japanese Navy met them in Savo Bay, with the opposing forces at such close range that they almost rammed into one another.

Rear Admiral Callaghan, without issuing a battle plan, thrust his column of ships into the midsection of the Japanese force. At close range, U.S. destroyers pummeled Japanese ships, whose gun crews scrambled to switch the Type 3 incendiary rounds with armor piercing from their breaches. The melee that ensued contributed toward the unfortunate friendly fire that ultimately killed Rear Admiral Scott on his flagship the USS *Atlanta.* Initially struck by a Japanese torpedo, the *Atlanta* found itself between Callaghan's flagship the USS *San Francisco* (CA 38) and its Japanese target. Not long after, Callaghan and the *San Francisco* suffered catastrophic hits, killing the admiral and many others on board. The chaos subsided late that evening with Admiral Hiroaki Abe calling for a general withdrawal from the area. Allied ships attempted to regain some semblance of an organized force as Marines and soldiers watched and listened to the entire battle from ashore to what sounded like titans exchanging blows in the dark. Despite many attempts by the Japanese, Henderson Field and the other airfields emerged unscathed.

9 December, the Americal Division Relieves 1st Marine Division

Major General Vandegrift now had enough fresh units to replace his veteran troops along the front lines. The decision to replace the 1st Marine Division with the Army's 25th Infantry Division had been made. Rear Admiral Turner had told Vandegrift to leave all of his heavy equipment on the island when he did pull out "in hopes of getting your units reequipped when you come out."[102] He also told the Marine general that the Army would command the final phases of the Guadalcanal operation, since it would provide the majority of the combat forces once the 1st Division departed. Major General Alexander M. Patch, commander of the Americal Division, would relieve Vandegrift as senior American officer ashore. His air support would continue to be Marine-dominated as Brigadier General Geiger, now located on Espiritu Santo with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters, fed his squadrons forward to maintain the offensive. And the air command on Guadalcanal would continue to be a mixed bag of Army, Navy, Marine, and Australian squadrons.

On 29 November, Vandegrift was handed a message from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The body of it read: "1st MarDiv is to be relieved without delay . . . and will proceed to Australia for rehabilitation and employment."[103] Word soon spread that the 1st Marine Division was leaving and where it was going. Australia was not yet the cherished place it would become in the division's future, but any place was preferable to Guadalcanal. This was good news for the 3,200 Marines and sailors suffering from malaria, not to mention the other illnesses and wounds.

[102] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 42.
[103] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 46.

Vice Admiral Halsey was well aware of the fierce fighting the "gaunt, malaria-ridden" Marines had endured and realized their expedited relief was paramount. A medical survey at the time found 75 percent of the 1st Marine Division currently suffered from malaria or had the disease dormant within them. During most of November, elements of the Americal Division replaced 1st Marine Division on the line. On 9 December, Vandegrift officially transferred command of forces on Guadalcanal to Major General Patch and flew out to Australia at the same time the first elements of the 5th Marines were boarding ship.[104] The 1st, 11th, and 7th Marines followed together with all the division's supporting units. The men who were leaving were thin, tired, hollow-eyed, and apathetic; they were young men who had grown old in four months' time. They left behind 681 dead in the island's cemetery.[105]

Major General Vandegrift's troops embarked transports and sailed for Australia to receive much-needed rest and rehabilitation to fight another day. Meanwhile, the remnants of the Imperial Japanese 17th Army bivouacked in the thick jungle hills surrounding Mount Austen. The imperial troops could see Henderson Field, Lunga Point, and Savo Bay, but could do nothing about the Allied operations they observed.

One year after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Major General Vandegrift sent a message to all men under his command in the Guadalcanal area, thanking them for their courage and steadfastness and commending particularly the pilots and "all who labored and sweated within the lines in all manner of prodigious and vital tasks." He reminded them all that their "unbelievable achievements had made 'Guadalcanal' a synonym for death and disaster in the language of our enemy."[106]

Looking to the Future: Guadalcanal as a Joint, Cross Domain Operation

Guadalcanal represented the U.S. military's first real attempt at joint operations in a contested environment, although the idea was not fully understood or appreciated at the time. Given the lessons learned at Guadalcanal, each of the Armed Services would make a significant contribution to the concept and play a critical role in the Okinawa campaign three years later. In 1942, however, the Services achieved success despite clinging stubbornly to their specific functions early in the campaign. Inter-Service rivalries were the primary cause. They would have to overcome their lack of an appreciation for the limitations and strengths of each Service as well as a want for grasping how a particular function could enhance another's strength while mitigating another's weakness. Not until the battle was in doubt did the Services begin to realize the shortfalls of acting independently compared to their full potential when operating as a joint force.[107]

The same can be said of the U.S. military's attempt at cross domain operations. Confronted for the first time with a peer air, naval, and sea competitor, U.S. forces looked to prevent Japan from

[104] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 46.
[105] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 46.
[106] Shaw, *First Offensive,* 46.
[107] See Ulbrich, "Thomas Holcomb, Alexander A. Vandegrift, and Reforms."

interdicting vital sea lanes used by the U.S. Navy to build American combat power in the Pacific following the attack on Pearl Harbor. After the naval battles at Midway and Coral Sea, where it gained a foothold in the Pacific, the United States turned its attention to Guadalcanal. With the potential to become a major staging area and launch point for Japanese air forces for action against Allied ground and naval forces, the island's airfield was the prime objective. To be successful, Vice Admiral Ghormley would have to create a layered logistic network to support the seizure of the airfield and, ultimately, the defense of it and the island. Creating the network required the coordination, integration, and management of air, naval, and land forces across domains. Events would later prove that not doing so left gaps in Ghormey's defensive plan and made the task of holding the airfield a challenging one.

In his 1987 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, "Thinking about Warfare," retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General Philip D. Shutler looked to Guadalcanal to explain how U.S. forces enforced cross domain operations, albeit out of survival, as a necessity for future operations.[108] In his article, Shutler explains how the task of seizing Guadalcanal's airfield was

> in effect to create an anti-air warfare shield to protect Espiritu Santo. But as the operational campaign progressed, the Marines' (and later the Army's) mission shifted from anti-air warfare to enabling U.S. land-based aircraft to support subsequent island-hopping battles to the north and the eventual reduction of the Japanese strongpoint on Rabaul.[109]

This is important to note at the operational level of war, although Shutler likens the campaign to a single domain action due to the operational objective, at the tactical level the airfield's seizure—and it's defense—required U.S. forces to adopt a cross domain approach to strategy.[110]

According to Shutler, seizing the airfield was neither a challenge nor was it an exercise in cross-domain application. "An initial successful landing" Shutler explained, "would have turned the battle into yet another symmetrical and protracted, single-domain, attritional fight between opposing land forces—both of whom sought to control the airfield."[111] Preventing the Japanese from reinforcing the island and retaking the airfield served to be both a challenge and an application of cross domain operations. To do so required the full use of U.S. naval assets, including submarines, surface ships, and naval aviation, to "establish maritime and aviation "shields" that Japanese air and naval forces would have to defeat to reinforce Guadalcanal."[112] This was not possible during the first two months as imperial naval and air forces proved too great a match for the U.S. Navy in both confidence and proficiency. Their absence as part of the defensive shield threatened the Marines' hold on the airfield as they had to contend with limited supporting arms, an exposed coastal flank, and Japanese freedom of movement in the air, on land, and at sea. Losing the airfield would create a second order effect in that Japanese air forces could then use the airfield and the island to attack the Marines as coastal sea lanes.

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[108] Philip D. Shutler, "Thinking about Warfare," *Marine Corps Gazette* 71, no. 11 (November 1987): 20.
[109] Shutler, "Thinking about Warfare," 20.
[110] Shutler, "Thinking about Warfare," 23.
[111] Shutler, "Thinking about Warfare," 23.
[112] Shutler, "Thinking about Warfare," 25.

By October, U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine air forces had helped to establish a portion of the shield when naval construction crews completed the airfield, limiting the Imperial Japanese Navy to nighttime operations. In November, when U.S. naval forces returned in force and sank seven Japanese troop transports carrying approximately 7,000 Japanese troops attempting reinforcement of Guadalcanal, the Marines, with help from the Army, were able to maintain a lopsided advantage in the number of ground forces and prevent the Japanese from retaking the airfield. More importantly was that for the first time in the campaign, the full cross domain defensive shield was operational, opening the way for U.S. forces to secure the island and drive north through the Solomons under a truly *single naval battle* construct.

Postscript

Major General Vandegrift returned to the United States with a hero's welcome in January 1943. Lauded as the "Conqueror of Guadalcanal," President Roosevelt added his personal thanks to that of a grateful nation and awarded the future Marine Commandant the Congressional Medal of Honor for "outstanding and heroic accomplishment" for his leadership of American forces on Guadalcanal from 7 August to 9 December 1942. In addition, Roosevelt bestowed upon the colors of the 1st Marine Division (Rein) the Presidential Unit Citation for "outstanding gallantry" reflecting "courage and determination of an inspiring order."[113] Included in the citation and award were the 2d and 8th Marines and other attached units of the 2d Marine Division; the 1st Parachute and 1st and 2d Raider Battalions; elements of the 3d, 5th, and 14th Defense Battalions; the 1st Aviation Engineer Battalion; the 6th Naval Construction Battalion; two motor torpedo boat squadrons; and the entire Americal Division. For its heroism and dauntless courage, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's 7 Marine headquarters and service squadrons and 16 bomber and fighter squadrons, along with the 16 Navy the 5 Army squadrons, received the honor as well.[114] Success, however, was not the 1st Marine Division's alone. In a sense, the entire Marine Corps played a part in the victory at Guadalcanal.

The total cost to the American ground combat forces was 1,598 killed, of which 1,152 were from the 1st Marine Division.[115] The wounded totaled 4,709 with 2,799 of them being Marines and Navy corpsman.[116] Marine aviation casualties were 147 killed and 127 wounded.[117] The Japanese lost close to 25,000 men on Guadalcanal, about one-half of whom were killed in action. The rest succumbed to illness, wounds, and starvation.[118]

As for the fight to seize control of the vital sea lanes surrounding the island, Allied and Japanese losses were about equal, with each side losing about the same number of fighting ships. The Imperial Japanese Navy lost two battleships, three carriers, 12 cruisers, and 25 destroyers; none

[113] Gordon Smith, "United States Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps Casualties, 1941–1945," Naval-History.net, 11 March 2016, hereafter "U.S. Casualties."
[114] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[115] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[116] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[117] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[118] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."

of which they were able to replace. The Allies' ship losses, though costly in terms of personnel killed or missing, were not as fatal to the overall war effort as all ships were replaced. The total U.S. Navy losses were more than 5,000 dead or lost at sea with countless more wounded, more than three times the number lost ashore.[119] The Navy also lost 31 ships and patrol craft to sea battles during the battle.[120] General Vandegrift paid tribute to the Navy when he wrote:

> We believe the enemy has undoubtedly suffered a crushing defeat. We thank Admiral Kinkaid for his intervention yesterday. We thank Lee for his sturdy effort last night. Our own aircraft has been grand in its relentless hammering of the foe. All those efforts are appreciated but our greatest homage goes to Callaghan, Scott and their men who with magnificent courage against seemingly hopeless odds drove back the first hostile attack and paved the way for the success to follow. To them the men of Cactus lift their battered helmets in deepest admiration.[121]

In the skies above Guadalcanal, the Allies shot down 600 Japanese planes, which took approximately 2,300 experienced pilots and aircrew down with them.[122] Cactus Air Force losses totaled 94 men.[123] The entire air campaign saw 436 Marine, Navy, and Army aircraft lost, with nearly twice that number of aircrew killed as a result, including aircrews flying in the Cactus Air Force and from U.S. Navy carriers.[124] Six Cactus Air Force pilots earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.[125]

[119] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[120] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[121] "Commendations for the Men Who Fought in the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942," WebCitation.org, 25 October 2009.
[122] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[123] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[124] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."
[125] Smith, "U.S. Casualties."

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Part C

Questions for Discussion

1. How did leadership and command relationships influence the landing and initial phase of the Guadalcanal campaign? What did Major General Vandegrift do at the pre-D-Day conference to communicate the requirements and risks associated with amphibious operations to his superiors who were largely inexperienced in these matters? What would you have communicated to Vice Admirals Ghormley and Fletcher if you were Vandegrift? How does a commander articulate risk? If Vice Admiral Fletcher was ignorant of amphibious operations, how much did Vandegrift understand about carrier warfare? Major General Vandegrift believed the most dangerous Japanese course of action was a "counterlanding on Guadalcanal to retake the airfield." This is an extremely land centric view of the problems facing the amphibious task force. Do Marine commanders have a responsibility to understand the seaward portion of the operation if they are going to participate in single naval battle discussions?

2. The U.S. Navy fielded new technology to the fleet, but the fleet did not seek to gain a true appreciation of its capabilities and limitations. Can we anticipate this being a factor in the future? With the proliferation of technologies, such as subsurface, surface, and air autonomous and semiautonomous systems, how can we better prepare ourselves and Marines for the future battle?

3. "If the aim of maneuver warfare is to shatter the cohesion of the enemy system, the immediate object toward that end is to create a situation in which the enemy cannot function."[126] Which events during the campaign did the Allied or imperial forces change the reality facing the opposing force? How can we create such a situation as we include cyber effects, information environment operations, and space assets, in addition to new and old technologies found within the land, sea, and air?

4. Major General Vandegrift once said, "Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held."[127] The differing opinions of Operation Watchtower added superfluous friction and possibly hindered the conglomerate of Allied forces working toward a common goal. With that, what lessons can we take from Vandegrift and his staff's focus?

5. What are the enduring command relationships, command and control, and coordination challenges stemming from Watchtower? Did the relationships on paper match the reality of the situation? Should we expect to fall in on a previous command relationship or expect to exercise command and control as it was executed before?

[126] *Warfighting*, MCDP-1 (Washington, DC, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1997), 73.
[127] *Warfighting*, 1.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle:
Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

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How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex A

U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Navy Ships Sunk during the Guadalcanal Campaign August 1942–February 1943[128]

Aircraft Carriers

USS *Wasp* (CV 7): sunk on 15 September 1942 by Japanese type B-1 submarine *I-19* while escorting transports to Guadalcanal.
USS *Hornet* (CV 8): torpedoed and sunk by Japanese destroyers on 27 October 1942, following damage from carrier-based aircraft during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands.

Heavy Cruisers

HMAS *Canberra* (D 33): Australian heavy cruiser heavily damaged 9 August 1942 by Imperial Japanese Navy gunfire during Battle of Savo Island, and scuttled later in the day.
USS *Astoria* (CA 34): sunk on 9 August 1942 by Japanese torpedoes and naval gunfire at the Battle of Savo Island.
USS *Chicago* (CA 29): sunk on 30 January 1943 by Japanese aircraft torpedoes during the Battle of Rennell Island.
USS *Northampton* (CA 26): sunk on 30 November 1942 by Japanese naval torpedoes during the Battle of Tassafaronga.
USS *Quincy* (CA 39): sunk on 9 August 1942 by Japanese torpedoes and naval gunfire at the Battle of Savo Island.
USS *Vincennes* (CA 44): sunk on 9 August 1942 by Japanese naval gunfire at the Battle of Savo Island.

Light Cruisers

USS *Atlanta* (CL 51): sunk on 13 November 1942 by a Japanese torpedo and naval gunfire at the naval Battle of Guadalcanal.
USS *Juneau* (CL 52): sunk on 13 November 1942 by Japanese type B-1 submarine *I-26* after being damaged by a torpedo and naval gunfire at the naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

Destroyers

USS *Benham* (DD 397): sunk on 15 November 1942 after being damaged by a torpedo from a Japanese warship off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
USS *Blue* (DD 387): scuttled on 22 August 1942 after being torpedoed by the Japanese destroyer Kawakaze in Savo Sound, Solomon Islands.
USS *Cushing* (DD 376): sunk on 13 November 1942 by gunfire from Japanese warships off Savo, Solomon Islands.
USS *Duncan* (DD 485): sunk on 12 October 1942 after being damaged by gunfire from Japanese warships off Savo, Solomon Islands.

[128] U.S. Navy History and Heritage Command historical data.

USS *Jarvis* (DD 393): sunk on 9 August 1942 by Japanese aircraft south of Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
USS *Laffey* (DD 459): sunk on 13 November 1942 by the Japanese battleship *Hiei* off Savo, Solomon Islands.
USS *Meredith* (DD 434): sunk on 15 October 1942 by Japanese aircraft near San Cristobal, Solomon Islands.
USS *Monssen* (DD 436): sunk by gunfire from Japanese warships off Savo, Solomon Islands, 13 November 1942.
USS *O'Brien* (DD 415): torpedoed on 15 September 1942 by Japanese type B-1 submarine *I-15* north of Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands, and foundered off Samoa en route to base on 19 October 1942.
USS *Porter* (DD 356): sunk on 26 October 1942 after being torpedoed by Japanese type B-1 submarine *I-21* near Santa Cruz Island, east of the Solomon Islands.
USS *Preston* (DD 379): sunk on 14 November 1942 by Japanese cruiser *Nagara* off Savo, Solomon Islands.
USS *Walke* (DD 416): sunk on 14 November 1942 by gunfire and torpedoes from Japanese warships off Savo, Solomon Islands,.

Fast Destroyer Transports

USS *Colhoun* (APD 2): sunk on 30 August 1942 by Japanese aircraft off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
USS *Gregory* (APD 3): sunk on 5 September 1942 by Japanese destroyer *Yūdachi* off Lunga Point, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
USS *Little* (APD 4): sunk on 5 September 1942 by Japanese destroyer *Yūdachi* off Lunga Point, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

Patrol Torpedo Boats

PT *37*: sunk on 1 February 1943 by Japanese destroyer *Kawakaze* off Cape Esperance, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
PT 43: damaged on 11 January 1943 by Japanese destroyer *Tokitsukaze*, beached, and destroyed to prevent capture on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
PT 44: destroyed on 12 December 1942 by Japanese destroyers *Kawakaze* and *Suzukaze* off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
PT 111: destroyed on 1 February 1943 by Japanese destroyer *Kawakaze* off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
PT 112: destroyed on 11 January 1943 by Japanese destroyers *Hatsukaze* and *Tokitsukaze* off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

Troopships/Attack Transports

USS George F. Elliott (AP 13)**:** damaged on 8 August 1942 by Japanese aircraft off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, and scuttled by destroyer USS *Hull* (DD 350).

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle:
Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex B

Reinforcements	
7th Marine Regiment HQ (18 Sep 42) *garrisoned at Samoa prior to deploying to Guadalcanal	2d Raider Bn (4 Nov 42)
1st Bn, 7th Marines (18 Sep 42)*	8th Marines (4 Nov 42- 31 Jan 43)
2d Bn, 7th Marines (18 Sep 42)*	1st Bn, 10th Marines (4 Nov 42)
3d Bn, 7th Marines (18 Sep 42)*	2d Bn, 10th Marines (Jan 42)
1st Bn, 11th Marines (18 Sep 42)*	6th Marines (4 Jan 42)
6th Naval Construction Bn (18 Sep 42)	2d Marine Division (2 Jan 43)
Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron-3 Tulagi (12 Oct 42)	1st Marine Aviation Engineer Bn (11 Nov 42)
164th Infantry Regiment, Americal Div (13 Oct 42)	132d Infantry Regiment (8 Dec 42)
Americal Division (9 Dec 42)	25th Infantry Division (17 Dec 42)
2d Marine Regiment (30 Oct 42- 31 Jan 43) –V12 and V22 left Tulagi for Guadalcanal, and V32 took up the Tualgi mission.	Malaria Control Unit (Nov 42)
3d Bn, 10th Marines (Oct 42)	

1St Marine Division (7 August 1942)	
Combat Group A (Florida Island, Tulagi, Gavutu, Tanambogo)	**Combat Group B** (Guadalcanal)
1st Raider Bn (Tulagi)	5th Marines Regimental HQ
1st Special Weapons (Tulagi)	1st Bn, 5th Marines
2d Bn, 5th Marines (Tulagi)	3d Bn, 5th Marines
1st Engineer Bn	2d Bn, 11th Marines
5th Bn, 11th Marines (Tulagi)	1st Marines Regimental HQ
2d Marines Regimental HQ (did not disembark, and held as Adm Turner's reserve)	Co A, 1st Tank Bn
Co B & other elements, 1st Bn, 2d Marines (Florida, Tulagi & Tanambogo)	1st Bn, 1st Marines
2d Bn, 2d Marines (Tulagi)	2d Bn, 1st Marines
Co I & elements of Co K, 3d Bn, 2d Marines (Tanambogo, Gavutu)	3d Bn, 1st Marines
Btry I, 3d Bn, 10th Marines (Tulagi)	3d Bn, 11th Marines
1st Parachute Bn (Tulagi, Gavutu)	3d Defense Bn

Cactus Air Force		
US Marine Corps	**US Navy**	**US Army Air Force**
MAG-23 (20 Aug – Oct 42)	VF-5 (11 Sep – 16 Oct 42)	67th Fighter Squadron (24 Aug – 8 Feb 43)
VMF-223 (20 Aug 11 Oct 42)	VS-71 (28 Sep – 7 Nov 42)	**USMC**
VMF-224 (30 Aug – 16 Oct 42)	Enterprise Flight (24 Aug – 27 Sep 42)	Marine Fighting Squadron (VMF)
VMSB-231 (30 Aug – 16 Oct 42)	VS-3 (6 Sep – 17 Oct 42)	Marine Scout Bombing Squadron (VMSB)
VMSB-232 (20 Aug – 2 Oct 42)	VT-8 (13 Sep – 16 Nov 42)	**US Navy**
VMF-121 (9 Oct – Dec 42)	VB-6 (14 Oct – 3 Nov 42)	Fighting Squadron (VF)
VMSB-141 (23 Sep – 19 Nov 42)	Carrier Air Group 10 (13-16 Nov 42)	Scouting Squadron (VS)
VMSB-131 (12 Nov 42- 1943)	VF-10	Torpedo Squadron (VT)
VMSB-142 (12 Nov 42 -1943)	VB-10	Bombing Squadron (VB)
VMSB-132 (1 Nov 42 - 1943)	VS-10	Source: Miller Jr., Thomas G., *The Cactus Air Force*, New York, NY 1969, Appendix A, p.211-227
VMF-112 (3 Nov 42- 1943)	VT-10	
VMF-212 (16 Oct – 1943)		

"BATTLE DOCTRINE

FOR

FRONT LINE LEADERS"

Reprinted by

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Originally published by the 3d Marine Division for its front line leaders, and subsequently distributed Corps-wide as an official training guide during World War II by LtGen A. A. Vandegrift, Commandant, U. S. Marine Corps, this pamphlet contains in pure form the formula for positive combat leadership. The essence of its fundamentals applies both on and off the field of battle to all leaders, at all times, regardless of rank, specialty, or duty assignment. I commend these truths to your careful study. Failure to follow them can cost your professional creditability in peacetime, and, in war, the lives of those dependent upon your leadership.

D. M. TWOMEY
Major General, U. S. Marine Corps
Director

FOREWORD

This forceful restatement of the fundamental principles of troop leadership, supplemented by rules based on combat experience in the Solomon Islands Area was prepared by the Third Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. It is worthy of careful study by every Marine who is or may be charged with the leadership of other Marines in battle.

(Signed) A. A. VANDEGRIFT

INTRODUCTION

The Senior Commander of a force plans the battle in its broader sense and is responsible for ultimate success or failure. However, once a subordinate unit has been committed to action, he must, for the time being, limit his activities to providing the necessary support and insuring the coordination of all components. Regardless of how well conceived the Senior Commander's plan may be, it can be nullified if his front line platoons are incapable of carrying out the mission assigned.

The conduct of the front line rests with company commanders, and their platoon and squad leaders. The front line leader must plan and execute his own battle. He must know his enemy, his own men, and must aggressively employ all of his weapons in coordinated fire and movement. He must personally lead his unit to success. The paramount importance of front line leadership cannot be overestimated.

1. The prime factor in a successful fighting unit is ESPRIT DE CORPS. This needs no explanation. It simply means that no Marine ever lets another Marine down. The expression, "A Squad of Marines," has for over a hundred years been synonomous with such other expressions as "coiled rattlesnake," "concentrated dynamite," "powder keg," etc. Its meaning has been well-earned.

2. Of almost equal importance to a fighting unit is DISCIPLINE. This applies to all activities at all times. It must never be relaxed, particularly during times of hardship, discomfort, or danger. It spells the difference between a "Mob" and a "Unit." Discipline is obtained mainly through diligence of the leader in insisting that things be done "right," and added by the judicious daily application of rewards and punishments. Justice, consistency, firmness, and respect are the roots of discipline. Men like to serve in a well-disciplined unit. Mob methods disgust them.

3. Be neat in your person; habitually wear your insignia of rank on all uniforms and have all your subordinates do the same. Insignia may be dulled or blended just before entering close combat--but not before.

4. Exercise and display absolute loyalty toward a superior, particularly when he is absent. This is not only morally correct, it is the only sure footing in any military organization. It also enhances your personal prestige among your subordinates.

5. Refrain from "blowing up" under stress or when irritated.

6. Always show enthuiasm - it is infectious.

7. Never allow yourself to be unduly rushed or stampeded. There is usually ample time for considered judgment, even during battle. Dignity and poise are invaluable assets to a leader.

8. In the field, practice the habit of making daily inspections (using the "sample" method) and insist on: (1) clean weapons, (2) presence of arms, ammunition, mess gear, helmets and other items of individual equipment, (3) care of the feet, (4) alertness while on watch. See that rewards and punishments are promptly awarded.

9. At the front, visit all of your men frequently—talk to them—be sure they know what you want them to do at all times, and where you can be found.

10. Do not get your unit lost—nothing destroys confidence quicker.

11. As a general rule do not call for volunteers to do a dangerous or distasteful job. Pick out the individuals yourself and assign them to the job clearly, and in the presence of others.

12. Give your orders positively and clearly at all times. Avoid vagueness.

13. Never allow cruelty, it undermines the natural courage and manliness of the perpetrator. Be respectful to the dead—even the enemy dead. Bury the dead quickly.

14. Be prompt and accurate in making reports. Send back information at least once each hour during an action. The commanding officer can't help you unless he knows your situation.

15. If anything goes wrong, do not be too quick to blame our artillery, aviation, engineers, supply services, or any other organization. They can be depended upon always to do all they can with the information and means at hand. They, too, have a job which requires courage and determination, and they are doing their best to back you up.

16. Take active charge of all activities on the front which lie within your sphere of responsibility.

17. A front-line Marine demands little from his leader, namely: (1) a clear conception of what he is expected to do, (2) ammunition, (3) drinking water, (4) rations, (5) medical service, and eventually (6) cigarettes and mail. These items must be your continuous concern.

18. Always arrange for the comfort of your men before you do your own.

19. Maintain your leadership. Nothing is more humiliating to a nominal leader than to see his men naturally turning to a subordinate for direction in times of danger.

20. Arrange continuously for your men to get as much rest as the situation will allow. Avoid unnecessary harassments, such as "standing by." Unless your unit is on the move, or unless you or the enemy are actually attacking, you can usually arrange for at least two-thirds of your men to sleep at night.

21. Do not tolerate any evidences of self-pity in your men. It makes any difficult situation worse.

22. Keep to yourself alone any concern you may have as to your general situation, and do not let it be relfected in your countenance or actions. Remember that all situations look critical at times.

23. Encourage common decency—do not tolerate vulgarity or filthy language in your presence.

24. Insist on carrying out all rules for field sanitation, even in the front lines.

25. Do not encourage rumors—they are usually disturbing—most of them are entirely without foundation. Find out for yourself and be the first to tell your men the truth.

26. Win a reputation for moving your outfit promptly. Depart and arrive on time.

27. Be "time and space" conscious. By practice, know the average time it takes: (1) to issue your orders, (2) to assemble your unit, (3) to move it a hundred yards over varied types of terrain, (4) to deploy it for battle. Always have your watch set at correct time.

28. Keep your men informed as to the enemy situation and your plans. Devise and execute plans for taking prisoners.

29. Offensive tactics, briefly summarized, may be stated as follows: Hold the attention of your enemy with a minimum force, then quickly strike him suddenly and hard on his flank or rear with every weapon you have, then rush him when his fire slackens. Any plan that accomplishes this will usually win if it is driven home quickly. Be slow to change a plan—the reason for the change should be obvious.

30. Remember that supporting arms seldom destroy—they paralyze temporarily. Take quick advantage of their support before the enemy "comes to." Act suddenly.

31. In a surprise meeting of small forces, hit the enemy immediately while he is still startled; don't let him get set, be persistent, and "keep him rolling."

32. Be prepared always. Anticipate your action in case of an emergency. Ask yourself what you would do immediately in case the enemy should suddenly appear. If you have to hesitate in your answer, you are not sufficiently prepared. Keep thinking, and at all times be one jump ahead of the immediate situation.

33. Never permit men to remain inactive under machine gun fire. Give orders quickly.

34. Do not permit the slightest rearward movement of any individual while under heavy fire, except to get wounded out, or when openly directed by you. It is usually best to go forward, or dig in until the fire ceases.

35. Always endeavor to confront your enemy with a superior volume of accurate fire. This may be accomplished at any given point by means of maneuver and coordination of the fire of all weapons. Use every weapon you have—they are all especially effective if used together.

36. A great and successful troop leader said that there comes a point in every close battle when each commander concludes that he is defeated. The leader who carries on, wins.

37. It has been recently observed that an enemy often slackens or ceases his fire right at the time he appears to be getting the upper hand. He then simply crouches in his hole. This means that he cannot sustain a fire fight. Stick to your plan and hit him harder.

38. Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held.

39. Beware of daylight withdrawals. They may appear logical in a classroom but they are always dangerous in practice. In a tight spot hold on, at least until nightfall.

40. Nothing on this earth is so uplifting to a human being as victory in battle; nothing so degrading as defeat.

41. "Battles are won during the training period."

28232 MCDEC, QUANTICO, VA.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex D

FEATURE

In Search of the Single Battle

The MAGTF command element's role in irregular warfare

by LtCol Wayne A. Sinclair

The dominance of decentralized planning across western Iraq for more than 2 years suggests that key tenets of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) are being neglected. This bottom-up approach to irregular warfare has often allowed such variances in goals and methods that the relevance of our warfighting doctrine may be called into question. If many of our operational concepts go unpracticed outside of our learning institutions—particularly in the midst of a war—then we risk encouraging indifference toward professional military education and inadvertently breeding a climate of anti-intellectualism in our officer corps. If doctrine codifies institutional memory and provides a common understanding of how the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) operates, we have an obligation to apply it—or consciously revise or discard that which does not work. Such may be the challenge today. The irregular character of the war in Iraq and the lack of recent institutional experience in this kind of warfare at its onset have made application of the "single battle" concept especially challenging for the MAGTF command element (CE).

The greatest challenges and most far-reaching opportunities for the MAGTF commander lie in his ability to orchestrate and synchronize the efforts of numerous, diverse entities along a single critical path toward an overarching campaign objective. Irregular warfare demands clear decisionmaking at every level to establish consistent priorities and achieve desired effects across a broad and dynamic battlespace. Failure to maintain a campaign-wide unity of effort frustrates the small unit leaders in the field and further alienates the indigenous population they seek to influence most.[1]

Since planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II (OIF II) began in the fall of 2003, a heated debate has ensued in the Marine Corps over the proper role of the Marine expeditionary force (MEF) CE in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.* While some advocated a central and even enhanced role for the MEF CE in the planning and execution of complex, synchronized operations, others viewed the MEF CE as a "force provider" whose primary task was to deliver resources to its major subordinate commands (MSCs) and ensure that higher headquarters (in this case, Multinational Corps-Iraq (MNC-I)) did not interfere or meddle in what was essentially a ground combat element (GCE) "decentralized fight." These discussions and accompanying decisions have had profound implications for the future of the MAGTF in irregular warfare. This article argues that the single battle concept is essential for lasting success in COIN operations and that the MAGTF

> ***". . . remember also that the worth of the ideal must be largely determined by the success with which it can in practice be realized."***
>
> ***—Theodore Roosevelt, Paris, 1910***

*The MEF headquarters for OIF 04–06 and OIF 05–07 was designated as the forward command element with the MEF headquarters proper remaining in Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton, respectively.

Photo: How well do our commanders and staffs understand the single battle and MAGTF integration for irregular warfare? (Photo by Sgt Enrique S. Diez.)

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex D

CE has a critical and far-reaching role in seeking and achieving it. In irregular warfare, the CE remains not only essential to planning, executing, and synchronizing all MAGTF operations but ensures that those operations are "nested" with higher headquarters' campaign objectives.

Defining the Single Battle

The single battle is not, as its name suggests, about one particular tactical action or series of engagements. It is about shared objectives, total force utilization, and a type of singular integration in time, space, and purpose that ensures the MAGTF "whole" is, in fact, greater than the sum of its parts. The single battle is essentially about how to most effectively and simultaneously harness the power of all elements of the MAGTF and integrate their activities across the MAGTF's area of operations. Arguably, it is the MEF CE *and only the MEF CE* that has the resources to truly fight the single battle. Naturally, this level of MAGTF synergy requires the vision of the commander and an experienced staff with more than a conceptual appreciation of the single battle. Not surprisingly, the single battle concept is one of three tenets of the MCPP and is rooted in a principle of war—unity of command. (See Figure 1.) It is built upon the other two tenets of top-down and integrated planning. Top-down planning is essential for directing and coordinating subordinate efforts while allowing sufficient flexibility to meet unexpected challenges. Though tempo is the primary goal of maneuver warfare, a more relevant contributor to the MAGTF single battle in irregular warfare is the vertical nesting of concepts. Nested concepts drive tempo more widely and purposefully through concentration and initiative. GEN William DuPuy, USA, captured this crucial aspect of integration particularly well:

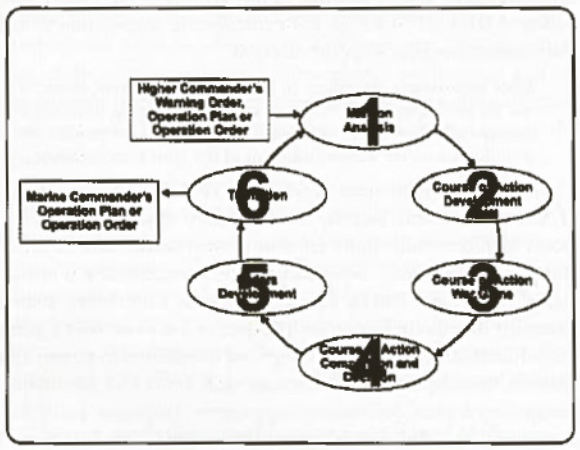

Figure 1. The MCPP.

> Cascading concepts carry the top commander's intentions to the lowest levels, and the nesting of those concepts traces the critical path of concentration and priorities. This is a phenomenon the Germans called *schwerpunkt*. The concepts are nested like mixing bowls in a kitchen. Each must fit within the confines of the larger and accommodate the next smaller and so on down to the squad, the tank, and the brave soldier himself. It is the only method by which the talent and initiative of commanders and troops at every level can be engaged and exploited.[2]

The complexities of irregular warfare, however, create a paradox that makes achievement of the single battle especially challenging for the MEF, particularly with the maneuver warfare philosophy of the Marine Corps. On the one hand, the inherently political nature of COIN operations requires clear priorities and agonizing intellectual rigor from the top down to ensure that MEF operations are nested to support theater campaign objectives. On the other hand, the vast spaces covered and the rapidly changing conditions in the battlespace (note: *not* simply the area of operations (AO)) inherently drive execution to the lowest levels.

Top-down planning is essential for directing and coordinating subordinate efforts while allowing sufficient flexibility to meet unexpected challenges.

After 2½ years of COIN operations in Iraq, the single battle remains elusive. Some senior commanders with a great deal of Iraq experience have even dismissed the notion of a "MEF deep fight." In the past, the MEF headquarters group, the Marine aircraft wing, and the Marine logistics group were each assigned an AO that amounted to the respective command's primary base of operations and an adjacent security belt. The division (and currently the regimental combat teams and the U.S. Army brigade combat team) was assigned a vast and *contiguous* AO that included the remainder of Multinational Force-West's AO. This arrangement contributed immensely to the prevailing GCE's perspective that the MEF CE's primary role was that of a resource provider whose attention should be directed "up" toward corps headquarters (MNC-I) rather than "down" on its own subordinates. Reinforcing this viewpoint, many officers believed that the MEF was an operational-level command vice the tactical-level command our doctrine clearly and purposefully states. Consistent with these views, and in an effort to increase responsiveness during two successive deployments, both I and II MEF's order of battle reflected a task organization that had the majority of its MEF-unique force structure—to include the intelligence and radio battalions and the force reconnaissance company—attached to the GCE. This trend of "pushing" virtually all resources to the lowest possible level (in most cases, the infantry battalions that were referred to as task forces), coupled with the primacy of independent, small unit actions, only heightened the sense of detachment at the MEF level. For the MEF CE, the cyclical, seemingly unconnected, day-to-day activities by multiple MSCs and other supporting elements (e.g., the civil affairs group, the naval construction regiment, a U.S. Army engineer battalion conducting route clearance missions, etc.) made bottom-up planning the norm for COIN operations. With few exceptions, there did not appear to be a "next mission" to prepare for. This situation was quite possibly exacerbated by the number of MEF staff

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex D

FEATURE

Execution is this Marine's responsibility. (Photo by Cpl Tom Sloan.)

officers—many of whom were individual augmentees and/or reservists with no staff experience above the battalion level—who lacked confidence in their knowledge of warfighting doctrine or the planning process. With so much to learn in a fast-paced environment, such officers were more comfortable pulling and forwarding information and reports from subordinates than planning and orchestrating the single battle.

Top-down planning is not out of place on the irregular battlefield. While many anti-insurgent activities are decentralized in execution, the need for centralized planning is a surprisingly consistent theme in COIN studies. French Army officer COL Roger Trinquier, who spent more than 30 years leading guerrilla and counterguerrilla operations in Asia and Africa, addressed the paradox that bedevils the MEF CE in his 1963 study, *Modern Warfare* (Praeger, 2006):

> The struggle against the guerilla is not, as one might suppose, a war of lieutenants and captains. The number of troops that must be put into action, the vast areas over which they will be led to do battle, the necessity of coordinating diverse actions over these vast areas, the politico-military measures to be taken regarding the populace, the necessarily close cooperation with various branches of civil administration—all this requires that operations against the guerilla be conducted according to a plan, established at a very high command level, capable at any moment of making quick, direct intercession effectively felt in the wide areas affected by modern warfare.

In essence, Trinquier describes the single battle. But despite many references to the oft-quoted but less read Marine Corps' *Small War Manual* of 1940, COIN operations are not intuitive to most Marines, and the single battle will not just happen without carefully crafted purpose. Like all challenging yet worthwhile endeavors, it requires hard work by all. The search for the single battle must include both top-down and integrated planning that emanates from a clear understanding of the three components of the battlespace and how it is organized through the intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) process.

Battlespace's Building Blocks

Considering its pivotal role in military operations, battlespace is a surprisingly misunderstood term. Marines routinely, but erroneously, use the term to refer to an AO—a tangible piece of land or water that is assigned to a commander who in turn is responsible for all activities therein. While an AO is a subset of battlespace, they are not interchangeable terms. The widespread misuse of the term reflects more than a terminology mixup. It is an overall poor understanding of a foundational concept. Without a basic appreciation of battlespace as a concept, its scope is more likely to be underestimated and its essential elements overlooked. *Joint Publication 2–01.3 (JP 2–01.3), Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*, attempts to point this out:

> More importantly, the failure to identify all the relevant characteristics (of battlespace) may lead to the joint force being surprised and unprepared when some overlooked aspect of the battlespace exerts an influence on the accomplishment of the joint force's mission.

So what is it? Battlespace is defined in *JP 3–0, Joint Operations*, as "the environment, factors, and conditions that must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, or complete the mission." Since battlespace is conceptual it is not assigned but is identified by the commander as a nonlinear, mental construct of relevant factors with respect to a mission over a given period of time.[3] In a COIN setting, and in addition to terrain and weather, battlespace would include such factors as population groups, key leaders' decisionmaking patterns, languages, social customs, cultural, tribal, and religious beliefs, relationship barriers and bridges, environmental and political conditions, rules of engagement, historical trends, nongovernmental organizations, nonstate actors, and contractors, as well as cyberspace and American and coalition countries' public perceptions. To cover this wide variety of relevant factors, Marine Corps doctrine subdivides battlespace into three categories—area of influence, area of interest, and AO.

The area of influence may be the most important and least appreciated component of battlespace in a COIN campaign. *JP 1–02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, currently defines it as the "*geographical* area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's control" (emphasis added). The trend has been to equate the size of the area of influence to the ranges of weapons systems or delivery platforms available to the commander—fixed-wing aviation in most cases. The trouble lies in the fact that the geographic focus reflects an en-

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex D

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Pre-1994 IPB	Battlefield area evaluation	Terrain analysis	Weather analysis	Threat evaluation
Current Joint IPB	Define the battlespace environment	Describe battlespace's effects	Evaluate the adversary	Determine adversary potential courses of action

Figure 2. Comparison of IPB processes.

tirely conventional battlespace perspective. This perspective creates unintended blindspots and suggests, by extension, a purely kinetic approach without due consideration for nongeographic and intangible factors a MAGTF may seek to influence. These may include such diverse matters as local job opportunities linked to critical infrastructure or the morale of an indigenous army we intend to train and employ.

Since the nonphysical dimensions of a commander's battlespace extend well beyond his AO, identifying multiple, noncontiguous areas of influence within an AO will serve to focus and unify efforts on those people, places, or things that fall within the commander's functional reach. This implies that directed activities aimed at identified areas of influence across a MAGTF's AO will likely be performed by various elements and resources of the MAGTF—some of which will not have assigned AOs of their own. The identification of these tasks and their orchestration, coordination, and assessment during and after execution is one of the most important functions the MEF CE must embrace to realize and sustain the single battle.

The irregular character of the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that influence is not determined as much by weapons and topography as by enablers to our authority and our ability to peacefully coexist and effectively communicate between cultures on a variety of levels. Curiously, the area of influence is only delineated as a distinct subset of battlespace in Marine Corps doctrine, and its definition fails to appear in the U.S. Army's *Field Manual 34–130 (FM 34–120), Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield.*

The area of interest is the broadest dimension of battlespace as it includes anything that can affect current or future operations. As such, the area of interest contains friendly and enemy forces, fire support coordination measures, host-nation capabilities, infrastructure, supporting ports and airfields, and any weather and terrain that are of concern to the commander. Removing those things within the realm of a commander's influence, the area of interest must be serviced by intelligence and information collection plans. Areas of interest are thus noncontiguous and may stretch far beyond the AO.

The terrain-oriented depictions of these battlespace components found in many reference publications usually include the AO and the areas of influence within a larger contiguous area of interest. This again reflects a distinctly conventional perspective that can easily overlook the cultural, linguistic, tribal, spiritual, economic, criminal, and other nongeographic factors that have proven more relevant to virtually every U.S. military intervention since Operation DESERT STORM in 1991. How and where these concerns fall into battlespace delineation is important to better align resources with main and supporting efforts within the single battle. This lends itself to an important concept known as battlefield framework. The battlefield framework should be sketched out early in the planning process to help the commander "organize his battlespace" into a consistent vision of deep, close, and rear operations.[4] Deep, close, and rear operations are not constrained or limited by spatial proximities. As an alternative to the deep, close, and rear approach, and in accordance with sound counterinsurgency practices, battlespace activities are often grouped by their primary purposes or functions of shaping, decisive, or sustaining actions. In either construct, this form of battlespace organization and integration by a single commander is the key to the single battle.

The counterinsurgent's "deep fight" then is more likely to have an extended horizon in time rather than space and consist of *shaping* actions to create or preserve conditions that allow the success of *decisive* actions in the "close fight." As such, deep operations at the MEF level in irregular warfare may include border security actions to limit enemy freedom of movement, population and resource control measures, tribal and key leader engagement, indigenous force generation and support, and infrastructure development. The close fight—traditionally characterized as a fire and maneuver affair—may in fact be more *progressive* and population oriented (e.g., tactical task of "protect") than *decisive* and enemy focused (e.g., tactical task of "destroy"). Thus the close fight may include civil-military activities performed by the Marine logistics group or the civil affairs group, such as the establishment of facilities for vocational training, improved services for the local population, or introduction of new economic and employment opportunities. Finally, "rear" actions enable and sustain shaping and decisive operations by the MAGTF through such diverse means as combat service support, forward operating base security, movement control, and detention operations.

IPB: Paintbrush Meets Canvas

Since battlespace could theoretically include almost anything outside the MAGTF, IPB offers a process to help narrow the commander's focus to those aspects of the battlespace most essential for mission analysis and command decisionmaking. Surprising for its importance and value to military planning and decisionmaking, the four steps of the IPB process are not widely known, which contributes directly to the lack of understanding of battlespace. The problem stems in part because 12 years ago the IPB process changed drastically with the publication of the revised *FM 34–*

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex D

FEATURE

130/Marine Corps Reference Publication 2–12A, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, (followed 6 years later by *JP 2–01.3*). IPB's shift from the physical battlefield to the conceptual battlespace went largely unnoticed while the differences between the old and new four-step processes had profound implications. (See Figure 2.)

Before IPB doctrine was revised in 1994, it was designed to support U.S. Army AirLand Battle doctrine and was primarily focused on offensive, conventional operations on a linear battlefield. In effect, early IPB became associated with a checklist of product-intensive procedures that served to graphically display terrain and weather effects and enemy templates. The physical focus of IPB continues to dominate long after the process was revised. Even the contemporary and widely known term "commander's battlespace area evaluation" was named for the first step of the pre-1994 IPB process—battlefield area evaluation. The joint doctrine published in 2000 took a far more expansive and interactive view of the environment. Most importantly, it offered a straightforward and comprehensive approach to align analyses of the most essential environmental/circumstantial conditions with the planning and decisionmaking process. The implications of the shift appear to have been overlooked in many intelligence and operational planning circles. While the revised IPB process continues to support and interact with the intelligence, planning, and decisionmaking cycles in four continuous phases, the inclusion of nongeographic, intangible characteristics is apparent. Steps one and two focus outside the organization to identify, categorize, and define *everything that matters* to the commander, as well as address their effects (outcomes) as the friendly force *and* the adversary interact with the environment and vice versa. Steps three and four focus on the adversary within the context established by the previous step. Here we seek to understand the adversary's structures, functions, capabilities, limitations, vulnerabilities and, ultimately, their intentions based on what the environment affords. As stated, however, what should have been a watershed doctrinal event for intelligence and operations planners—and by extension commanders—went largely unnoticed. Even long after this "new" process was introduced, most IPB efforts gloss over step one (define the battlespace), overlook step two (describe battlespace effects), and jump prematurely into the enemy-focused step three (evaluate the adversary).

Conclusion

In his handwritten memoirs, British Field Marshall Sir Bernard Montgomery described his "critical and intolerant" state of mind as a young officer in 1918 having emerged from 4 years of active field service in the Great War with "no theoretical study as a background to that experience." He had learned to fight and function against modern, industrialized European opponents but recognized his limited ability to place his rich and varied experiences in context to build "trained common sense" for a future war.[5] Conversely today, many Marine officers are experiencing intense difficulty aligning their operational experiences with their doctrinal upbringing within a larger MAGTF context appropriate to a COIN. As a result, many young officers with service in Iraq see practical experience as the only worthwhile teacher. The successful counterinsurgent depends on many tools, but consistency and steadfastness in their purpose and use vertically and horizontally are the fuels of synergy. The single battle begins with a holistic view of the three components of battlespace and depends heavily on a MAGTF staff's deeper understanding of the IPB process. From the planning process through execution, the single battle must be vigorously preserved by the commander. At the MEF level, top-down planning by a disciplined staff will harness the tremendous planning capacity of the MEF (with a future operations section under the G–3 (current operations) and the G–5 (plans), the MEF's planning horizon is unrivaled by any MSC) in order to constantly identify, present, and plan future MSC missions and anticipate the next likely MEF mission. For its part, the MEF G–3 has a vital role in achieving the single battle by identifying complex battlespace relationships in order to understand how events and actions in one AO can affect others. Furthermore, current operations must not only follow, coordinate, and/or direct daily tactical operations but be predisposed to frame its analysis across an AO-wide stage for what comes next and focus all MEF subordinate commands accordingly.

Finally, at each command level, the orders development process must include "crosswalks" to ensure every task and purpose is nested with higher and linked to adjacent commands. Enduring success in irregular warfare will not allow as many different battles as we have battalions on the ground. The single battle concept can and should be better and more widely understood, but it can never be appreciated by all until it is practiced by all commanders and their staffs.

Notes

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3. Thomas, Maj Troy, USAF, "Beneath the Surface: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace for Counterterrorism," Center for Strategic Intelligence Research, Washington, DC, 2004, p. 45.

4. *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, Marine Corps Operations*, Department of the Navy, Washington, DC, September 2001, p. 6–19.

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USMC

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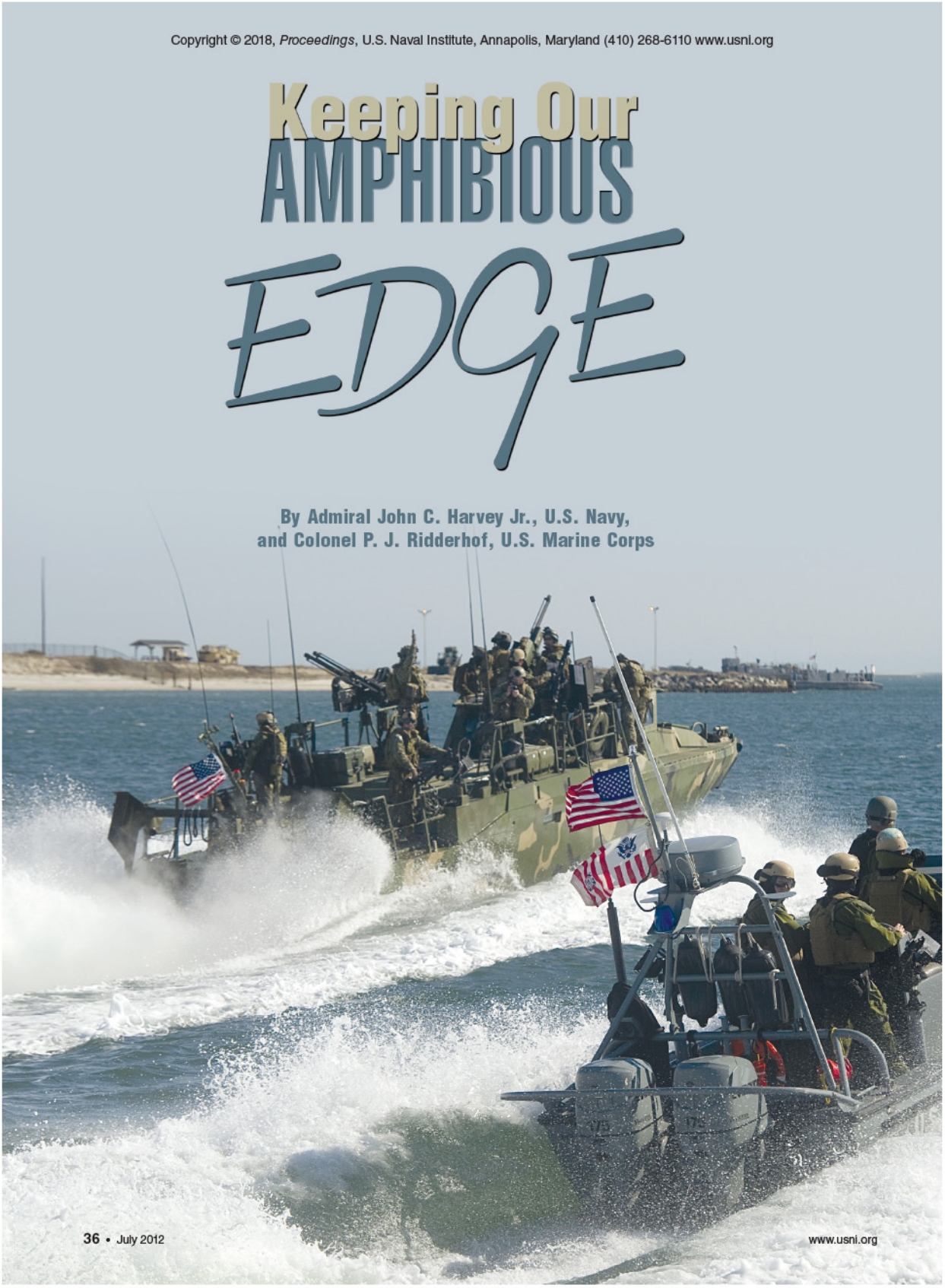
How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex E

Keeping Our AMPHIBIOUS EDGE

By Admiral John C. Harvey Jr., U.S. Navy,
and Colonel P. J. Ridderhof, U.S. Marine Corps



How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex E

Who's responsible for maintaining the critical sea-to-shore-and-back capability? The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, that's who.

In March, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command completed their Exercise Bold Alligator 2012 (BA12), the largest amphibious exercise in the past decade. A mix of live and simulated forces, the exercise followed Bold Alligator 2011, executed in December 2010, which was conducted wholly with simulated forces. The commands' staffs are now crafting an extended campaign plan to incorporate Bold Alligator exercises into annual operations and training of East Coast naval forces. So why are these exercises important, and what challenges lie ahead?

The Requirement

Amphibious capability has become associated primarily with assaulting defended beaches and seizing lodgments for land campaigns. However, such forces provide much broader capability to the nation than that narrow mission profile. Stripped to its essence, an amphibious capability places an intact, ready-to-operate landing force ashore and supports it from the sea to accomplish the mission.

A simple assessment of U.S. global interests and geographic position, set against a backdrop of continuing instability in the world, clearly points to the need for a U.S. amphibious capability so described. We have been fortunate to have ready access to friendly ports for our major operations over the past decades. This will not necessarily, nor even likely, be the case in the future. We may be denied these ports not only based on overt hostile action, but also by political decision, natural disaster, or lack of infrastructure. Amphibious capability brings a greater guarantee of access to a foreign shore at the time and place of our choosing.

An amphibious operation becomes a forcible-entry capability when the environment is either hostile or potentially hostile. Since the end of the Cold War, the threat was ashore. However, today's and tomorrow's adversaries have capabilities that extend the threat out to sea. Whether it is against conventional or irregular forces, or a combination of both—what many describe as a hybrid threat—an amphibious forcible-entry capability must be able to succeed in a hostile air-land-sea environment.

Amphibious capability is not a one-way operation from sea to shore. Amphibious forces can adjust from sea to shore and back again, depending on logistical or political factors. They can also rapidly withdraw the landing force from one point and make use of the inherent mobility afforded naval forces to move and strike elsewhere. An amphibious attack is not only an axis of attack inland, but it can operate and dominate laterally along an extended littoral area.

This has been a key characteristic of U.S. military power, from its initial ad hoc forms in the Barbary Wars, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War; through being the primary U.S. operational capability of World War II, all the way to the multitude of crisis-response actions of today. The nation will continue to need amphibious capability in the future, and it is the U.S. Navy's and Marine Corps' responsibility to provide it.

The Challenge: Beyond the ARG-MEU

Belying recent chatter that the Marines and Navy are returning to their amphibious roots after a decade of war on land, we have never stopped preparing and deploying amphibious forces over the past ten years. There is always an Amphibious Ready Group–Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG-MEU), trained and ready, afloat somewhere on the oceans. The ARG-MEU has proved its worth in countless crises. The naval services have nurtured this amphibious cutlass to a sharp and lethal edge. It has served us well in the past and will do so in the future.

U.S. NAVY (R. BRUNSON)

On 1 February in North Carolina's intracoastal waterway, U.S. Coast Guard transportable port-security boats attached to Port Security Unit 308 joined riverine command boats from Riverine Squadron 2 to practice maneuvers as part of Exercise Bold Alligator 2012. Because of the emphasis placed on maintaining U.S. amphib capability, the authors assure that the these exercises will be incorporated "into annual operations and training of East Coast naval forces."

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex E

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

In "The Battle for Fox Green Beach, D-Day Normandy," combat artist Dwight Shepler depicted the drama unfolding for U.S. forces in the fight for a stretch of the Omaha beachhead. The ability of U.S. forces to "operate and dominate laterally along an extended littoral area," the authors note, "has been a key characteristic of U.S. military power" throughout its history, including—perhaps especially—key battles in World War II.

However, the continued excellence of the ARG-MEU program does not by itself mean that the United States has an effective amphibious capability for the full range of operations. The ARG-MEU excels at forward presence, theater-security cooperation, and crisis response, but it is not sufficient for all missions, or for taking on a competent adversary of significant size and strength. The Navy and Marine Corps must provide combatant commanders with workable doctrine and trained forces to execute amphibious operations, including forcible-entry operations, larger than the ARG-MEU.

To develop this effective amphibious capability, the naval services must think and train beyond the ARG-MEU. As we have found in both 2011 and 2012, executing a large amphibious operation is not only quantitatively bigger, it is qualitatively different from an ARG-MEU operation. Lessons learned from the latter may not be relevant; some may actually be counterproductive. We must address a number of challenges in order to achieve expanded amphibious capability.

How to Expand Amphibious Capability

We must tactically integrate amphibious, sea-control, and strike capabilities. A common belief is that the air-and-sea superiority battle must be completely fought and won before ever contemplating an amphibious assault. However, that has not been the historical pattern. While the amphibious attacker has usually set the local conditions for an assault, the defender has normally not made his strongest challenge to air and sea superiority until *after* the actual initiation of the operation. Think of the great air and sea battles—around Guadalcanal in 1942–3, the Philippine Sea in June 1944, Leyte Gulf in October 1944, the kamikaze assaults off Okinawa in April-May 1945, and the Battle of San Carlos Sound in the 1982 Falklands campaign. In each case, the great battle for air-sea superiority around the beaches did not begin until after the amphibious force was committed to the landing area.

Before the amphibious operation commences, the attacking naval force has the natural advantage of mobility and concealment afforded by open sea. Knowing this, the defender has little incentive to uncover his weapons and sensors to risk them in a long-range strike duel. Once the assault begins, however, the amphibious task force and supporting fleet elements are constrained to a relatively defined littoral area to support the landing force. This gives the defender a much easier detection problem to solve and a host of lucrative targets in the form of the amphibious ships.

The intertwined dynamic of the air/sea-superiority fight and the amphibious assault makes it critical that these operations are tactically integrated. Operating ARG-MEUs and Carrier Strike Groups (CSGs) in the same vicinity has not provided us the experience or insight on how to closely align amphibious, sea-control, and strike operations. In fact, we have developed doctrines and operating practices that do not mesh with one another. If Bold Alligator 2012 is any indicator, we have work to do to ensure that a CSG, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG), and Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) can effectively integrate their operations in a maritime environment.

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex E

'Ship-to-Shore'

We must know how to embark and employ a larger Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) across more ships. While there are variations in each deployment, ARG-MEUs all go out with a standardized embarkation of the Marine elements. More amphibious ships and a larger MAGTF mean more capability and more options, but these advantages will only be realized if we rediscover the art of combat embarkation and amphibious ship-to-shore tactical employment. This includes all elements of the MAGTF, from aviation coordinating across multiple decks to an infantry battalion launching from multiple well-decks to land in a single wave on a single beach. Parts of the MAGTF, especially aviation, may be based ashore within range of the amphibious operation, further enhancing capability, but complicating the situation. We must break out of the ARG-MEU mold to explore the possibilities and fully take advantage of the flexibility and combat power of a larger MAGTF.

We must be able to command and control a large Amphibious Task Force (ATF). A large ATF is not simply a collection of three-ship ARGs. There is no single template for how an ESG commander employs his subordinate ships, Amphibious Squadron Command elements, and other Navy assets. Amphibious doctrine calls for very centralized control under the commander ATF in the form of a primary control officer for surface movement and a tactical air officer for all air operations. We have very little recent practical experience in knowing whether or how this doctrine will work in large task forces in light of new capabilities as well as the pervasive influence of composite warfare doctrine in the force.

We must be able to embark and employ larger command elements. A large amphibious force requires more command elements. From where do they embark and operate? Do they all need to embark? The requirements levied by these command-and-control nodes can come at a cost to combat capability of the force as well as stressing already limited bandwidth available at sea.

We must be able to simultaneously deploy, aggregate, and operate the force. A large amphibious force will not be embarked and sail from a single port, or even a single coast. Deployed ARG-MEUs and CSGs will be the first naval forces on-scene and will be task-organized to begin operating immediately. Coordinating embarkation and deployment of Continental U.S.–based forces with aggregation and initial shaping operations in-theater will be a daunting challenge for fleets and tactical amphibious command elements. Our approach to large-scale amphibious operations must account for how our amphibious forces will realistically concentrate from a dispersed strategic posture.

Role of the Military Sealift Command

We must leverage Military Sealift Command (MSC) capabilities. Current practice divides the landing force into an assault echelon on amphibious shipping and an assault follow-on echelon on MSC and other craft. We need to consider whether these categories and their impact on our thinking still make sense. BA12 featured MSC ships closing rapidly to provide support and additional MAGTF elements, even while the assault echelon was still operating from the amphibious ships. MSC ships are by no means amphibious vessels, but further integrating MSC shipping into the amphibious operation, with proper shaping and risk assessment, may provide a more powerful assault-echelon punch than can be mustered by amphibious ships alone.

We must integrate Navy expeditionary capabilities. The classic rationale for an amphibious operation is to secure a port and/or airfield complex for the introduction of follow-on forces. Another look at the historical record indicates that physically securing a port has not been as much an issue as have the challenges in getting that port operating. We only need to think of Naples in 1943, Cherbourg in 1944, and Port-au-Prince in 2010 to see the significant impact of damaged ports to sustaining operations ashore. The capabilities to execute port opening, operations, and security, or logistics over the shore may need to be prioritized for embarkation and offloading—even to the degree of having these capabilities

U.S. NAVY (P. SANTINI)

Marines from the 4th Amphibious Assault Battalion debark from the Military Sealift Command roll on/roll off ship SS *PFC Eugene A. Obregon* (T-AK-3006) during Exercise Bold Alligator 2012 on 7 February in the Atlantic Ocean. The authors assert that "further integrating MSC shipping into the amphibious operation, with proper shaping and risk assessment, may provide a more powerful assault-echelon punch than can be mustered by amphibious ships alone."

How to Fight and Win the Single Naval Battle: Operation WATCHTOWER's Relevance Today

Annex E

as part of the assault echelon.

We must be able to understand and tie the amphibious operation into the broader joint campaign. On the far end of the amphibious operation, the landing always serves a further purpose. When that purpose is a lodgment ashore to allow the introduction of a larger joint force, then the plans and requirements of that joint force will drive the amphibious operation. Left to our own devices, the naval services will tend toward courses of action that maximize the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of the amphibious force. However, the needs of the campaign, and possibly the planned concept of operations for a land component, may drive the naval force to "suboptimize" the conditions for its amphibious phase to better support the overall campaign. The Inchon landing during the Korean War is the best example: General Douglas MacArthur's need for the assault to occur in close proximity to Seoul overrode Navy and Marine Corps objections concerning the suitability of the area for amphibious operations.

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Four tank landing ships unload men and equipment at low tide on Inchon's Red Beach one day after the initial landings there in September 1950 during the Korean War. The authors see this landing as a perfect example of how amphibious operators need to be flexible.

We must be able to integrate Special Operations Forces. Amphibious operations rely heavily on good intelligence and shaping of the operating environment. Many of the required capabilities to accomplish these tasks now reside in U.S. Special Operations Command forces.

The Answer: Single Naval Battle and Aggressive Action

As the list here demonstrates, large amphibious operations are not the domain of just the "Gator Navy" and the Marines. We will need to apply CSGs, submarines, patrol aircraft, mine warfare, Navy expeditionary forces, as well as the amphibious ships, landing craft, beachmasters, and the entire inventory of MAGTF capabilities to address land-air-sea threats and accomplish the amphibious mission. In order to integrate these units into coherent operating forces, we need a common approach across the naval services. "Single naval battle" is a term that has recently emerged from the deliberations of the Marine Corps' Amphibious Capabilities Working Group. Single naval battle is not an operating concept or a separate doctrine. It is a framework, or lens, for thinking, planning, and executing naval operations: *Everything* that occurs in the maritime battlespace affects *everything else* in that battlespace—so *every* aspect of Navy and Marine Corps doctrine and operations must take into account the impact *across the whole naval force*. This framework will facilitate developing our ideas and capabilities with integration foremost in mind.

However critical single naval battle is to bringing naval thinking into coherency, it is only a first step. To address the challenges itemized in this article requires active experimentation and training. U.S. Fleet Forces and Marine Forces Command are taking action to this end by crafting a multiyear campaign to develop and train to our capability of executing large-scale amphibious operations. This campaign will get after the "how" of large amphibious operations, and in the process ensure our forces are trained and ready.

The Combined/Joint Maritime Component Command with the Maritime Operations Center provides an actual naval command-and-control tool with which to apply single naval battle approaches in wargaming and exercises. In BA12, U.S. Fleet Forces and Marine Forces Command employed an inherently naval Combined Force Maritime Component Command (CFMCC), with equal Navy and Marine Corps staff representation, to pursue the single naval battle at the tactical and operational level of war. The CFMCC will be a centerpiece of the campaign plan.

'Premier Annual Event'

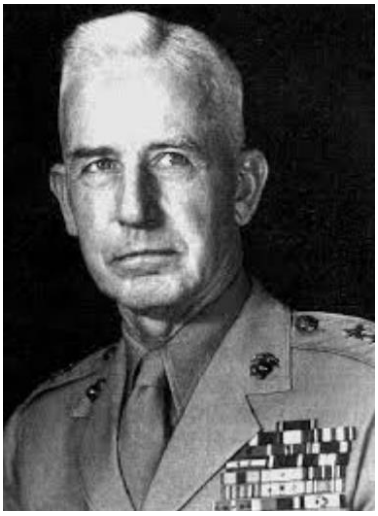
The Bold Alligator exercise will be the premier annual event of this campaign. However, the campaign will not solely be an exercise series. It will feature experiments, professional military education, leadership seminars, and other events to truly develop and sustain this capability. This effort on the East Coast is part of a larger Navy and Marine Corps effort to revitalize the full range of our naval capabilities.

The naval services have a great deal of work to do to deliver the amphibious capability that our nation expects of us. There will always be capacity and resource limitations, and in an era of declining budgets, the naval services will not be able to field and maintain all the forces we desire. However, the challenges laid out are primarily those of doctrine, training, and education. If we fail to understand how we should execute these operations, and fail to build a generation of sailors and Marines who have been trained to do so, we will also fail in execution, regardless of whether we have more resources or not.

Admiral Harvey has commanded U.S. Fleet Forces since July 2009. He is a 1973 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and is a nuclear-qualified surface-warfare officer.

Colonel Ridderhof is an infantry officer and has been the Fleet Marine Officer at U.S. Fleet Forces Command since 2010.

Appendix 1:
Case Study User's Guide



Case Study User's Guide

"We need every Marine and Sailor to seek creative solutions to today's and tomorrow's complex problems…. to ensuring we can Innovate, Adapt, and Win!" ***Marine Operating Concept***

1. Purpose: Provide unit leaders with information on how to lead small group case studies.

2. Intent:

a. Purpose: The purpose of case studies is to use historical scenarios as an analytical guide for: 1) professional discussion and debate in pursuit of solutions to current real-world problems and leadership challenges; and 2) developing the critical thinking and creative decision-making abilities of participants. Case studies are also an effective way to rehearse the practical application of leadership and ethical principles (reps and sets), to demonstrate the value of diversity in decision-making, to connect Marines with their legacy of character and competence in a meaningful way, and to strengthen team cohesion.

b. Methodology:

(1) Case studies are conducted in a Socratic, student-centered learning environment where the students take the lead in the discovery process, guided by the instructor. Rather than serving as a lecturing "sage on the stage," the instructor functions as a facilitator, moderator, devil's advocate, and fellow-student who guides discussion with thought provoking questions intended to draw out key themes and principles and to exploit teachable moments that emerge from the dynamic interaction. Unlike lectures, case study discussions unfold without a detailed script or pre-determined outcomes -- the aim is to teach participants how to think rather than what to think.

(2) Successful case study discussions rely heavily on both preparation and spontaneity. A precondition for a successful case study is all participants have thoroughly studied and analyzed the associated historic narrative, supporting materials, and assignment questions and are prepared to challenge the group with their unique experienced-based insights. Additionally, the instructor must be prepared to stimulate thought-provoking discussion through targeted, thematic, open-ended questions; all-hands prompting; cold-calls; follow-ups; and summations. Thorough preparation and effective moderation in an environment of mutual respect set the conditions for a rich free-exchange of ideas and unconstrained learning.

(3) Effective case study leaders guide students to discover unchanging principles applicable to current challenges, alternatives to conventional wisdom, and new approaches to problem solving across key themes and focus areas relevant to the Marine Corps. The following are examples of pertinent interest areas which should emerge naturally from case narratives and provide direction for continued discussion and debate:

(a) Warfighting Themes

- Nature/Character of Warfare
- Command and Leadership
- Strategic and Military Culture
- Learning and Adaptation
- Maneuver Warfare
- Geography
- Sustainment
- Unity of Effort

(b) Advance to Contact -- Five Vital Areas

- People
- Readiness
- Training/Simulation/Experimentation
- Integration with the Naval and Joint Force
- Modernization and Technology

(c) Marine Operating Concept – Five Critical Tasks

- Integrate the Naval force to fight at and from the sea
- Evolve the MAGTF
- Operate with resilience in a contested-network environment
- Enhance our ability to maneuver
- Exploit the competence of the individual Marine

c. Desired Outcomes: Case studies are intended to achieve the following goals:

(1) Develop student skills in critical thinking, creative problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and leadership.

(2) Involve more personnel in the pursuit of solutions to current operational and leadership challenges.

(3) Provide personnel with an effective way to rehearse the practical application of leadership and ethical principles (reps and sets)

(4) Demonstrate the value of diversity in decision-making.

(5) Educate Marines on the nature of war and the principles of warfighting.

(6) Encourage students to have more responsibility for their learning, and promote skills, practices, and disciplines that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving.

(7) Demonstrate an effective method of teaching that can be replicated by participants with future students.

(8) Connect Marines with their legacy of character and competence in a meaningful way.

(9) Strengthen team cohesion.

3. Case Study Preparation.

a. Student Responsibilities: The primary responsibility of students preparing for a case study class is to thoroughly study and analyze the associated historic narrative, supporting materials, and assignment questions. The goal of preparation is not simply to be prepared to regurgitate facts and chronologies but rather to – understand the "big picture" as well as the game-changing "little details"; identify key themes and principles as well as their applicability to current challenges; identify key causal relationships in their complexity; identify the primary problems and dilemmas faced by protagonists; and identify key decision makers, factors which influenced their decision-making calculus, consequences of their decisions, and alternative approaches to their decisions and actions. Drawing from their personal knowledge and experiences, students should prepare to contribute insightfully and creatively to the group learning environment. If possible students should seek opportunities to discuss the materials with other students before the case study session.

b. Case Study Leader Responsibilities: In preparing for the discussion, the leader must become fully conversant with the facts of the case, and should conduct the same analysis he/she expects the group to engage in. Beyond that basic requirement, the leader must prepare both content and process, including a clear set of teaching/learning objectives, a call list, a board plan, an opening question, discussion probes, transitions, follow-up questions, and closing comments. The leader must also prepare the discussion venue – audio/visual requirements, seating arrangement/assignments, supplemental materials, etc. Thorough preparation includes learning about the backgrounds of the students (ideally a small group) in order to develop and informed call plan that maximized the richness of their diverse experiences. Case study leaders should be prepared to start and end the session on time while ensuring all-hands participation and adequate time to summarize group outcomes. Finally, case study leaders should have a plan to collect and share post-event critiques.

4. Case Study Execution:

a. Student Responsibilities: Students should be ready to start on time and to positively contribute to the learning environment, understanding that there are no passive observers in case study sessions. Effective participation balances active, analytical listening with constructive comments, critique, and debate that draws out and expand upon major learning points. Students must be ready to take intellectual risks and to challenge status quo and group think, while remaining receptive to differing viewpoints and while maintaining mutual respect among participants. Critical thinking must never devolve into cynical thinking, and animated discussions must never become aggravated discussions.

b. Case Study Leader Responsibilities: The case study leader (CSL) sets the stage by introducing the material, establishing the learning objectives, explaining the rules of engagement, and starting the discussion pasture. The case study leader actively manages class flow and structure, while responding flexibly to student comments. The CSL poses challenging questions, cold/warm calls, and follow-ups to promote high quality class discussion; stimulates thoughtful student-to-student discussion and encourages participation from all students; draws on student

background information in guiding the class discussion; provides closure to discussion segments with appropriate transitions; and finally, concludes the session with appropriate synthesis, takeaways, and recommendations for further study and actions.

5. Keys to Success. The quality of a case study session is determined by the quality of the questions asked and answers given. Harvard Business School Professor C. Roland Christensen described case method teaching as "the art of asking the right question, of the right student, at the right time—and in the right way."

> The "right" questions promote learning and discovery, pique student interest, and yield dynamic discussions. Questions themselves cannot exist in isolation, but instead form part of the basic triad of questioning, listening, and responding. Asking a question entails active listening and a thoughtful response—often in the form of another question or follow-up probe. Good questions take into account the specific audience (What are the students' needs, interests, and abilities?), the pedagogical goals of the class (What are the key learning objectives? Why should students care?), and the content and class plan (Which case features are relevant, surprising, confusing, etc.? How is the material sequenced?). Whether it calls for analysis, encourages debate, or solicits recommendations for action, a question is most effective when it fits the needs of a specific class context and helps guide students individually and collectively towards discovery and learning.[1]

The below sample questions (a slightly modified list from Harvard Business School) are provided for consideration.[2] These sample questions are organized into four main categories, which mirror the four major ways in which a discussion leader uses questions:

a. Starting a discussion: Framing students' approach to the case study. At the beginning of case discussions, questions involving assessment, diagnosis, or recommendation/action tend to be more effective for stimulating learning than purely descriptive questions such as "What is the situation?" or "What are the issues?"

(1) Assessment:

"How serious is the situation?
"How successful is this [protagonist]?"
"How attractive is the opportunity under consideration?"
"What's at stake here?"

(2) Diagnosis:

"What is the most significant problem/challenge faced by the [protagonist]?"
"Who or what is [responsible/to blame] for the crisis faced by the [protagonist]?"
"Why has the [protagonist] performed so well/poorly?

[1] "Questions for Class Discussions", C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School

[2] Ibid. Note: The list of questions provided, along with their explanations, are only slightly modified from the above reference, though detailed quoting and footnoting has been omitted to avoid confusion to the reader.

"As [the case protagonist], what keeps you up at night? What are you most worried about?"

(3) Recommendation/Action:

"Which of the [three] options presented in the case would you pursue?
"What would you recommend to the [protagonist]?
"What would be your plan of action?

b. Following up: Responding to student comments by probing for more depth (drilling down), opening up the discussion to more participants (moving laterally), or asking for generalization/reflection/synthesis (linking up). Case study leaders should consider that, while follow-ups are necessary to guide the discussion and challenge students, excessive interventions can lead to instructor-focused, hub-and-spoke exchanges. Greater depth of analysis can be achieved through general probes and questions exploring underlying assumptions and boundary conditions.

(1) General probes:

"Why?"
"Could you say a little more about that?"
"Could you walk us through your logic/thought process?"
"What leads you to that conclusion?"
"How did you come up with that estimate?
"Do we have any evidence to support that?"
"How did you interpret that exhibit/quote/data/information?"
"Why is that important?"
"What are the implications?"

(2) Underlying assumptions and boundary conditions:

"What indicators/measures/criteria are you using to support your analysis?
"What are you assuming with respect to [x, y, z]?
"Do you have any concerns? How might they be addressed?"
"If we assume [x] instead of [y], does that change your conclusion/recommendation?"
"What would it take for you to change your conclusion/recommendation?"
"Was the outcome inevitable?" "Could it have been prevented?"
"To what extent was the [protagonist] just lucky?"
"Is that consistent with [another student's earlier point]?"
"How does this compare with what we discussed/concluded previously?"

(3) To open the discussion to other students: Although the instructor may call on another student without responding at all to the previous comment, it is often helpful to provide some guidance for the subsequent contributor. It is particularly useful to indicate whether the next student should respond directly to the previous comment or not.

(a) The questions may be prefaced by framing statements such as:

"Let's stick with this"
"[Student X] is arguing [y]."

"Any reactions?"
"What about that?" "What do you think?" "Is that right?" "Any concerns?" "Do you buy that?" "Any questions for [previous student]?"
"Who would like to build on [previous student]'s point?"
"Does everyone agree?"
"Does anyone see it differently?"
"Can someone help us [work through this analysis, resolve this confusion]?"
"Can anyone address [student x]'s concern?"

(b) Broadening the discussion:
"Other perspectives?"
"Are we missing anything?"
"Are there other issues we should consider?"
"Who can reconcile these different interpretations/conclusions/points of view?"

(4) To encourage generalization, reflection, or synthesis: Case study leaders can help students integrate new concepts and internalize takeaways by challenging them to link key learnings to broader leadership issues or experiences from their own lives:
"What do you take away from today's discussion/case?"
"What's the moral of this story?"
"Why should leaders care about these issues?"
"In what other situations would the lessons/principles of today's case apply?"
"Has anyone confronted a similar challenge in their own work experience?"

c. Transitioning: Bridging the current situation with the next discussion block, which may include checking for student comprehension before moving on. Transitions are often preceded by two types of questions: 1) comprehension-checking questions that invite questions or final thoughts, and 2) framing questions that link the current situation to the new one.
"Have we missed anything important?"
"Any final comments before we move on?"
"Before we get into [x], are there any questions?"
"Is everyone comfortable moving on to […]?"
"Now that we've established [x], what about [y]?
"In light of our discussion of [x], what should we do about [y]?"
"What are the implications of [x]?
"So we're clear on [x]—shall we move on to [y]?
"Before getting into the details, how do we think about how we should approach the analysis?"

d. Handling special challenges: There are a variety of student contributions that can create challenges for discussion leadership. Examples include tangential, non-sequitur, long, complex, and/or confusing comments. Instructors also may find it difficult to know how best to respond to incorrect answers or the use of offensive or inappropriate language by a student. In many of these instances, it may be difficult to redirect or refocus the comment without interrupting the student. To capture the student's attention and reduce the likelihood of causing offense or embarrassment, it is helpful to begin the response by making eye contact, saying the

student's name, and offering a neutral-to-complimentary observation such as –

"That's an interesting perspective,"

"You're raising some important issues,"

"I hear you saying that [. . .]."

(1) Tangential or non-sequitur comments:

"How does that relate to what [previous student] was saying?"

"Let's hold off on that for the moment. Can we first resolve the [issue/debate] on the table?"

"We'll get to that a little later in the discussion. Let's stay with [previous student]'s question."

"Let's park that [on the side board], and I'll look for you when we get to [later discussion topic]"

(2) For esoteric contributions:

"Why don't we take that off-line."

(3) Long, rambling comments:

"You're raising a number of issues. Let's focus on [x]."

"It sounds like you're concerned about [x]. Let's explore that."

"So you basically disagree with [the previous student] because [x, y]. [To previous student]: would you like to respond?"

"I hear you saying [x]. Does everyone agree?"

"What's the headline?"

(4) Complex or confusing comments:

"Let's slow this down for a minute."

"Let's take it one step at a time."

"How would you explain that to someone unfamiliar with technical language?"

"Let's keep it simple."

"Before digging into the numbers/details, let's make sure we understand the basic intuition."

"You mention [x]. I'm not sure everyone is familiar with that concept. Could you clarify?"

"I just want to make sure I understand your argument. You're saying [. . .]?"

(5) Incorrect answers: Incorrect answers might stem from a lack of preparation, legitimate confusion, or other causes, such as ambiguous questions or lack of clear direction. For factually incorrect comments containing minor inaccuracies not central to the discussion, it is often appropriate for the instructor to respond with a gentle correction. Faulty or incomplete analysis can serve as a learning opportunity for the student and the class. Ideally, the instructor will 1) not abandon the student, 2) not confuse other students by letting incorrect answers pass unchallenged, and 3) address the reason for the misperception, not just the misperception itself. When possible, the instructor should guide the student or his/her classmates to correct the error.

"Where in the case did you find that?"

"Could you walk us through how you came up with that?"

"Did anyone come up with a different answer?" "Let's see if we can reconcile these different results."

"This is a particularly complex analysis. Let's make sure the basic assumptions are clear."

(6) Offensive or inappropriate language:

"Would you like to take another shot at/rephrase that?"

"Hold on just a second. Do you want to try that again?"

"In less colorful language?"

6. Conclusion: Past is prologue – history sets the context for the present. Case studies are a highly effective and enjoyable way to learn lessons from the past and apply them to future current and future challenges. Case studies provide valuable reps and sets for the development of critical thinking and creative decision-making abilities, while promoting teambuilding and collaborative problem-solving. Importantly, effective case studies require rigorous preparation and pre-work by all participants. Students must come fully prepared to positively contribute to a dynamic group learning environment through thought provoking commentary, active listening, real-time analysis, and constructive discussion and debate. Case study leaders must be prepared stimulate and sustain fruitful discussion and debate through questioning, while managing the discussion through the artful balance of structure and flexibility. While adroit case study leaders know how to bring a case study session to a logical conclusion, a successful case study should leave participants with a sense that the discussion has only just begun, and everyone should walk away with heightened interest in autonomous learning and problem-solving.

Officers are expected to have a solid foundation in military theory and a knowledge of military history and the timeless lessons to be gained from it. ***MCDP 1***

Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb poses with Major General A. A. Vandegrift, Major General Roy C. Geiger, and their commanders and staff on Guadalcanal.