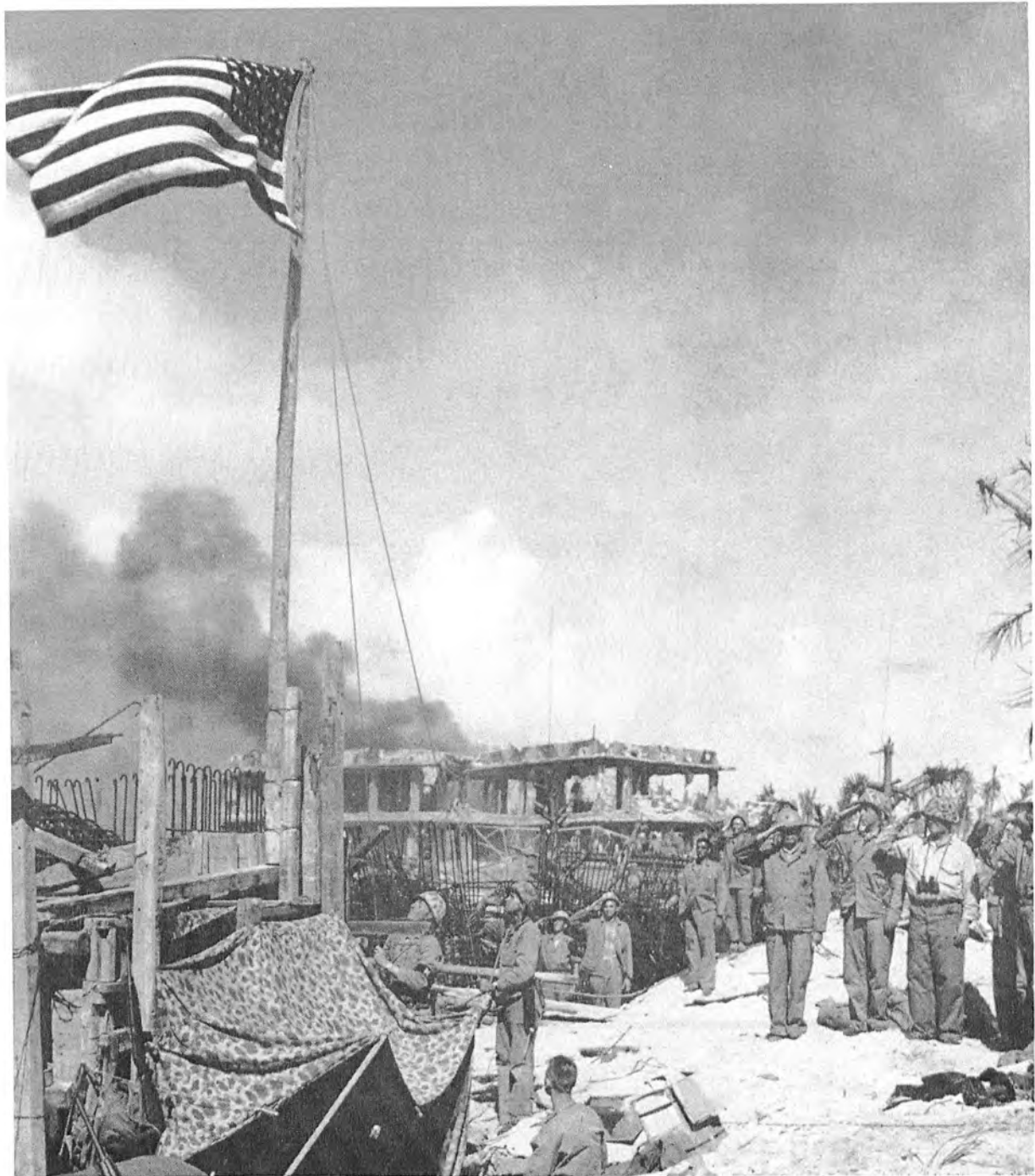


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MARINES OF THE 4TH DIVISION halt momentarily during mopping-up activities following the seizure of Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll to witness the official flag raising over the smoking ruins of Japanese defenses. Major General Harry Schmidt (in pith helmet) and his staff are standing to the right while in the background is the remains of a three-story concrete block-house knocked out by the terrific bombardment by land, sea, and air forces. In the foreground, the camouflaged shelter half shields the dug-in command post.



THE MARSHALLS:

INCREASING THE TEMPO



HISTORICAL BRANCH

G-3 DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

U. S. MARINE CORPS

Lt. Col. Robert D. Heint, Jr., USMC

Lt. Col. John A. Crown, USMC

1954



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COVER PICTURE: MARINES in an early wave jump from their LVT onto Namur's sandy beach.



Foreword

As 1943 drew to a close, Marines had retaken Tarawa and portions of the Solomons from the Japanese invader, but the formidable enemy bases studding the vast Pacific, bases which had been built during the preceding 25 years, were as yet untouched by our amphibious forces.

In early 1944 the first penetration of this prewar enemy territory was accomplished with the assault and occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls in the Marshall Islands. These were quickly followed by the seizure of Eniwetok Atoll. The major role in these over-all operations was undertaken by Marine units working in close coordination with elements of the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard. That they acquitted themselves with distinction is reflected in the rapidity with which they accomplished their missions.

Operations in the Marshall Islands clearly indicated that Japanese bases in the Central Pacific could be by-passed. The way was now open for the neutralization of Truk and the assault on the Marianas, the next great step in the drive toward Japan.

LEMUEL C. SHEPHERD, JR.
GENERAL, U. S. MARINE CORPS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



Preface

THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO is the fourteenth in a series of operational monographs prepared by the Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps. The purpose of these monographs is to afford both the casual reader and the military student an accurate and complete account of the operations in which Marine units participated during World War II. When sufficient of these monographs have been brought to completion, they will be integrated into a final, definitive Operational History of the Marine Corps in World War II.

Army units participated in many phases of the operations in the Marshalls, but their activities are treated here in only sufficient detail to provide continuity and the proper perspective to the overall account. It is believed that Army agencies are better qualified to deal with strictly Army operations, and would prefer doing so.

Moreover, the account herein is principally concerned with Marine amphibious operations between the inclusive dates of 31 January-6 April 1944. For that reason the activities of Marine aviation in the Marshalls cannot be given in detail.

Many participants in the Marshalls campaign have contributed to the preparation of this monograph, either by written comments on the preliminary drafts or by submitting to interview. To them grateful acknowledgment is made. The Office of Naval History, Department of the Navy, and the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, have been helpful both by making available their records and by furnishing comments. The extensive research required in preparing an accurate and complete account of the campaign was performed by Miss Laurene Bryant. Maps included herein were prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. Official Marine Corps photographs have been used to illustrate this monograph unless otherwise noted.

T. A. WORNHAM
BRIGADIER GENERAL, U. S. MARINE CORPS
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, G-3



Contents

	Page		Page
Foreword	V	Chapter VI. Kwajalein	100
Preface	VI	The First Day, <i>p.</i> 100	
Chapter I. "Anchored Aircraft Carriers"	1	The Second Day, <i>p.</i> 103	
The Marshalls Operation, <i>p.</i> 1		The Third Day, <i>p.</i> 105	
Some Geography and History, <i>p.</i> 1		The Fourth Day, <i>p.</i> 106	
ORANGE and "Z", <i>p.</i> 3		Chapter VII. Interval	108
"Thus We Get On With The War,"		Completing the Job, <i>p.</i> 108	
<i>p.</i> 5		All Islands Secured, <i>p.</i> 112	
Chapter II. Plans and Preparations	9	Summation, <i>p.</i> 114	
Over-all Plan, <i>p.</i> 9		Chapter VIII. Eniwetok	117
Who Will Command? <i>p.</i> 14		The Objective, <i>p.</i> 117	
Force and Corps Planning, <i>p.</i> 15		The Japanese, <i>p.</i> 118	
Preparing for Roi-Namur, <i>p.</i> 20		Planning for Eniwetok, <i>p.</i> 121	
Preparing for Kwajalein, <i>p.</i> 26		Preliminary Operations, <i>p.</i> 125	
Intelligence, <i>p.</i> 28		Loading Out, <i>p.</i> 127	
The Japanese, <i>p.</i> 29		CANNA, CAMELLIA and ZINNIA,	
Logistics, <i>p.</i> 35		<i>p.</i> 127	
Preliminary Operations, <i>p.</i> 37		FRAGILE Is Shattered, <i>p.</i> 130	
Mounting Out, <i>p.</i> 41		PRIVILEGE Is Taken, <i>p.</i> 136	
Chapter III. D-Day in the Marshalls	42	Sideshow, <i>p.</i> 143	
IVAN and JACOB, <i>p.</i> 42		Breaking HEARTSTRINGS, <i>p.</i> 143	
ALLEN, ALBERT and ABRAHAM,		CATCHPOLE Concluded, <i>p.</i> 150	
<i>p.</i> 46		Chapter IX. Mopping Up the Marshalls	152
CECIL and CARTER, <i>p.</i> 53		FLINTLOCK, JR. Begins, <i>p.</i> 152	
CARLOS and CARLSON, <i>p.</i> 55		Secure in the South, <i>p.</i> 154	
Majuro, Bloodless Conquest, <i>p.</i> 58		Mejit, Ailuk and Likiep, <i>p.</i> 156	
After Nightfall, <i>p.</i> 61		Finale in the North, <i>p.</i> 157	
Chapter IV. D-Plus 1, Roi	64	Last Stage, <i>p.</i> 158	
LST's, LVT's and Wet TCS-TBX, <i>p.</i> 64		Appendices	161
Landing on Red 3, <i>p.</i> 69		I. Bibliography, <i>p.</i> 161	
Landing on Red 2, <i>p.</i> 71		II. Chronology, <i>p.</i> 167	
Roi is Secured, <i>p.</i> 74		III. Casualties, <i>p.</i> 169	
Clean-up on Roi, <i>p.</i> 79		IV. Task Organization, <i>p.</i> 173	
Chapter V. Namur, D-Plus 1 and 2	81	V. Command and Staff, <i>p.</i> 175	
The 24th Gets Ashore, <i>p.</i> 81		Index	180
Green 2 to 0-1, <i>p.</i> 85			
Landing Team 3 Reaches 0-1, <i>p.</i> 87			
Warheads in the Blockhouse, <i>p.</i> 89			
North from SYCAMORE, <i>p.</i> 91			
Namur Secured, <i>p.</i> 95			



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER I

"Anchored Aircraft Carriers"

THE MARSHALLS OPERATION

Following the hard-won conquest of the Gilbert Islands in 1943, the rising tide of U. S. naval power surged over the Marshalls in the opening months of 1944.

Seizure of the Marshall Islands represented the coming of age of U. S. amphibious power. Tarawa, two months earlier, had demonstrated that amphibious assault could be forced home against opposition by resolute troops. Tarawa had also proven that the principles of amphibious assault, perfected in the 1920's and 1930's by the U. S. Marine Corps, were sound. It now remained to apply those battle-tested doctrines, plus the inevitable lessons learned from their initial application, in a larger arena, against stronger enemy forces, and on a scale of both attack and support previously never attempted.

SOME GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The Marshall Islands¹ consist of 32 coral atolls and 867 reefs which span ten degrees of latitude (14°30' N. to 4°30' N.) and 800 square miles of ocean. They lie in a double chain

along a common northwesterly axis some 15 degrees west of the International Date Line. The two chains are entitled Ratak (Sunrise) and Ralik (Sunset), in accordance with their east-west dispositions. Each atoll is an enclosed or semiclosed reef on which islands and islets of coral, sand and rock have been built by the action of surf, tide and wind. They range in size from pinpoint islets (Kili Island) to Kwajalein, largest atoll in the world.

The Marshalls operation was thus an inevitable sequel to that in the Gilberts, yet by no means the same. Moreover—and this meant much to the Marines, seamen, and soldiers of the Pacific forces in 1943—attack on the Marshalls marked our first penetration of enemy territory; up to this point, in the Solomons and the Gilberts, we had regained ground lost in 1942. Now, at length, the United States was making its first step forward into the islands which, by mandate at any rate, had been Japanese before 1941.

Approximately 2,000 such islands and islets comprise atolls of the group, never exceeding 20 feet in elevation. Most of the islands are fringed with coconut palms, breadfruit, or pandanus, but relatively few are large enough to have names, and even fewer are large enough to support native populations. The climate is steamy, with frequent rain squalls and showers.

The first known white man to sight the Marshall Islands was a Spaniard, Garcia de Loyassa, in 1526, and he was followed by his fellow-

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, data on terrain, hydrography, physical characteristics and history of the Marshalls are from *Sailing Directions for the Pacific Islands*, Vol. I, 1938, H. O. 165; *The Pacific Islands Handbook*, by R. W. Robson, Macmillan Co., 1945; *Guide to the Western Pacific*, CinCPac-CinCPOA Bulletin No. 126-44, and V Amphibious Corps G-2 Study of the Theater of Operations: The Marshall Islands, 26Nov43.

countryman, Alvaro de Saavedra, three years later. Spain assumed nominal possession of the islands at the same time she annexed the Carolines and Marianas, in 1686, but they were virtually forgotten until 1788 when two Englishmen, Captains Marshall and Gilbert, explored the Marshall atolls and those of a neighboring group which were, logically, named the Gilberts. By 1824 all islands within the Marshalls had been discovered, and the natives came increasingly into contact with whalers, merchants, missionaries, and explorers.

In 1878, Germany, in a belated quest for empire, became interested in Spain's Pacific possessions, and encouraged her energetic traders to establish themselves in the Marshalls. Twenty-one years later, Spain sold the Carolines, Marianas (less Guam), and Marshalls to Germany for \$4,000,000, and the latter power took formal possession. German colonization was interrupted in 1914 when Japan, ostensibly acting as an ally of Great Britain, moved in occupation forces. The League of

Nations in 1920 recognized Japan's *de facto* sovereignty by giving that nation a Class "C" mandate over the Marshalls, a mandate which specifically prohibited military and naval installations. After throwing over the League in 1935, however, the Japanese did not return the Marshalls to the international organization, but instead proclaimed absolute sovereignty over them. Foreigners had never been encouraged to travel within the mandated islands, and now, with formal annexation, the Japanese rigidly excluded them.

The Japanese administered the Marshall Islands (except for Eniwetok and Ujelang) by the Jaluit Branch Bureau of the South Seas Administration (Nanyo-Cho), while the two excepted atolls came under the direction of the Ponape Branch Bureau. These branch bureaus in turn were under a director who presided at Koror Town in the Palaus, and he in turn answered to the Minister of Overseas Affairs, Tokyo. Local administration among the natives was handled by village chiefs and headmen.



THE MARSHALLESE lived a quiet and simple life at the turn of the century. (Photo courtesy of National Archives.)

The last available population figures (1937) for the Marshalls listed 10,068 natives (Kanakas) and 493 Japanese under Jaluit Branch Bureau. The natives were and are Micronesian, more nearly resembling the Polynesians of Hawaii and Samoa than the Melanesians of the Fijis and Solomons. The Kanakas subsisted by fishing, marginal truck-farming and as little paid labor under the Japanese as they could be compelled to perform.

From a military standpoint the Marshall atolls of importance in 1943 included Mille,² Majuro, Maloelap, and Wotje in the Ratak chain; and Jaluit, Eniwetok, and Kwajalein³ in the Ralik chain. (See Map 1, Map Section.) Bikini, in the latter group, was to attain later fame as a testing ground for atom bombs, but as far as 1943-44 operations were concerned, Bikini figures hardly at all.

ORANGE AND "Z"

To military planners, both Japanese and American, the strategic importance of the Marshalls had long been recognized. As seen from Japan, these wind-blown coral atolls constituted an unsurpassed geographical shield for the then-mysterious "Mandated Islands"—a shield which might serve as a line of departure for attack,⁴ or an outpost line of resistance in the defense.

Conversely, to U. S. naval planners the Marshalls represented a menacing extension of Japanese power toward the eastern Pacific and a standing hazard to lines of communication into the South and Southwest Pacific. Any drive

² Like the majority of Pacific islands, there were many ways of spelling the names of the Marshall atolls. For instance, Mille appears as "Milli" and "Mili". This narrative will follow spelling used by CinCPac-CinCPOA and VAC at the time of the operation.

³ Kwajalein Atoll includes Kwajalein Island, scene of important operations in the Marshalls campaign. To prevent confusion, this narrative will therefore refer to Kwajalein Atoll as such, and to the islands merely as Kwajalein. In the operational cant of code names, Kwajalein Atoll became CARILLON and Kwajalein became PORCELAIN.

⁴ The Marshalls did, in fact, provide the springboard for Japanese Fourth Fleet operations against Wake and the Gilberts in 1941. See LtCol Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *The Defense of Wake*, monograph prepared by Historical Section, USMC, 1947.



MARSHALL ISLANDS NATIVES used unique crafts, such as the one above, for fishing. (Photo courtesy of National Archives.)

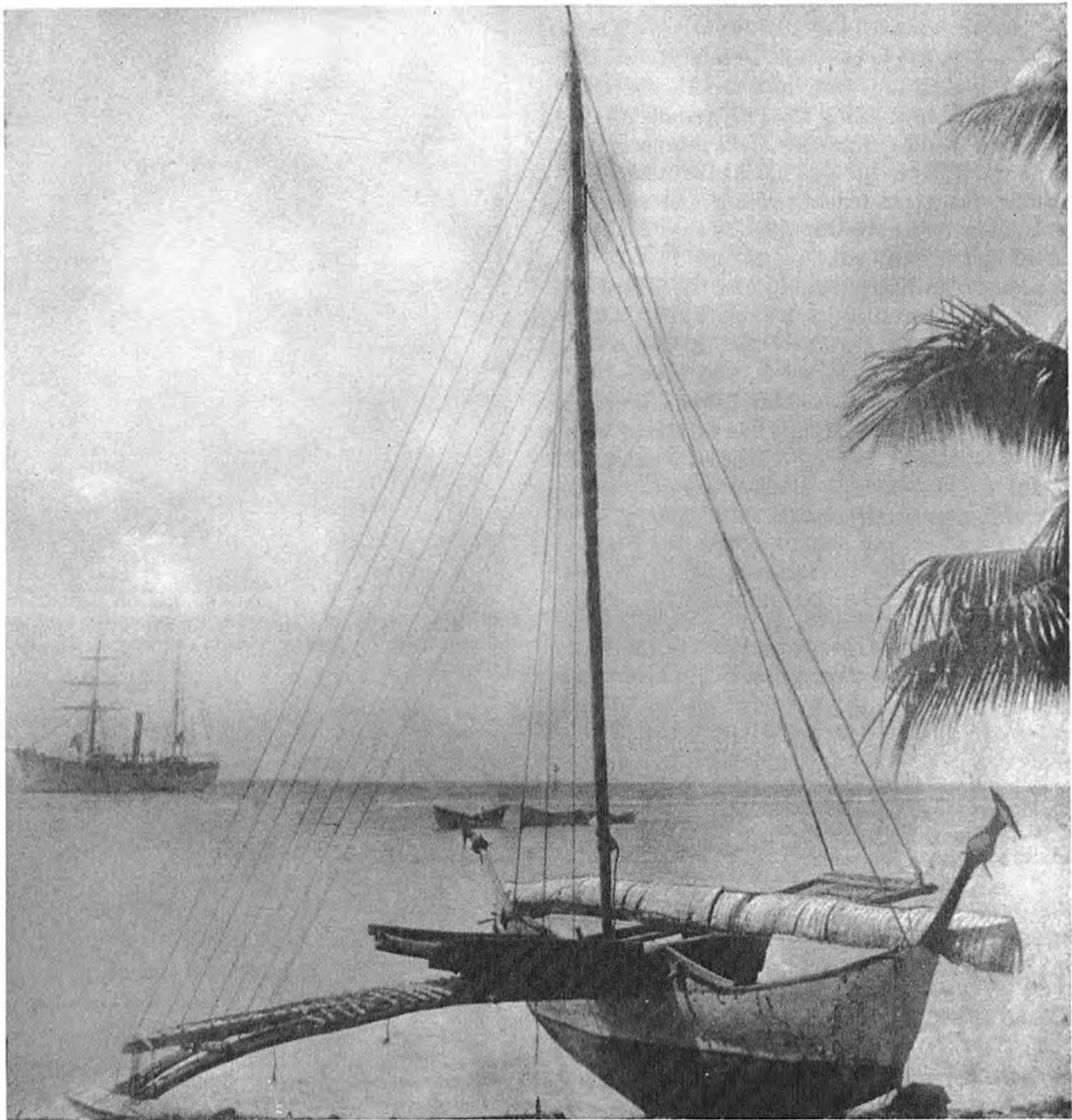
toward the Japanese maritime "heartland" in the Carolines and Marianas—themselves in turn obvious springboards for final assault upon Japan—must encounter the unsinkable "anchored aircraft carriers" of the Marshalls.

In 1921 the Marine Corps' almost legendary war planner, E. H. "Pete" Ellis⁵ (then a major), drew up a plan entitled *Advance Base Operations in Micronesia*. Major Ellis' portfolio was approved by Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune on 23 July of that year. It stipulated that the Marine Corps

... be prepared to accompany the Fleet and reduce enemy resistance in Marshall Islands; to hold there a temporary base for our Fleet and to deny the use of the remaining available islands or atolls suitable for bases to the enemy.

Ellis visualized the seizure of Eniwetok-Ujelang Atolls, Wotje and Jaluit Atolls with a

⁵ The most complete extant accounts of Ellis' career, compiled entirely from official sources, appear in *Saturday Evening Post*, 23Nov46: "The Marines' First Spy," by Maj John L. Zimmerman, USMCR; *Marine Corps Gazette*, Nov50: "Personalities—Men Who Differed," by Maj Frank O. Hough, USMCR.



THIS IDYLIC SCENE in Jaluit lagoon was photographed some 44 years before the Marshall Islands became a battleground. (Photo courtesy of National Archives.)

total of five Marine regiments. For the seizure of Eniwetok he predicated a reinforced infantry regiment of virtually identical strength with that ultimately employed.

Perhaps the best known prewar U. S. plan was ORANGE, which conceded initial loss of the Philippines in a war involving only the United States and Japan. ORANGE set forth

that the Fleet would drive westward through the Marshalls and Carolines and on to recapture of the Philippines. The Navy estimated that 25,000 trained troops, with an additional 50,000 in reserve, would be required to reduce the two island groups.⁶

⁶ Memo from Adm H. R. Stark to SecNav, 12Nov40. ORANGE gave way to a series of RAINBOW Plans

With the beginning of hostilities in 1941, however, the United States was forced onto a strategical defensive which continued until mid-1943. By that time, victories at Midway and in the South and Southwest Pacific,⁷ as well as a drive on the Aleutians, were significantly reversing the status of the two Pacific opponents. Untouched thus far were the reaches of Central Pacific, the most direct route to Japan. As the advantages of men and material shifted to the United States, however, it became evident that this area would not remain inviolate for long.

To protect this approach and establish an airtight strategic position, the Japanese Navy, in cooperation with the Army, formulated the "Z" Operation Plan during May 1943.⁸ This plan visualized a lengthy defensive front across the Aleutians, Wake, Marshalls, Gilberts, Nauru, Ocean, and the Bismarcks. Local commanders were responsible for their own security, but the crux of the plan was to base the Combined Fleet at Truk and send it to the assistance of any threatened link in the chain.⁹

But by the end of September 1943 Allied gains required a modification of the Japanese plan. Landings at Vella Lavella, Munda, Lae and Salamaua, in addition to naval and air losses at Rabaul, caused the Emperor's men to pull in the perimeter and set up a new defensive line. The Bismarcks and Gilberts-Marshalls were written off, the line then joining the Kuriles-Marianas-Carolines. The islands thus removed from the questionable security of the "Z" Plan were not abandoned, however. Quite the reverse. They were slated for reinforcements and supplies in order to fill the mission of forward bastions of the new perimeter. Their function was to impede, and if possible

after Japan joined the Axis, and the United States moved to closer accord with Great Britain.

⁷ LtCol Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Marines at Midway*; Maj John L. Zimmerman, *The Guadalcanal Campaign*, hereinafter cited as *Zimmerman*; Maj John N. Rentz, *Marines in the Central Solomons*, monographs prepared by Historical Branch, USMC.

⁸ A companion, "Y" Operation Plan, was formulated at the same time for Japan's western frontier.

⁹ *The Campaigns of the Pacific War*, United States Strategic Bombing Survey, GPO, 1946, pp. 6-8, 191, hereinafter cited as *USSBS*.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL EARL H. ELLIS drew the first attack plan for the Marshalls in 1921.

stop, any westward attack which might threaten the inner defenses. To this end the defenders must strengthen their positions and prepare themselves to fight to the death.

"THUS WE GET ON WITH THE WAR"

As if endorsing the soundness of Japan's estimate of events, the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) at the TRIDENT Conference (Washington, May 1943) decided to seize the Marshalls, as well as to move against other points on the enemy's Pacific perimeter.¹⁰

At that time the CCS agreed that a major 1943-44 strategic objective in the Pacific should be to open an Allied line of communications to the Celebes Sea, and to secure and shorten a line to the Southwest Pacific. To implement

¹⁰ *The War Reports of General Marshall, General Arnold and Admiral King*, Lippincott, 1947, p. 158.

this the planners specifically approved an undertaking to seize the Marshall and Caroline Islands.¹¹ To General Douglas MacArthur's argument that every resource be concentrated on the New Guinea-Mindanao axis with its asserted advantage of shore-based air, the CCS said: (1) the enemy could concentrate against a single line of advance; (2) simultaneous offensives in the Central and Southwest Pacific would protect the latter area from flank attack; (3) simultaneous offensives would deceive the enemy as to the ultimate route to be taken against the Empire itself; (4) aircraft carriers would provide concentrations of aircraft at any desired point and time.¹²

¹¹ CCS 239/1 "Operations in the Pacific and Far East in 1943-44," a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) paper approved by the CCS 21May43.

¹² Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States*

Thus in June 1943 the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas (CinCPOA),¹³ to submit a plan for operations against the Marshalls. In response to this directive on 1 July Nimitz submitted a tentative and somewhat exploratory concept for an operation by the Pacific Fleet as well as by ground

Naval Operations in World War II, Vol VII, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls*: Little, Brown and Co., 1951, p. 81, hereinafter cited as *Morison*.

¹³ Nimitz wore two hats as Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet (CinCPac) and CinCPOA. The former title represented his naval command, the latter his command over the North, Central and South Pacific Areas under the JCS. As his opposite number General MacArthur held the title of Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area (CinCSWPA).



PALM-COVERED NAMUR two months before the 24th Marines landed there. (Navy photo.)

and air elements under his command.¹⁴ This exchange was followed three weeks later by a JCS directive to the admiral that he prepare to seize the Gilberts by 1 December 1943, preceding additional operations in the Marshalls on 1 January 1944.¹⁵

One month later Admiral Nimitz and his staff had completed and submitted an outline plan for the Marshalls.¹⁶ In this, CinCPOA assumed the success or continued progress of operations in the Gilberts (GALVANIC) and in the New Guinea-New Britain (CART-WHEEL) area. He likewise summarized the factors which now favored success in the Marshalls:

1. The present availability of United States strength and means.
2. The corresponding strengthening of our own lines of communication and resultant threat to the enemy's lines of communication.
3. The possibility that a thrust into the Marshalls might precipitate fleet action on favorable terms.
4. The timing, which would probably cause the Japanese, in confusion, to divide their forces among various theaters.

"Thus," he concluded, "we get on with the war."

Contrariwise, however, unfavorable factors existed and merited consideration in planning for the Marshalls:

1. The problem of obtaining accurate and timely information.¹⁷
2. Difficult Fleet logistic problems because of the lack of bases west of Oahu.

¹⁴ CinCPac serial 096 to Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet (CominCh), 1Jul43.

¹⁵ JCS to CinCPOA, 202204 July 1943, p. 35 in W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Vol IV, *The Pacific—Guadalcanal to Saipan*, University of Chicago Press, 1950, hereinafter cited as *AAF in WWII*.

¹⁶ CinCPac serial 00151 to CominCh, 20Aug43, hereinafter cited as *CinCPac serial 00151*. Unless otherwise noted succeeding references within this chapter to the plan are taken from this source.

¹⁷ The intelligence problems created by an offensive into the Marshalls were peculiarly troublesome because of Japan's closed-door policy in that area for many years previously. Not even the scantiest information was available, let alone the mass of detail upon which amphibious planners must depend.



ADMIRAL NIMITZ, CinCPac-CinCPOA, conceived the bold plan to by-pass the heavily defended atolls and strike Kwajalein in the heart of the Marshalls. (Navy photo.)

3. Possible lack of surprise.
4. The necessity for rapid training of our own forces.
5. Dependence for air superiority wholly upon carrier aircraft until bases could be established ashore.

In summary, the CinCPac-CinCPOA Marshalls plan embodied these basic elements:

1. Simultaneous seizure of key islands in Kwajalein, Wotje, and Maloelap Atolls, coupled with neutralization of Jaluit and Mille.
2. Mounting and staging from Oahu, the Gilberts, and the South Pacific.
3. Intensive photo reconnaissance and preliminary air strikes from the Gilberts, Baker, and from Nauru (which was then

an intended target in the Gilberts scheme).
4. Operations to accomplish these ends to require approximately 35,000 assault troops backed by a major fleet.¹⁸

Central Pacific strategy was considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the QUADRANT Conference (Quebec, August 1943) where it was decided that the Marshalls should immediately follow the Gilberts operation. On 1 September, the Joint Chiefs dispatched a directive to Admiral Nimitz for operations in the Marshalls. The wording of this order was almost identical with the earlier CinCPOA plan except that an allocation of actual troops and naval forces was made to accomplish the mission. In addition, a new phase—of considerable significance, as it turned out—was added

¹⁸ Troop requirements were broken down into approximately 21 battalion landing teams with appropriate supporting units, and four defense battalions. Combat ships would total 13 battleships, 19 aircraft carriers, 15 cruisers, and 95 destroyers.

to the plan as proposed, namely, that upon completion of the Marshalls task, Admiral Nimitz must "seize or control Wake, Eniwetok and Kusaie."

Troop allocations for the Marshalls consisted of the 4th Marine Division (training on the West Coast); the 7th Infantry Division (in Hawaii); the 22d Marines (reinforced) (in Samoa), augmented by the myriad base defense and development units required to realize the fruits of amphibious assault. Later the 106th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was temporarily detached from the 27th Infantry Division in Hawaii and added to the force.

Within three weeks, on 22 September, Admiral Nimitz' staff had completed the initial planning required on area level, and the Marshalls project then passed for execution to the Commander, Central Pacific Force, Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance.¹⁹

¹⁹ CinCPac serial 00190 to ComCenPac, 22Sept43.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER II

Plans and Preparations

OVER-ALL PLAN

On 5 August 1943 Admiral Spruance, formerly chief of staff to Admiral Nimitz, became Commander Central Pacific Force¹ and Commander Fifth Fleet. To him Admiral Nimitz passed the task of initial planning for the Marshalls operation, and he in turn promptly took the matter up with his principal subordinates. These included:

Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force (Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner), the Joint Expeditionary Force Commander, whose responsibility it was to get troops ashore and support them.

Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, FMF (Major General Holland M. Smith), Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops, responsible for the troops once ashore.

Commander, Carrier Forces (Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher), whose fast carriers were responsible for getting information of the enemy and pounding the targets.

Commander, Defense Forces and Land-Based Air (Rear Admiral John H. Hoover), who was also responsible for target-pounding, as well as for the follow-up, consolidation, and base-development required after capture of the objectives.

To these major commanders, during late September 1943, passed the task of forging over-all plans for seizure of the Marshall Islands.

It should be remembered that when this mission was announced by Admiral Spruance on 1 October,² landings in the Gilberts were more than seven weeks ahead. Thus initial planning for the Marshalls operation (first coded BANKRATE, later changed to FLINTLOCK) had to proceed without the vast benefit of experience which was to result from Tarawa, and without the availability of intelligence data, particularly photo reconnaissance, which possession of the Gilberts would shortly confer upon the U. S. attackers.

The original concept of the Marshalls operation called for two contingent schemes.³ These

¹ Central Pacific Force corresponded to North Pacific Force under VAdm Frank Jack Fletcher, USN, and to South Pacific Force under VAdm William F. Halsey, USN. All three fell under CinCPOA, although tactically Halsey worked more with General Douglas MacArthur than with Admiral Nimitz.

² Commander, Central Pacific Force serial 0053, 1 Oct 43.

³ *ComCenPac ser 0053*, 1-2. The requirement for extensive and complex alternative planning in this initial directive typifies difficulties encountered by planners throughout the entire planning phase.



VICE ADMIRAL SPRUANCE commanded Fifth Fleet and Task Force 50. (Navy photo.)

were:

1. Neutralization of Jaluit, followed by simultaneous seizure of Wotje, Maloelap, and Mille, and then seizure of Kwajalein—a four-objective operation of considerable magnitude and complexity against well-defended objectives; *or*,
2. Neutralization of Jaluit, followed in turn by seizure of Mille and Ebon (southwest of Jaluit), to progress to simultaneous seizure of Maloelap, Wotje, and Kwajalein.

Both plans required multi-phase and multi-divisional operations, all to be carried on simultaneously, something never before attempted in the Central Pacific.

Nevertheless, the concept at this stage had begun to show signs of change. As Admiral

Spruance announced it on 1 October, both versions of the plan pointed definitely toward Kwajalein Atoll, although each still retained—from the enemy viewpoint—elements of the expected in the steppingstone character of the operations blocked out. Makin, furthermore, had now been substituted for Nauru as a Gilberts objective.

On 12 October Admiral Nimitz issued CinCPOA Operation Plan 16-43, the first formal operation plan to deal with the Marshalls. This document served to ratify the planning of the preceding few weeks, but did not disclose final objectives. Two days later Admiral Nimitz followed with *Detail Plan FLINTLOCK*, which assigned troops to definite Marshalls objectives and indicated what those objectives would be:

To capture, occupy, and develop bases at Wotje, Maloelap and Kwajalein and vigorously deny Mille and Jaluit. . . .

The target date for Wotje and Maloelap was to be 1 January 1944⁴ and for Kwajalein Atoll the succeeding day. During the initial landings the Kwajalein forces would remain in reserve (principally with Wotje in mind), and, after seizure of the first two objectives, troops from those landing forces would be available to support the Kwajalein scheme.⁵

During the month succeeding issuance of the CinCPOA plan, implementing plans and orders were prepared by the major subordinate commands. Based on a preliminary estimate of the situation which was completed on 21 October. Major General Holland M. Smith, Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, was able on 15 November to issue Corps Operation Plan 2-43. This was the first over-all troop directive for FLINTLOCK, and it was on this basis that Marine planning went forward until the results of the Gilberts assault could be assessed.

⁴ All dates are west Longitude, the date east of the Date Line.

⁵ This information is quoted in Report by G-5, V Amphibious Corps, FLINTLOCK, 1, hereinafter cited as VAC G-5 Report. Major troop assignments were to have been:

Wotje-Maloelap: 7th Infantry Division.

Kwajalein Atoll: 4th Marine Division, FMF, and 22d Marines (reinforced).

The battle for Tarawa constituted the turning point of plans and preparations for **FLINTLOCK**. At Tarawa theory and surmise fused into concrete reality, and hard experience demanded immediate reexamination of the Marshalls project in light of the 2d Marine Division's 76 bitter hours of combat to win Betio.

Tarawa had been a rude shock to everybody on the planning level. No one felt more strongly about this than Admiral Turner and General Smith . . . Every responsible agency in the Pacific Ocean Areas spared no effort to devise means to put the troops ashore under more favorable conditions than at Tarawa . . .⁶

By 6 December Tarawa's lessons had been thoroughly studied, and General Smith felt justified in recommending a complete review of the choice of objectives in the Marshalls. He contended that those originally chosen now seemed far in excess of what could be achieved with the forces assigned.

The next day Admiral Nimitz called a meeting of his staff and principal subordinates. Here he disclosed that he was seriously considering dropping the previous **FLINTLOCK** Plan in favor of capturing Kwajalein first. This recommendation for a bold stroke into the heart of the Marshalls caught his commanders by surprise, as Admiral Turner later testified:

I feel sure that this was the first that Spruance, Smith or I had heard about the scheme . . . Being already well into the planning required by the previous scheme [seizure of Wotje and Maloelap], I, for one, was startled. Spruance, Smith and I all spoke against it. After considerable discussion . . . the meeting was adjourned. No decision was announced . . . [The next day] a second similar conference was held . . . A third meeting was held two days later . . . Smith and I merely said we had not changed our opinions.

At the end, Nimitz directed Spruance to submit his views in writing. . . .⁷

A firm decision was reached on 12 December at a private conference between Admirals Nimitz and Spruance. Here the divergent viewpoints merged, and a plan evolved to assault both Kwajalein Atoll and Majuro Atoll, the latter thought to be lightly defended, if defended at all. The addition of this latter atoll

⁶ Ltr Col Joseph C. Anderson, USA, to CMC, 9Jan53.

⁷ Ltr Adm Richmond K. Turner to CMC, 20Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Turner*.



REAR ADMIRAL TURNER commanded both Task Force 51 and Task Force 52. (Navy photo.)

as an objective lent added protection to the proposed lines of communications, as Admiral Spruance recalled:

The principal reason for my objection to the capture of Kwajalein alone, was that units of the Fifth Fleet were scheduled, after its capture, to proceed to the South Pacific to support an operation there [Kavieng]. This would have left our line of communications in to Kwajalein surrounded by Japanese bases—Wotje, Maloelap, Mille, and Jaluit—with the air pipeline back to Japan through Eniwetok intact; and with no fleet support. It was for this reason, as well as my desire to have a protected anchorage available at the earliest possible time for logistic purposes, that I insisted on adding Majuro to our objectives. . . .⁸

On 13 December Admiral Nimitz informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the proposed changes and the reasoning behind them.⁹ The

⁸ Ltr Adm R. A. Spruance to CMC, 12Jan53.

⁹ CinCPOA serial 001685 to JCS, 13Dec43.



JAPANESE SHIPS in Kwajalein lagoon were hit by planes from the *Lexington* in early December 1943. (Navy photo.)

next day—only two weeks prior to the original D-Day—Admiral Nimitz issued a total revision of his original Operation Plan 16-43. The target date was now retarded ¹⁰ to 17 January 1944 and the revised mission was:

... capture of and development of Kwajalein Atoll as a Fleet anchorage and of Roi and Kwajalein Islands as air bases, preparatory to extension of control to include the remainder of the Marshall Islands.

To which was added still another contingent directive for the heavily burdened planners, namely, that:

Alternate plans be prepared for capture and development of Wotje and Maloelap.¹¹

This realistic contraction of objectives was accompanied by the welcome addition to the V Corps troop-list of one more regimental combat

team ¹²—the 106th Infantry (reinforced), a 27th Infantry Division unit as yet untried in battle; and both this unit and the 7th Division reported to General Smith for operational control.

The deadline of 17 January, however, still represented an unattainable objective. Neither the 4th Marine Division nor the 7th Infantry Division could be satisfactorily equipped by that date, and furthermore not enough time was permitted for the former unit to hold rehearsals. On 20 December, therefore, Admiral Turner requested a delay until 10 February. Admirals Spruance and Nimitz approved the proposed change and sent it along to the Joint Chiefs. They replied, however, that the Marshalls attack must be made in January, so

¹⁰ As early as 25Oct, however, Adm Nimitz had indicated to Adm King that the Marshalls target date of 1Jan44 would have to be set back about a month. CinCPac serial 00247 to CominCh, 25Oct43.

¹¹ *VAC G-5 Report*, 2.

¹² This regiment had become available for the Marshalls as early as 3Oct43, consequent upon the abandonment of Nauru as a Gilberts objective. CinCPOA serial 022120 to Commanding General, Army Forces, Central Pacific Area (CGUSAFCPA).

D-Day was finally firmed at 31 January.¹³

Three days after adoption of the final version of the FLINTLOCK Plan, CinCPOA headquarters filled in further details by designating the 4th Marine Division and the 15th Marine Defense Battalion for Roi-Namur, and the 7th Infantry Division and the 3d and 4th Army Defense Battalions for Kwajalein. The 22d Marines (reinforced) and 106th Infantry (less one BLT) (reinforced) made up Corps Reserve. One Army battalion landing team (from the newly assigned 106th Infantry) would secure Majuro, although at that time the atoll's identity had not been disclosed to the lower echelons.

On 20 December Admiral Nimitz issued a final Joint Staff Study, *FLINTLOCK II*, in which all preceding piecemeal changes were ratified, and in which the following strategic decisions were stated:

1. To neutralize Wotje and Maloelap by sustained bombing, followed by carrier and surface bombardment strikes.
2. To neutralize Mille by sustained bombing.
3. To reduce the effectiveness of Eniwetok and Kusaie by air.
4. To seize Kwajalein Atoll as a Fleet anchorage with air bases at Kwajalein and Roi.

On 23 December, Majuro Atoll was revealed as the selected "Island 'X'" to be secured, and on receipt of this decision on 26 December, General Holland Smith set up the Majuro Landing Force, consisting of the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, with the V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company and the 1st Defense Battalion, FMF, attached.¹⁴

¹³ Turner.

¹⁴ Col Wallace M. Greene, Jr., S-3 for Tactical Group-1 during the Marshalls campaign, later recalled the conference where this problem was discussed: "Gen Holland Smith paced the floor of the little planning room. . . . His chief of staff, Gen G. B. Erskine, was [advising against] the employment of the entire 106th Infantry regiment for the job [seizure of Majuro]. From the conversation it appeared that even a division or at least Tactical Group-1 in its entirety had at one time been considered for the task. . . . 'I'm convinced that there can't be more than a squad or two [of Japanese] on those islands today,' [Gen Smith said] 'Let's use only one battalion for the Majuro job. . . .'"

All elements participating in the Marshalls operation fell under Task Force 50, commanded by Vice Admiral Spruance. (See Chart 1, Map Section.) That officer was to accompany the expedition on board the USS *Indianapolis*, but would not assume tactical command unless the Japanese Fleet made its appearance,¹⁵ a denouement considered quite possible at that stage of the war.

Rear Admiral Turner commanded Task Force 51 (Joint Expeditionary Force) while Major General Smith headed Task Force 56 (Expeditionary Troops), each of these in turn containing subordinate commands. Under Turner were the Southern Attack Force (Task Force 52) also commanded by that admiral and charged with the mission of seizing Kwajalein and the islands in the southern half of the atoll; the Northern Attack Force (Task Force 53) under Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, which was to capture Roi-Namur and the islands in the northern half of the atoll; the Majuro Attack Force (Task Group 51.2) commanded by Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, which was to take Majuro Atoll; the Attack Force Reserve Group (Task Group 51.1) commanded by Captain Donald W. Loomis, and a series of Defense and Garrison Groups (Task Group 51.3-Task Group 51.9) which carried supplies and garrison troops. General Smith's force included the Northern Landing Force (Task Group 56.2), composed primarily of the 4th Marine Division (reinforced) and commanded by Major General Harry Schmidt; Southern Landing Force (Task Group 56.1), consisting of the 7th Infantry Division and attached units under Major General Charles H. Corlett, USA; the Majuro Landing Force Task Group under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick B. Sheldon, USA; and the Reserve Landing Force (Task Group 56.3), under Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson, including the 22d Marines (reinforced) and the 106th Infantry (less BLT 2) (reinforced).

Three other major task organizations were immediately subordinate to Vice Admiral Spruance for the operation. These were Rear

Ltr Col Wallace M. Greene, Jr., to CMC, 23Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Greene*.

¹⁵ Central Pacific Force Operation Plan 1-44, 6Jan44, Annex H.



MAJOR GENERAL HOLLAND SMITH exercised over-all command of troops in the FLINTLOCK Operation.

Admiral Mitscher's Carrier Force (Task Force 58); the Neutralization Group (Task Group 50.15) under Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small, and Admiral Hoover's Defense Forces and Land-Based Air (Task Force 57). This latter force was in turn divided into Strike Command (Task Group 57.2) under Major General Willis Hale, USA, and Search and Patrol Group (Task Group 57.3) under the command of Brigadier General Lewie G. Merritt.

All that remained as 1943 neared its close was the issuance of final orders. This was expeditiously accomplished and the mission passed to the troops.

WHO WILL COMMAND?

Far-reaching decisions during autumn 1943 lay within the field of command relationships

among the naval and troop commanders in the amphibious operations to come.

Originally—at Guadalcanal, for instance—the amphibious troops who constituted the landing forces had been subordinate and component to the amphibious force, headed by the commander afloat.¹⁶ On 9 November 1942, pursuant to recommendations from Admiral Halsey, Admiral King had modified this relationship so that the troop commander and the naval commander (except during the landing phases of the operation) faced each other on equal level.¹⁷

However, in mid-1943 when the Central Pacific campaign began to shape up, there was some question as to whether a corps organization would be required to prosecute what were then rather imperfectly visualized as very small island operations. Early in his plans, Admiral Nimitz had given much thought to the matter and by 19 June 1943 had formed his conclusion:

... I now frankly confess that if I ever entertained doubts that a corps commander was not necessary, I am *now* not only fully convinced of his necessity—but am sure he should be the best man you can dig up.¹⁸

Following this decision, on 25 August the headquarters of Amphibious Corps Pacific Fleet had been transferred to Pearl Harbor, and redesignated as V Amphibious Corps, Major General Holland M. Smith commanding.¹⁹

But on 26 August Admiral Nimitz made the corps headquarters of General Smith directly subordinate to Admiral Turner's Amphibious Force. This cut across the grain of Admiral King's November 1942 directive, and two days later the CominCh—as Admiral King was short-titled—so informed his Pacific Fleet commander.²⁰ On 10 September Nimitz accordingly modified General Smith's position

¹⁶ This was pursuant to a directive issued by Adm King on 20Feb42.

¹⁷ ComSoPac dispatch to CominCh, 3Nov42, as approved by CominCh dispatch, 9Nov42; also see *Zimmerman*, 153–154.

¹⁸ Ltr from Adm Nimitz to LtGen Thomas Holcomb, 19Jun43.

¹⁹ CMC dispatch of 25Aug43.

²⁰ CinPac dispatch of 27Aug43, and CominCh dispatch of 28Aug43 to CinCPac.

and reassigned the V Amphibious Corps headquarters one echelon higher, under direct command of Admiral Spruance, Commander Central Pacific Force.²¹

Although this appeared to represent an ideal solution, the relief of the Marine planners preparing for FLINTLOCK was both premature and short-lived. On 10 October, when Nimitz' headquarters issued Operation Plan 13-43 (that dealing with the Gilberts operation), although the troops of the V Amphibious Corps, itemized, appeared in the task organization, the Corps headquarters itself was missing.²² Two days later General Smith protested this omission to his immediate superior, Spruance, and was informed by the latter that:

It is considered essential for the success of the [Gilberts] operation that the responsibility for the assault be placed on the Commander Fifth Amphibious Force. . . . You will report to the Commander Fifth Amphibious Force for duty under his operational control until further orders.²³

The problem which thereupon confronted the amphibious corps planners, not only for the Gilberts but for the infinitely more complex Marshalls operation, was summed up by Colonel Graves B. Erskine, the corps chief of staff, as follows:

. . . It is extremely difficult for the Corps to function unless its command status is definitely and clearly established, and that command relations during the training and operational phases should be the same. My personal idea is that Force and Corps should be on an equal level for command relations.²⁴

To add to the delicacy, not to say the ambiguity of the troop planners' position, it was believed that coequal status for Force and Corps headquarters was in accordance with the personal desires both of the Amphibious Force

commander (Admiral Turner)²⁵ and the Central Pacific Force commander (Admiral Spruance). The matter apparently was one which only Admiral Nimitz could rectify.²⁶

After all the backing and filling, the final status of the corps headquarters for FLINTLOCK was established in the ultimate Marshalls operation plan of Admiral Nimitz. Although the corps headquarters functioned under the over-all naval commander during the initial amphibious phases, landing force commanders were entitled to assume command on shore as soon as each felt that the situation permitted.²⁷ Thus a substantial measure of the Marine position in the matter had met with acceptance, and the decisions thrashed out in preparation for the Marshalls landings contributed much to the ultimate body of doctrine in the field of amphibious command relationships.

FORCE AND CORPS PLANNING

On 3 January 1944 Rear Admiral Turner issued Operation Plan A6-43 which set forth the mission of the Joint Expeditionary Force (Task Force 51) and listed its components.

One piece of good news was that the lesson of insufficient preliminary bombardment at Tarawa had been well-learned. Naval guns would begin blasting the targets two days before the initial landings and three days prior to the main landings.²⁸ In addition, aerial bombing from the newly-won Gilberts bases and from carriers would be more intense and of longer duration than at Betio. Later General Smith

²⁵ "[If it is assumed] that I favored giving exact equal status in the Pacific Fleet Organization to the Fifth Amphibious Force and the V Amphibious Corps, then [that] is correct. But [if it is assumed] that I ever favored making the Corps a subordinate part of the Force, then [that is] most decidedly not correct." Turner.

²⁶ Ltr from Col O. T. Pfeiffer to Col G. B. Erskine, 23Oct43.

²⁷ Throughout the operation, however, any troop directives involving *major landings* or *major changes* in tactical plans required the approval of the Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force, prior to their issuance. This was based on the logical premise that any major change of plans would not involve the troops alone, but the entire Joint Expeditionary Force.

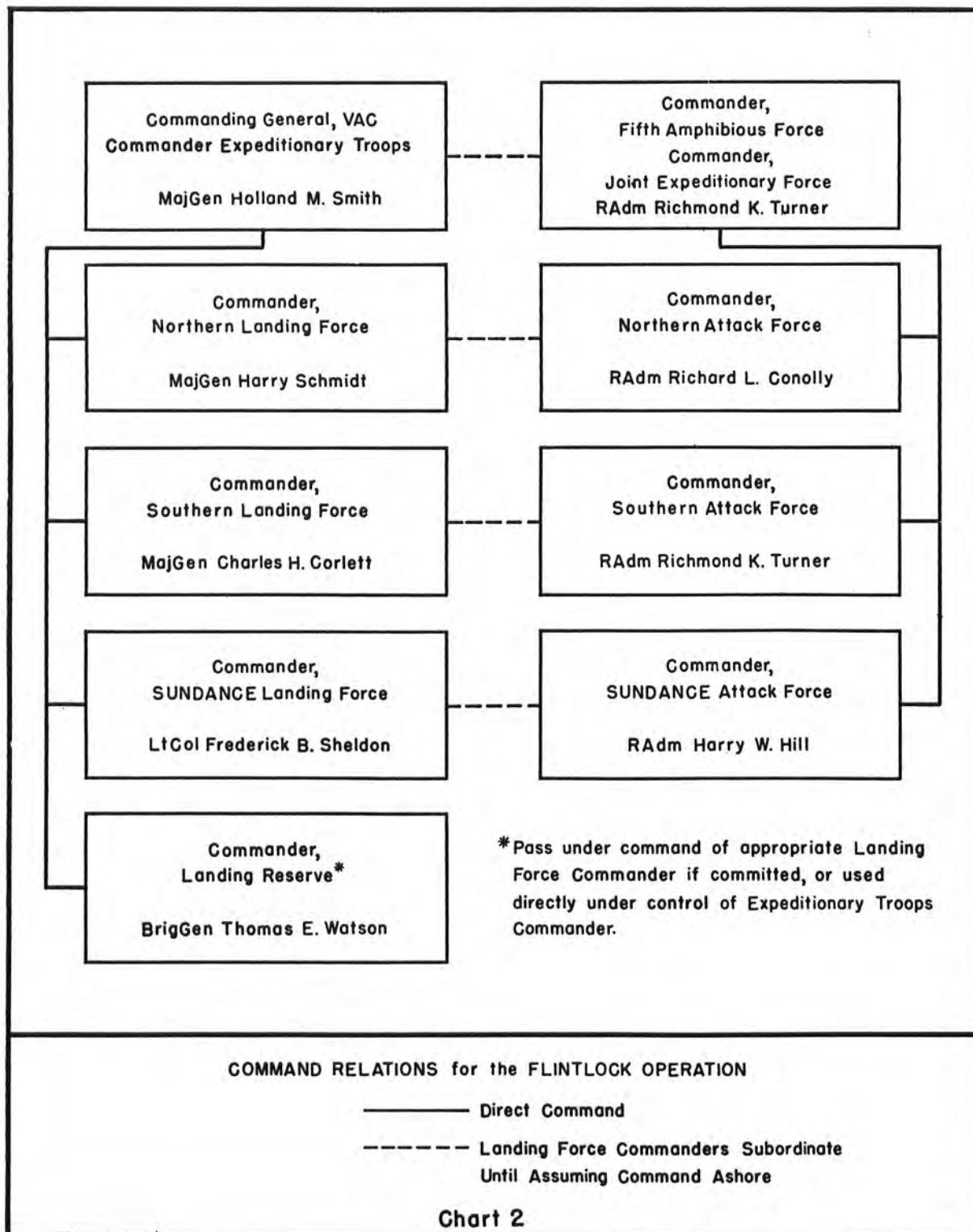
²⁸ Naval and air preparations for the landings will be treated in detail later in this chapter.

²¹ AlPac dispatch of 10Sep43.

²² "I was as astonished as [MajGen Holland] Smith was when CinCPac's Gilberts Operation Plan did not designate him as over-all command of the troops. I immediately protested that omission, as well as the rather confused and unsatisfactory command provisions. . . ." Turner.

²³ ComCenPacFor serial 0081, 14Oct43.

²⁴ Ltr from Col G. B. Erskine to Col O. T. Pfeiffer, 14Oct43. Erskine was VAC chief of staff. Pfeiffer was on the planning staff of Adm Ernest J. King, CominCh. On 6Nov43 Col Erskine was promoted to BrigGen.



was to declare, "the magnitude of the Kwajalein bombardment was historic."²⁹

One command innovation for Pacific operations was the AGC,³⁰ generally known as a command ship, which had been first utilized in the Salerno landings in 1943. Amphibious operations required a mass of communications equipment, and this specially designed vessel seemed to be the answer. After its Pacific debut in the Marshalls operations, no United States major amphibious operation on the road to Tokyo was without one. Two AGC's were listed in the plan: USS *Rocky Mount* and USS *Appalachian*.³¹ In his dual role as commander of both Task Force 51 and Task Force 52, Admiral Turner, accompanied by Generals Smith and Corlett, established his headquarters on the first-named AGC. Admiral Conolly, with General Schmidt, flew his flag in the other.

For the Marine landings in the northern sector of Kwajalein Atoll, Admiral Turner allotted 11 attack transports (APA), one troop transport (AP), three attack cargo ships (AKA), two landing ships, dock (LSD), one high-speed assault transport (APD), 15 landing ships, tank (LST), 12 large infantry land-

ing craft (LCI(L)), three mine layers with sweep gear (AM), four fast mine sweepers (DMS), six tank landing craft (LCT), five submarine chasers (SC), four yard mine sweepers (YMS), and three tug boats (AT). Task Force 53 also included three old battleships (OBB), three escort aircraft carriers (CVE), two heavy cruisers (CA), three light cruisers (CL), and 19 destroyers (DD).

The southern force had essentially the same strength. It had no light cruisers but counted one additional battleship, one additional heavy cruiser and two additional destroyers.

Allocated for the Majuro Attack Group under Admiral Hill were one CA, two CVE's, four DD's, one APA, one APD, one DMS, two AM's and one LST. Captain Loomis' Attack Force Reserve Group included seven DD's, five APA's, two AP's, one AKA, and one AK. In addition, three Defense Groups and four Garrison Groups had a total of 13 LST's, three LCT's, seven AP's, 12 AK's, ten DE's, and one DMS.

The mission of the Joint Expeditionary Force as set forth in the plan was to capture Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls "for the purpose of establishing air and naval bases from which to maintain and exercise control of the Marshalls."

On D-Day, Task Force 53, attacking in the north, would capture Mellu (IVAN),³² and Ennuebing (JACOB) Islands to the southwest of Roi-Namur and Ennumennet (ALBERT) and Ennubirr (ALLEN) Islands to the southeast. Landings on the first two would be from seaward and on the latter would be from the lagoon. Marine artillery would be landed on all four preliminary objectives to support the main landings on Roi-Namur.

Task Force 52 in the south, was charged with capture of Enubuj (CARLSON), Ennylabegan (CARLOS), Gea (CARTER) and Ninni (CECIL) Islands northwest of Kwajalein on D-Day. Landings would be made from seaward, and artillery would be emplaced only on CARLSON.

The D-Day mission of Task Group 51.2 was the seizure of Eroj (LUCILLE), Calalin

²⁹ Holland M. Smith, *Coral and Brass*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, 144.

³⁰ Initially designated an Auxiliary General Communications vessel, hence the "AGC." Later, however, its listing was changed to Amphibious Force Flagship, but the "AGC" designation remained. It is designed for the use of the attack force and landing force staffs, equipped with extra communication gear, photo lab, sound recording devices and similar installations. Large rooms facilitate coordination of staff actions. AGC's are named after mountains and mountain ranges.

³¹ During simulated battle conditions at San Diego, it was immediately obvious that the war rooms of the *Appalachian* were blind to events occurring outside the ship. LtCol William R. Wendt, a member of Gen Schmidt's staff, arranged a television demonstration with Paramount Studios, which proved successful. Although Paramount offered to loan the equipment to the Navy for the Marshalls operation, the project hit a snag on Paramount's stipulation of a \$100,000 guarantee against battle damage. "However, the interest aroused . . . fostered the development of standard and air-borne television equipment which came into existence in the Navy before war's end." Ltr Col William Wendt to CMC, 9Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Wendt*.

³² Code names for the islands follow in parentheses the native names.

(LUELLA) and Dalap (SALOME) Islands in the Majuro Atoll (SUNDANCE).

On D-Day plus 1 (1 February) Task Force 53 would assault Ennugarret (ABRAHAM), Roi (BURLESQUE), and Namur (CAMOUFLAGE) islands from inside the lagoon. Task Force 52 would assault Kwajalein Island (PORCELAIN) by landing on its western end and advancing east and then north. Task Group 51.2 would continue the seizure of Majuro Atoll by taking Uliga (ROSALIE) and Darritt (RITA) Islands in a shore-to-shore operation from SALOME.

Turner's plan provided for amphibian tractors to get the assault troops ashore "owing to the heavy defensive installations . . . and the difficulty of getting boats across the reef to the beach. . . ." Scheduled for the Marshalls were two types: LVT(2) and the LVT(A) (1), the latter making its debut in Pacific operations.

The LVT(2) was the troop-carrying tractor which had been used so successfully by the 2d Marine Division at Tarawa. Before leaving Wellington, N. Z., for that objective, the 2d Division had bolted armor plate on a number of its amphibian tractors, with gratifying results. Therefore, all LVT(2)'s designated for the Marshalls were protected by quarter-inch armor. Crews were required to work 24-hour shifts, and training with the tractors had to be curtailed, but by these efforts the LVT's received the protective coating in time for the operation. In addition, 4.5-inch multiple rocket launchers were installed on a number of the LVT(2)'s as additional fire support. During the landing, however, these proved ineffective, as will be seen.

Nor was this the only project involving the LVT's, as Major Victor J. Croizat, then commanding the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, later pointed out:

While the LST's with my battalion were at Kauai, we received from Pearl Harbor a large load of assorted chain grapnels, cables and steel pipe. This mass was dumped on the pier and a blueprint was handed to me indicating that the hardware when sorted would produce a device for detonating mines. Briefly, the arrangement consisted of a boom about 15 feet long to be fixed by a system of supports to the bow of an LVT. At the forward end of this boom there was a yard from which dangled a set of grapnels. The theory being that as the LVT approached the beach the grapnels would

set off mines and the machine would proceed without further hazard. A careful study of this device revealed that it could not be installed while aboard the LST prior to debarking the LVT; it was impossible to install while the LVT was waterborne, and it could only be installed with the LVT on the beach, i. e., after the mine hazard had already been met. The decision made . . . was to forget the whole thing. However, it was decided to weld the supports required on the LVT's and take the gear along in the event it might ultimately prove useful. . . . During the landing the supports were ripped off the LVT's by coral and the gear was abandoned in the Marshalls. . . .³³

The LVT(A) (1), or armored amphibian was not a troop-carrier, but an additional means of pounding the enemy's beach defenses. Also wearing a belt of quarter-inch armor, this vehicle mounted a 37mm gun in a turret and three .30-caliber machine guns. It was to drive into the enemy-held beach accompanying, or preceding the first waves of LVT(2)'s.

Additional supporting fire on the beach would be delivered by LCI(G)'s, infantry landing craft converted into gunboats. In the Treasury Islands operation in October 1943 and again in the New Britain landings in December, LCI's were armed with multiple rocket launchers to throw more explosives at the enemy's beach defense. The formally converted LCI(G) made her first appearance, however, during the Marshalls operations. Twenty-four of these vessels were armed with five .50-caliber machine guns, three 40mm, two 20mm guns, and six 4.5" rocket racks, each holding 72 rockets.

Japanese underwater obstacles and beach mines at Tarawa pointed up the need for demolition men for the FLINTLOCK operation.³⁴ Therefore, Marines, soldiers, and sailors who had had experience with demolition work were hurriedly assembled under Navy auspices and organized into Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) 1. The UDT was assigned a variety of missions which boiled down to beach reconnaissance at Kwajalein and Roi-Namur on the night of 31 January-1 February, and the attempted demolition of obstacles and mines the

³³ Ltr LtCol V. J. Croizat to CMC, 10Nov52, herein after cited as *Croizat*.

³⁴ TF 51 Report of Amphibious Operations for the Capture of the Marshall Islands, serial 00180, 21, hereinafter cited as *TF 51 Report*.

following morning. Later, as an anticlimax to these hasty preparations, Admiral Turner cancelled the assignment for Kwajalein³⁵ because a boat reconnaissance indicated the absence of beach obstacles and mines. After the beaches were secured, however, the team was used to remove coral heads, wrecks, and other obstructions.³⁶

On 5 January 1944, only two days after Rear Admiral Turner published his Operation Plan A6-43, Major General Smith released V Am-

³⁵ Elements of UDT 1 carried out the reconnaissance of Roi-Namur, however, approaching within 50 yards of the landing beaches.

³⁶ Amphibious Operations, The Marshall Islands, HQ CominCh, 20May44, 6-5, 6-6, hereinafter cited as *AmphibOpn*.

phibious Corps Operation Plan 1-44, superseding Corps Operation Plan 3-43. He noted in a later report:³⁷

It was necessary to issue both Corps Operations Plans before the receipt of an operation plan or task organization from the next higher echelon in the chain of operational command. Only by the closest liaison could the Corps obtain sufficient information upon which to base its plans.

The corps plan established the following forces:

Northern Landing Force (Major General Schmidt)

³⁷ CG, V Amphibious Corps, Operations Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, 6Mar44, p. 3, hereinafter cited as *VAC Report*.



MILLE ATOLL was one of the first in the Marshalls to feel the weight of aerial bombardment. (Navy photo.)

4th Marine Division (reinforced)
 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion
 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion
 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion
 Company A, 11th Amphibian Tractor
 Battalion
 1st Joint Assault Signal Company
 15th Marine Defense Battalion
 Southern Landing Force (Major General
 Corlett, USA)
 7th Infantry Division (reinforced)
 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor
 Battalion
 75th Signal Company
 767th Tank Battalion
 91st Separate Chemical Company, MTZ
 3d Army Defense Battalion
 4th Army Defense Battalion
 50th Engineer Battalion
 145th Field Artillery Battalion
 163d Signal Photo Company
 31st Field Hospital
 Photo Detachment, 972d Signal Service
 Company
 SUNDANCE Landing Force (Lieutenant
 Colonel Sheldon, USA)
 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry (rein-
 forced)
 Reconnaissance Company, V Amphibi-
 ous Corps
 1st Marine Defense Battalion
 Reserve Landing Force (Brigadier Gen-
 eral Thomas E. Watson)
 (Tactical Group-1)
 22d Marines (reinforced)
 106th Infantry (reinforced) (less 2d
 Battalion)

Possible landing beaches for Roi were desig-
 nated Red 1, Red 2, and Red 3, while those for
 Namur were labeled Green 1 and Green 2. Al-
 though the plan called for the Southern Land-
 ing Force to hit the western end of Kwajalein,
 possible landing beaches were selected on the
 southern side of the island, the western tip and
 along the northern side to the northeastern tip.
 Starting from the latter point the beaches were
 Black, Purple 3, Purple 2, Purple 1, Green 1,
 Green 2, Green 3, Green 4, Red 1, Red 2, Blue 1,
 and Blue 2.

With the issuance of the Corps Operation
 Plan, it then fell to the various landing force
 commanders to prepare themselves for their as-
 signed missions.

PREPARING FOR ROI-NAMUR

Throughout the Marshalls planning the 4th
 Marine Division, which had been selected to
 make the assault on Roi-Namur, was stationed
 at Camp Pendleton, California, north of San
 Diego. It was the only Marine Division during
 World War II to be mounted and staged into
 combat directly from the continental United
 States.

Officially activated on 15 August 1943, and
 brought to full strength a month later, the di-
 vision was assigned to the V Amphibious
 Corps—in which it fought all its subsequent
 actions—on 20 September 1943. Its required
 date of readiness for combat operations was
 then set as 1 December of that year.³⁸ Al-
 though the division embodied its share of expe-
 rienced Marines, it was without previous com-
 bat background as a unit, a condition by no
 means eased by the pressure under which its
 training was conducted during the autumn of
 1943.

Aside from the fact that the 4th Marine Di-
 vision's leaders knew it to be earmarked for
 the Central Pacific, and thus for atoll warfare,
 the 4th had no knowledge of its probable ob-
 jective until early November, at which time
 preliminary planning was begun. At the same
 time it was decided to send certain key officers
 along as observers on the Tarawa operation.³⁹

The fact that corps headquarters was located
 in Hawaii, and Division headquarters in Cali-
 fornia some 2,200 miles away did not render
 the planning any easier. Close liaison was

³⁸ This and subsequent data from 4th MarDiv serial
 00C07744, Final Report on FLINTLOCK Operation,
 17Mar44, hereinafter cited as *4th MarDiv SAR*.

³⁹ Ltr Col W. W. Wensinger to Director, DivPub-
 Info, 5Jan48. These officers were BrigGen James L.
 Underhill, LtCol Walter I. Jordan, LtCol Charles D.
 Roberts, LtCol Evans F. Carlson and LtCol David K.
 Claude. Col Claude was killed in action in the op-
 eration while with the 3d Bn, 2d Marines. Col Jordan
 assumed command of the 2d Bn, 2d Marines, during the
 Tarawa assault. See Capt James R. Stockman, *The
 Battle for Tarawa*, Historical Section, HQMC, 1947.

maintained by flying staff officers between the two points, and on at least one occasion Brigadier General Graves B. Erskine, corps chief of staff, made a journey to the division.⁴⁰

Initial division planning as in the case of VAC, was concerned variously with Kwajalein, Wotje, and Maloelap Atolls. With Admiral Nimitz' decision to strike deep in the Marshalls and take only the atolls of Kwajalein and Majuro, however, this original assignment was rescinded and the division was told to plan only for the assault of Roi-Namur and adjacent islands. With little time before embarkation and a scarcity of information, the division staff went to work to rearrange plans in light of the new objective.

In late December Major General Schmidt, accompanied by Colonel William W. Rogers, division chief of staff, and Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson, assistant operations officer, flew to Pearl Harbor to submit the division's plan to Amphibious Corps. This was accepted, but the planners were instructed to draw alternate plans for the capture of Wotje. Within two days Colonel Rogers, assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Carlson, roughed out a scheme which in turn was accepted by the corps.

The importance of the 4th Division's objective was great, both strategically and tactically. The airfield on Roi constituted the center of enemy aviation activities—both logistical and operational—in the Marshalls. Deprived of this base, Japanese air power in the area would soon wither. From a tactical point of view, location of Roi-Namur controlled the northern entrances and anchorages of the great Kwajalein Lagoon. If this were not in our firm possession, the prosecution of other operations within or against the northern part of Kwajalein Atoll would be difficult if not impossible.

Although collectively referred to, Roi-Namur in fact constitutes two separate islands for all practical purposes. Roi, the westernmost, was the site of the airdrome proper,⁴¹ being joined to



REAR ADMIRAL CONOLLY AND MAJOR GENERAL SCHMIDT commanded the forces attacking northern Kwajalein.

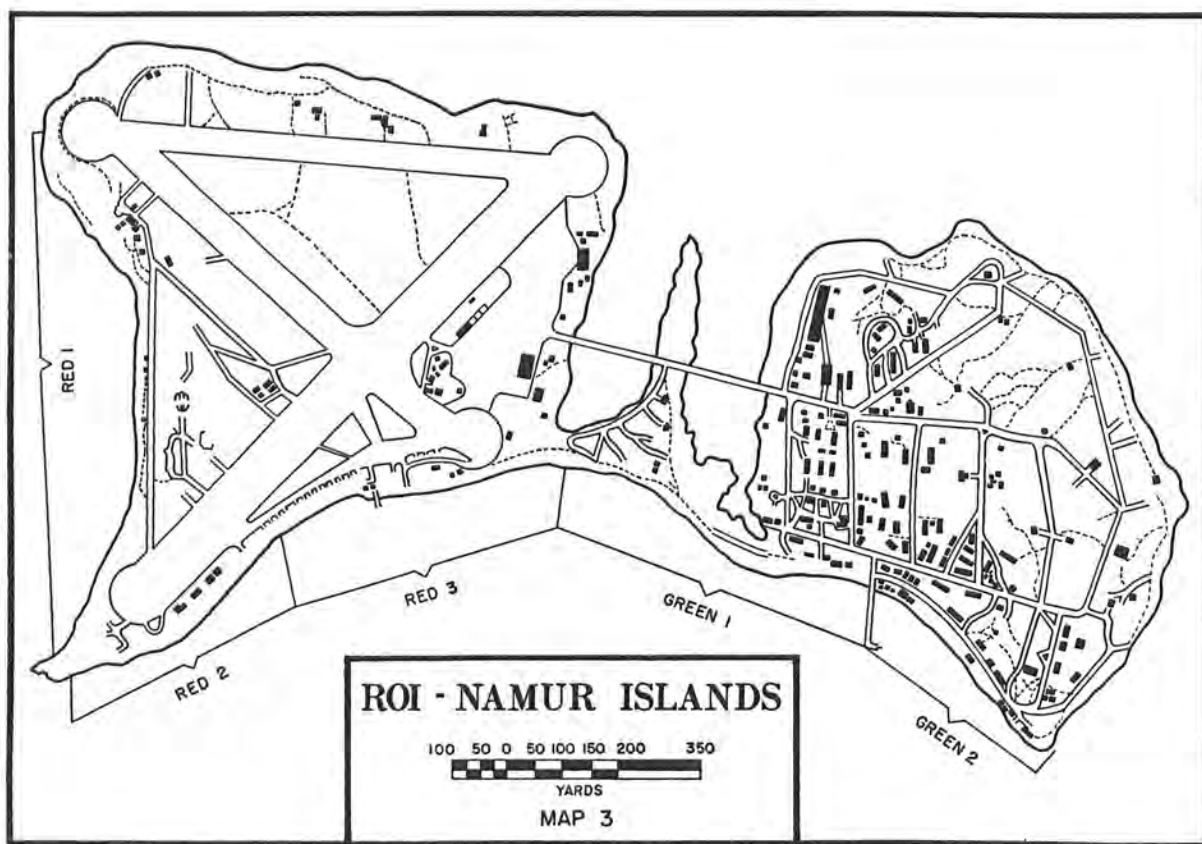
Namur, some 400 yards eastward, by a causeway across a neck of land. Namur on the other hand, served as the supporting base. Roi was little more than an airfield with the aviation operation and communication facilities and the aircraft maintenance installations needed for such a mission. Namur included the dumps of fuel, food and munitions; the shops and industrial facilities; the main power supply; the wharfage and port facilities; the barracks and headquarters buildings—in a word, all the supporting establishments required to sustain Roi's airfield and to maintain Japanese air and surface forces in north Kwajalein Atoll.⁴² Aside from the main radio transmission station on Ennubirr, a tiny islet some 3,000 yards down the chain from Namur to Kwajalein, the foregoing activities and facilities represented the net sum of the enemy's advanced base at this point.

⁴⁰ Ltr MajGen W. W. Rogers to Director, DivPub-Info, 3Feb48, hereinafter cited as *Rogers*.

⁴¹ "The design of the 4th Marine Division's patch had been approved during the brief period in which the division had been in existence prior to the Kwajalein operation. There was general regret after Roi had

been seized that the '4' formed by its runways [See Map 3, p. 22] couldn't supplant the previously approved less-historic design." *Wendt*.

⁴² JICPOA Bulletin 46-44, Base Installations, Roi, Namur and Ennubirr Is., Kwajalein Atoll, 15Apr44.



In terms of terrain, Roi and Namur constituted almost complete opposites. Roi, largely due to the exigencies of aviation, was bare as only a Central Pacific air base can be. On the other hand Namur was not only thickly clustered with every type of structure, but was heavily overgrown with palms, breadfruit trees and miscellaneous shrubs.⁴³ Each island was bounded by coral shelving which extended 600 yards on the seaward side and not more than 300 yards into the lagoon. Within the lagoon there was no surf; outside, heavy swells tumbled and crashed. As a measure of protection against erosion on Roi, concrete seawalls guarded the northeast and northwest corners of the island. None existed on Namur. Beaches were those of the typical coral atoll:

⁴³ "The code name for Namur was CAMOUFLAGE and the code name for Roi was BURLESQUE. These names were chosen because the undergrowth on Namur was so dense, while Roi was bare." Ltr BrigGen Homer L. Litzenberg to CMC, 31Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Litzenberg II*.

rough and generously spotted with heavy boulders.⁴⁴

Between Roi and Namur ran a sandspit over which the Japanese had constructed a causeway and road to link the two islands. In addition, along the lagoon shore a narrow stretch of beach connected the two.⁴⁵

The planners for the Marshalls operation were quick to realize the value of seizing off-shore islands to be used for artillery positions⁴⁶ to prepare for and support the main landings.

⁴⁴ Appendix 2, Annex FOX, 4th MarDiv Operation Plan 3-43 (Revised), 5.

⁴⁵ Because of this connecting strip of beach, Roi-Namur may technically be considered one island. For planning purposes, however, they were considered two separate entities.

⁴⁶ "As far as the origin of such a procedure is concerned, this method of handling artillery first came to my attention in the Marine Corps Schools in 1936 when a number of students solved the artillery problem in the Trinidad landing schedules by placing artillery on the channel island of Chacachacare to cover the landing on the south shore of the western peninsula." *Rogers*.

In the case of Roi-Namur, the necessity for securing such positions was further emphasized by the fact that the entrances to the lagoon (or "passes" as they were called) must be under Marine control inasmuch as the projected transport areas were all outside. Finally, because the immediate approach to the lagoon beaches of Roi and Namur was closely flanked by several islands to the east and west, it would be essential that these be neutralized or controlled as a prerequisite to landings on Roi-Namur.

The Northern Landing Force plan for the seizure of Roi-Namur, therefore, consisted of three phases: (1) seizure of four offshore islands; (2) seizure of the main objective; and (3) seizure of 11 lesser islands on the north and east ring of Kwajalein Atoll.

Inasmuch as entrance into the lagoon and seizure of the cluster of offshore islands represented a task of some complexity, requiring careful coordination and supervision, a provisional headquarters, IVAN Landing Group, was established under Brigadier General James L. Underhill, Assistant Division Commander. IVAN Landing Group consisted of the 25th Marines (reinforced), the 14th Marines, Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion and other attachments normal to the regimental combat team. Landings of this group were to be executed by the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, preceded by Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion. Upon completion of its assigned mission the group would revert to the normal relationship of its components to the division structure, and the 25th Marines would become division reserve.

While the foregoing plans were being rushed to completion, the 4th Division was terminating its basic amphibious training and preparing for two advanced exercises, one of them of rehearsal proportions. These were to be held in conjunction with Admiral Conolly's newly organized Group 3, Fifth Amphibious Force, which was to serve as support and transport element of the Northern Attack Force.⁴⁷

Throughout the planning, Admiral Conolly maintained his headquarters at Camp Pendle-

⁴⁷Group 3 had been organized on 23Oct43 in the San Diego area with this mission in mind. Conolly commanded Group 3 and Task Force 53 as Turner commanded Fifth Amphibious Force and Task Force 51.

ton near that of the 4th Division. This physical propinquity greatly favored effective joint planning, and all major decisions, therefore, represented the concurrence of Major General Schmidt and the admiral himself.⁴⁸

The first such division exercise was held at Camp Pendleton's Aliso Canyon beaches on 14-15 December when final details of the Marshalls plan were still necessarily lacking. The second, conducted at San Clemente on 2-3 January 1944, represented an actual rehearsal with all amphibious shipping, plus the bulk of the fire-support ships and carriers participating.⁴⁹

Two newly organized groups participated in the San Clemente rehearsal: the First Joint Assault Signal Company (1st JASCO) and the 4th Marine Division Air Observers. The former unit was activated 20 October 1943 at Camp Pendleton for the purpose of coordinating supporting fires during an amphibious operation. Its components included Shore and Beach Party Communication Teams, Shore Fire Control Parties, and Air Liaison Parties. On 2 December the 1st JASCO was joined to the V Amphibious Corps and thereupon attached to the 4th Marine Division for the FLINTLOCK operation.⁵⁰

The division air observers (or "Gunnery and Tactical Air Observers," as they were called initially) were organized to relay from the air an account of the progress of operations as they were occurring. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Wendt, Division Air Officer, trained the observers between October and December 1943.

In view of the fact that the Division's Air Observers would, of necessity, have to be based aboard a carrier, there was much Navy opposition to their being employed. As a result, it became necessary to demonstrate their value. . . . The demonstration took place at San Clemente Island. Lieutenant Colonel William W. Buchanan and Major Charles Duchein were hastily nominated to act as air observers on this occasion. Their

⁴⁸Report of ComPhibGrp 3 serial 0028 to CominCh, 23Feb44, 1, hereinafter cited as *PhibGrp3 SAR*.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁰Report of Commanding Officer, First Joint Assault Signal Company, undated.

"While the size of the objective [Roi-Namur] hindered their [JASCO] fullest utilization, the Division was very pleased with the over-all utilitarian performance of the JASCO personnel." *Wendt*.

subsequent superior performances during this rehearsal enabled the Division to profit immensely from their services. . . . Thereafter, Marine Air Observers were a vital adjunct of the Division's subsequent operation.⁵¹

During the rehearsal at San Clemente, the division was afforded a preview of the unfortunate relationships which would exist between the LVT's and LST's on the night of D-Day-D-plus 1 at Roi-Namur:

⁵¹ *Wendt*.

The naval elements [at the rehearsal] were poorly trained and uncooperative. LST's frequently refused to take aboard LVT's or LVT(A)'s with the result that several were lost and several men from the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion were drowned. One LST ran right over one of the LVT(A)'s. . . . All this was very poor for morale just before combat. LST's frequently would refuse to fuel LVT's other than the ones that they carried. This occurred both in the rehearsals and in the operation.⁵²

⁵² Ltr LtCol Louis Metzger to CMC, 13Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Metzger*.



KWAJALEIN ISLAND was bombed regularly before the amphibious assault. Note falling bomb in the lower center of the photograph. (Navy photo.)

As noted earlier, the LVT had just demonstrated its extraordinary usefulness as an assault landing vehicle in the Gilberts. In fact, the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, which would spearhead the assault on Roi-Namur, had furnished one officer and 50 men to operate the LVT(2)'s for the 2d Marine Division at Tarawa. The experience in the Gilberts plainly dictated widest possible employment of the amtracs in the forthcoming Marshalls assault, and Admiral Turner wrote them into his plan.

But a problem arose concerning amphibian tractor personnel.

On 5 December the 4th Division's organic 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was split, combined with some Marines of the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion and then diluted with recruits to form an additional unit—the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. This dilution was further increased by the subsequent organization during the same month of still another unit, Company A, 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Thus, the relatively inexperienced personnel of the original battalion had been spread extremely thin—a situation which could not but lead to difficulties and to some loss of efficiency in combat.⁵³

In view of the extensive difficulties subsequently encountered by the amphibian tractors at Roi-Namur (see Chapters IV and V), "it must be emphasized that only 30 days were available to the Amtrac Battalions to accomplish the following:"⁵⁴

1. Use the elements of one battalion to organize a total of two battalions plus one additional company.
2. Erect the housing necessary to accommodate daily drafts of personnel arriving at the amtrac units.
3. Armor plate all LVT's at San Diego (50 miles from Camp Pendleton).
4. Install, waterproof (as best as possible) and check LVT radios.
5. Train new LVT crews.
6. Familiarize naval personnel with LVT characteristics.
7. Accumulate, segregate, and prepare the large amount of stores and supplies authorized for LVT units.
8. Participate in numerous planning conferences with RCT 23, RCT 24, RCT 25, and the artillery units in reference to landing plans.

⁵³ 4th MarDiv SAR, 2.

⁵⁴ Croizat.

9. Embark and participate in a rehearsal at San Clemente Island.

10. Allocate officers and men reporting in; instruct them in their duties and assign them a job.

11. Supervise the combat loading of numerous LST's and one LSD.

12. Prepare LVT's for combat by installing weapons and making necessary vehicle checks.

Nevertheless, by the end of December the 4th Division's work was nearing completion, and the resultant Operation Plan 3-43 (revised) was issued to the regiments on the last day of the year. Less than a week remained prior to initial embarkation, with a rehearsal in between, but somehow all details were attended to. On 6 January the LST's and certain other amphibious small craft of Group 3 sailed from San Diego for Kauai, T. H., bearing the bulk of the amphibian tractors and the 14th Marines. These were followed a week later by the main body of Group 3 with the balance of the Northern Landing and Attack Forces.⁵⁵

But one final complication remained. The tractor group of LST's sailed from San Diego without having received the operation plans of the Central Pacific Force, the Fifth Amphibious Force and the Northern Attack Force. These plans reached the ships and units concerned on 18 January at Kauai. But since the tractor group proceeded from the Hawaiian area to the Marshalls on a different schedule and routing than the main body, no opportunity was afforded for any consultation or briefing between the command elements, both of Landing and Attack Forces, and the ships and units of the tractor group.

These difficulties were compounded by unforeseen radio troubles, which were subsequently recalled by Lieutenant Colonel Louis Metzger, commanding the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion:

The four line companies of the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion were *attached* to the various assault infantry battalions of the assault regiments. As battalion commander I had no command authority over my LVT(A) companies. No operation orders were received from the division, infantry regiments or infantry battalions until after we reached Hawaii. Then the orders varied from complete orders to penciled notes. In addition to the lack of orders, we had not been assigned our radio frequencies until after our arrival

⁵⁵ PhilGrp 3 SAR, 2.

at Kauai, Hawaii. Upon receipt of the radio frequencies I requested permission of the senior Marine officer . . . to drive the LVT(A)'s off the LST in order to set our TCS radios upon the assigned frequencies. He refused in spite of being told what it would mean to the [LVT(A)]'s efficiency. . . .⁵⁶

PREPARING FOR KWAJALEIN

While the 4th Marine Division wrestled with time and distance in its preparations for the northern landings, the 7th Infantry Division, located at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, T. H., found its planning far less complicated. This was owing, not only to the division's previous combat experience at Attu,⁵⁷ but, primarily, to physical nearness of V Amphibious Corps headquarters at Pearl Harbor, less than an hour's drive distant.

The 7th Division had been ordered to the Hawaiian area from Kiska just prior to being included in the Marshalls troop list and arrived at Oahu on 16 September 1943 for an early start in all the plans and preparations necessitated by the ambitious operations in prospect.⁵⁸ On 14 December the division learned that, with suitable attachments, it would constitute the Southern Landing Force in the seizure of Kwajalein Atoll (see Map 2, Map Section), and that Kwajalein Island would be the division's main objective.

Kwajalein is a crescent-shaped island located at the southeast tip of the atoll of that name. Although the island's development had not progressed to the extent of its northern counterpart, its importance in the southern arm of the great lagoon corresponded closely to that of Roi-Namur in the north. From the United States point of view, Kwajalein, like Roi-Namur, must be controlled if the atoll were to be secure for our use. Further, the island's length would permit something not feasible

on the blocky shapes of Roi and Namur: development of a long-range bomber strip from which shore-based air could harry the Carolines and Wake, not to speak of the remaining enemy strongholds in the Marshalls.⁵⁹

In December 1943, Kwajalein was a green, palm-covered island, flat, composed of sand and coral, with the usual offshore reefs. Ashore, amid the trees, were situated more than a hundred barracks, warehouses, and headquarters buildings, all required to maintain the garrison, its construction units, and the necessary administrative services. These buildings were largely concentrated in the northeastern end of the island. Centered and running east-west was a 5,000-foot airstrip well along towards completion. Parallel taxiways and parking areas to the north, nearer the lagoon, completed the airdrome on Kwajalein proper, but a subsidiary seaplane-base with ramps, hangars and other facilities was to be found on Ebeye, next island to the north. In the triangular bight formed by Gugegwe, Kwajalein, and Enubuj Islands lay the principal Japanese anchorage of the atoll, and Kwajalein's 120-foot concrete pier, reaching out into the lagoon, gave testimony of the island's importance.⁶⁰

Just as on the islands near Roi-Namur, Kwajalein's neighbors contained outlying installations which supported the Kwajalein headquarters. These were Gugegwe, which controlled the entrance to Bigje Channel into the lagoon; Ebeye, whose seaplane-base has already been described; and Enubuj, site of Kwajalein's radio transmitter.

Heavy surf and steep beaches marked the seaward sides of Kwajalein except in the area along its southwestern end. Good beach existed on the northern end, but surf conditions were bad. The offshore reef, 100 to 130 yards in width, was flat and bare at low tide, necessitating high-tide landings. Within the lagoon, Kwajalein's reef extended out anywhere from 200 to 400 yards without surf, but was flat and shallow, rendering difficult any approach. The western beach of smooth sand,

⁵⁶ Metzger.

⁵⁷ The 7th Division, less 53d Infantry Regiment, had taken Attu in May 1943. Kiska was occupied by a force which included the 17th and 184th Infantry Regiments. The latter, a former National Guard unit, replaced the 53d as an organic regiment of the 7th Infantry Division following the Kiska operation.

⁵⁸ Report of the 7th Division Participation in the FLINTLOCK Operation, 8Feb44, 1, hereinafter cited as *7th Div Report*.

⁵⁹ CinCPOA serial 00293, FLINTLOCK II-Joint Staff Study, 20Dec43, Annex 3 to Appendix C.

⁶⁰ JICPOA Bulletin 53-43, "Kwajalein," 1Dec43, 1-17.

450 yards long and approximately 20 feet deep. Back of it the Japanese were already erecting concrete seawalls and log palisades.⁶¹ The 7th Division's planners, therefore, selected the southwest beaches of Kwajalein for their main landing.

The 7th Division's plan for reduction of Kwajalein and the islands in the southern portion of the atoll was divided into three phases,⁶²

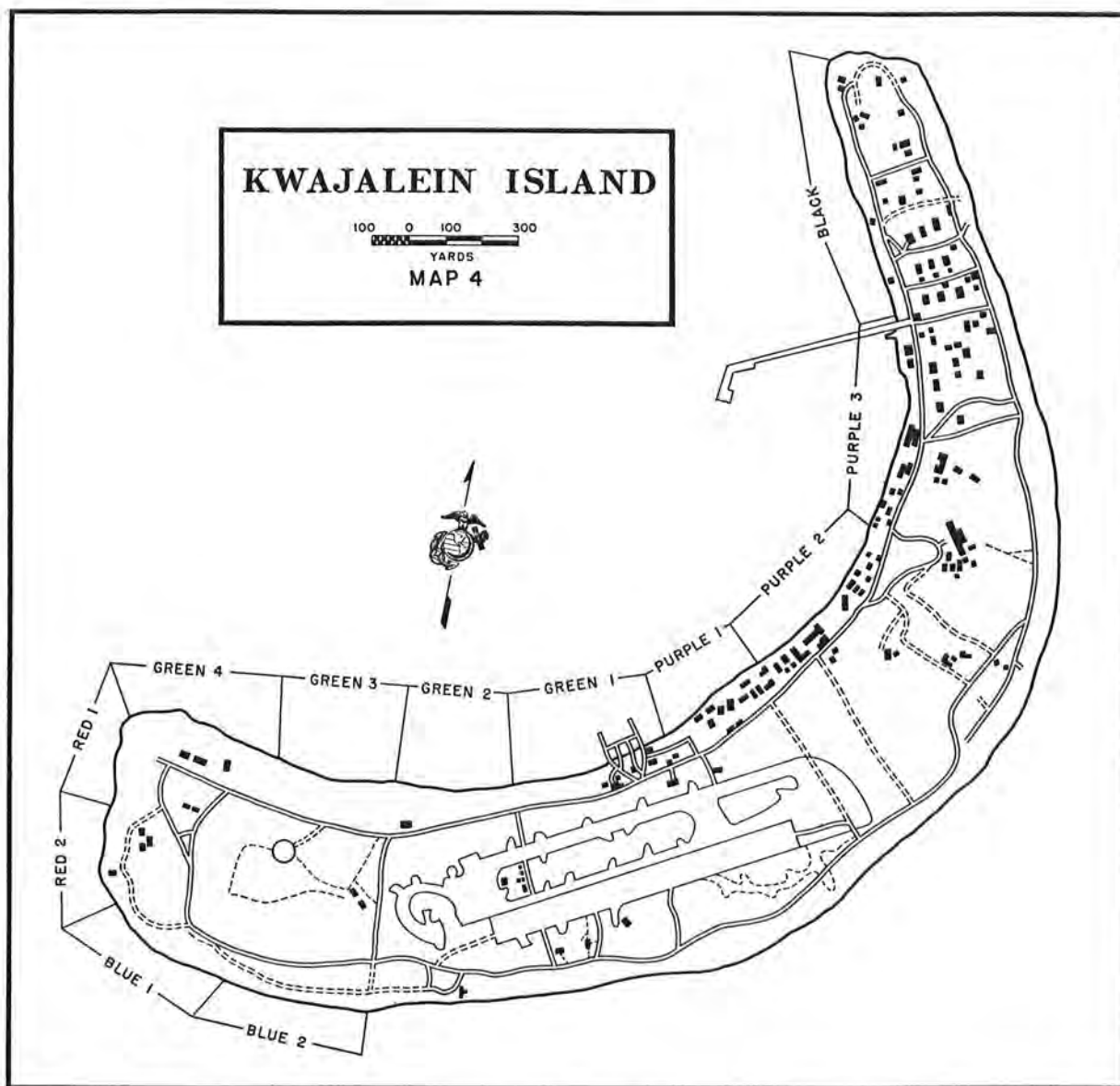
⁶¹ The foregoing data on Kwajalein's beaches are from 7th Infantry Division Field Order No. 1, Annex #3, 7.

⁶² 7th Div Report, Annex A.

closely corresponding to those in the 4th Marine Division Plan.

While not observing the Tarawa landing, Major General Corlett, the Army division commander, with two of his staff officers visited Betio shortly after its occupation. Here he made a study of the Japanese defense and later imparted this information to his subordinates for use in division training.

Another advantage of the 7th Division's situation in the Hawaiian area was that rehearsals could be held much later there (and under corps supervision) while the 4th Marine Division was en route from the West Coast. Such rehearsals



were held at Maalaea Bay, Maui, with simulated landings and gunfire support coordinated by the 75th JASCO being placed on adjacent Kahoolawe Island, between 12 and 17 January.⁶³

INTELLIGENCE⁶⁴

In mid-January 1944, the major portion of the Japanese fleet was believed concentrated at Truk, which at that time was still thought to be a veritable Gibraltar of the Pacific. Intelligence officers believed that an amphibious attack on the Marshalls would not in itself bring forth this main force, but probably a light striking force would do battle with the American Fifth Fleet. If the Japanese commander at Truk then deemed the situation favorable, he might send forth his armada. In any event, at least 20 enemy submarines were believed operating within the Marshalls area.

Japanese air capabilities were not considered formidable, but they did constitute a definite threat. Some 235 planes were estimated to be based in the Marshalls, 181 of these being serviceable. In addition, some 560 planes at such bases as Truk and Saipan theoretically counted as potential reinforcements.

Enemy ground forces in the Marshalls were set at 35,000, and of these between 8,000 and 9,600 were thought to be on Kwajalein Atoll, considered "the most active military-naval area in the Marshalls," containing the headquarters of both the 6th Base Defense Force and the 4th Fleet Commander. Furthermore, Kwajalein lay a mere 955 miles east of Truk as compared with the 2,190 miles separating it from Pearl Harbor. VAC Intelligence also expected defenses on the atoll to be "of a more permanent nature and consequently more formidable" than those encountered at Tarawa. The reasoning here, of course, was that the enemy had been occupying the Marshalls for nearly 30 years as compared with less than two at Tarawa.

Aside from Kwajalein Atoll, Japanese strength on other key atolls within the Marshalls merited consideration in planning the

FLINTLOCK operation. Jaluit, Wotje and Maloelap were thought to hold 3,500 troops each. All three had airfields, and in addition Jaluit and Wotje possessed seaplane and submarine bases. Mille, the southern anchor of the eastern Marshalls, held an estimated 5,500 troops. Eniwetok, the western bastion of the group, had a naval base, an airfield, a seaplane anchorage and possibly 1,000 troops.

A study of the two main objectives, Roi-Namur and Kwajalein, produced the following estimate:

Roi-Namur, defended by 2,700-3,100 men, 400-600 of them Korean laborers. Defenses generally centered around strong points on the corners of the two islands with AA guns, pillboxes, machine guns and fire trenches filling in the gaps in the perimeter defense; a few machine-gun and AA positions inside the perimeter, but virtually no organized defense in depth. The seaward approaches are the more heavily defended, but the lagoon beaches have more defensive installations than any of the other fortified islands within the atoll. Kwajalein, defended by 2,300-2,600 combatants, with an additional 1,200-1,600 laborers, mostly Korean. Strong points have been constructed on the corners of the island, to include two twin mount dual purpose 127mm guns, AA guns, pillboxes, machine guns and fire trenches in the gaps in the perimeter defense. A defensive line of antitank and fire trenches east of the airfield cuts the island in half. Seaward approaches are much more heavily fortified than those on the lagoon shores, but the strong points could enfilade any target within the lagoon crescent.⁶⁵

In order for Majuro Atoll to qualify as an additional objective, it had to fulfill the description of "lightly held." Intelligence officers came to the conclusion that there were few, if any, defensive installations on its islands and "small" defensive forces.

The V Amphibious Corps on 26 November 1943 distributed a G-2 Study of the Theater of Operations, consisting of 141 pages, six annexes, and 26 maps. Forty copies were allocated to each division, and a proportionate number to lower echelons. Additional sections and maps were distributed on 21 and 28 December to accord with the change in plans and with new information.

The first aerial photographic coverage of Kwajalein Atoll was not effected until 4 December 1943, inasmuch as preliminary empha-

⁶³ V Amphibious Corps serial 00684, 6Mar44, 5, hereinafter cited as *VAC SAR*.

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise cited, this data is derived from VAC Operation Report, G-2 Report, 19Feb44, hereinafter cited as *VAC G-2 Report*, and Annex H, Northern Attack Force Operation Order A-157-44, 16Jan44.

⁶⁵ Estimate of Japanese Troops and Defensive Organization on CARILLON Atoll, VAC, 17Jan44.

sis had been on Wotje, Maloelap, and Mille Atolls. Prior to the departure of troops from the Hawaiian area, two additional photographic sorties were flown in December and three in January. Photographs were also made on D-minus 2 and distributed to the assault units. While earlier mosaics had been at a scale of 1:10,000, these final pictures were at a scale of 1:2,500 and showed the Japanese positions in detail, winning an accolade of "excellent" from the V Amphibious Corps.

Although aerial photographs provided the best source of information, submarine photographs were also obtained. Pictures were made by USS *Seal* in December and by USS *Tarpon* in January. These provided additional hydrographic information.

Maps for the operation were made from aerial photographs by combining the efforts of the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas, the Fifth Amphibious Force, and the 64th Engineer Topographic Company. Three types were reproduced and distributed. These were charts on a scale of 1 inch to 1 nautical mile, terrain maps scaled 1:20,000, and special terrain maps of important island objectives scaled 1:3,000. Approximately 191,000 sheets of maps were reproduced and distributed within 30 days, including 43 different sheets of Kwajalein Atoll and seven different sheets of Majuro. Each division received 1,000 copies of the chart and terrain maps and 300 to 2,000 copies of the special terrain maps within its zone of action.

Relief maps of the various objectives were constructed by the Joint Intelligence Center, assisted by Marine and Army engineers, and distributed to the units involved. The 4th Marine Division received 12 such maps of Roi-Namur, while the 7th Infantry Division received a like number of Kwajalein for use on board the troop transports. Two relief maps of each objective were furnished Corps reserve. In addition, the 7th Division was furnished four relief maps of Ebeye Island and one of Enubuj.

Preparations for the landing on Majuro Atoll included the production of a navigation chart of the lagoon, inasmuch as no charts relating to Majuro could be found. This was accomplished by extensive aerial photographic missions, con-

verting the results into a chart with the assistance of a survey party from the Coast and Geodetic Survey.⁶⁶

THE JAPANESE

To defend both the Marshalls and the Gilberts, over-all responsibility for joint command was vested in Vice Admiral Masashi Kobayashi, IJN, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Fourth Fleet, normally based at Truk. Within his organization, Admiral Kobayashi actually commanded very little fleet in the conventional sense since the bulk of his command consisted of island garrisons throughout the Marshalls and Gilberts. Three old light cruisers, *Naka*, *Isuzu*, and *Nagara*, plus a few auxiliaries, constituted his principal forces afloat, while initially, his air strength was embodied in the 22d Air Flotilla commanded by Rear Admiral Shunichi Kira, IJN.⁶⁷

Japanese garrison forces in the Marshalls were composed principally of naval guards units under the 6th Base Force (responsible for bases and logistics) and commanded by Rear Admiral Monzo Akiyama, IJN, whose headquarters were on Kwajalein.⁶⁸ On 19 November 1943 (D-minus 1 for Tarawa) Admiral Akiyama was joined by Kobayashi, who, fearing an assault on Japan's Central Pacific bastions was imminent, transferred his flag by air from Truk to Kwajalein on that date.⁶⁹ The Fourth Fleet continued to be based at Truk, however, and it is evident that its commander rejoined it sometime before 31 January 1944.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ltr VAdm Harry W. Hill to CMC, 14Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Hill*.

⁶⁷ USSBS, 198-199; also USSBS *Interrogation Nav-43*, Cdr Goro Matsuura, IJN, 20Oct45, hereinafter cited as *Matsuura*.

⁶⁸ RAdm Akiyama remained at his post and was killed in the subsequent fight for that island. He was posthumously promoted to Vice Admiral.

⁶⁹ USSBS *Interrogation Nav-96*, RAdm Shunsaku Nabeshima, IJN, hereinafter cited as *Nabeshima*. This officer served as Chief of Staff, Fourth Fleet from Dec42 to Dec43.

⁷⁰ The author can find no record of the date Kobayashi returned his flag from Kwajalein to Truk. That he did so is obvious, however, for he was relieved of Fourth Fleet command on 19Feb44 and sent to Tokyo for naval staff duty.



REAR ADMIRAL AKIYAMA commanded the Japanese 6th Base Force from his headquarters on Kwajalein.

Simultaneously with Vice Admiral Kobayashi's aerial move, reinforcements departed Truk for Makin. These consisted of 1,500 Army troops embarked on the Fourth Fleet's three old light cruisers, accompanied by destroyer escort. Two days later, in light of the Tarawa assault, three naval divisions⁷¹ and several destroyers of the Japanese Second Fleet sped after the Fourth Fleet units to provide a stronger naval group. These forces rendezvoused at Kwajalein Atoll, and the two commanders conferred on possible courses of action.⁷²

⁷¹ These were the 4th Division, the 7th Cruiser Division and the 8th Cruiser Division.

⁷² *USSBS*, 192, 201; *USSBS Interrogation Nav-34*, Cdr Chikataka Nakajima, IJN: hereinafter cited as *Nakajima*; *Nabeshima*.

After due consideration, the Japanese admirals decided that discretion was the better part of valor and that they should retire to Truk. They reasoned that their combined forces would be of little avail against the United States Fifth Fleet unless they had their own Third Fleet (carrier forces). As if to emphasize these views, American carrier forces struck the Marshalls at this time, and the light cruisers, *Nagara* and *Isuzu* were substantially damaged.⁷³ Thereupon the 1,500 Army troops were landed at Mille, and the Japanese naval forces returned to Truk, arriving there on the night of 7 December. This was the last occasion that the Marshallese had to observe major fleet elements of the Japanese Imperial Navy, and much of this movement was duly noted by *USS Seal*, the submarine engaged in reconnaissance of Kwajalein Atoll.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the Japanese were attempting to build up their air strength in the Central Pacific. On 25 November, just after Tarawa had been secured by the 2d Marine Division, the Japanese 24th Air Flotilla staged into the Marshalls from Hokkaido, Japan, with some 40 bombers and 30 fighters.⁷⁵ These were to augment the somewhat depleted 22d Air Flotilla which had suffered heavy losses from the pre-Gilberts strikes of United States shore-based air and carrier aircraft. An additional 18 fighters were flown in from Rabaul as well as an undetermined number of single engine bomber-torpedo planes. On 5 December, however, the 22d Air Flotilla left the Marshalls for the Marianas taking nine bombers along. Thereupon Vice Admiral Michiyuki Yamada, IJN, commander of the 24th Flotilla, assumed command of all Japanese aviation in the Marshalls from his headquarters on Namur. There he remained until his death during the aerial bombing on D-minus 3.⁷⁶

On 25 January there were 35 shore-based

⁷³ This action is treated from the American viewpoint later in this chapter.

⁷⁴ Memo to Chief of Staff from ACofS, G-2, VAC, 29Dec43.

⁷⁵ *Matsuura*.

⁷⁶ 4th Marine Division Intelligence Report on FLINT-LOCK (undated) 2, hereinafter cited as *4th MarDiv IntRpt*.

planes at Roi-Namur, ten at Kwajalein, nine on Wotje, 59 on Maloelap, and 15 at Eniwetok.⁷⁷ Most of these were destroyed on the ground by carrier air and some few which rose to meet the attacking American planes were shot down. During the latter part of November and the first of December an attempt had been made to replace losses with planes from Roi, but it was soon evident that this was impractical. The Japanese, therefore, began gradually evacuating what was left of their aerial forces to Truk, and by 1 February 1944 their air power in the Marshalls was non-existent.⁷⁸

As has been noted in Chapter I, the Japanese wrote off the Marshalls as indefensible within the context of "Z" Plan, but these islands were scheduled to make the American advance a costly one. For that reason, during late 1943 they received a considerable share of Army troops which had been drawn from Japan, the Philippines and Manchuria and reorganized into Amphibious Brigades and South Seas Detachments. These were distributed to the outlying atolls rather than to the inner chain on the assumption that any attack would be a natural and gradual step from the Gilberts. As one Japanese naval staff officer later commented:

There was divided opinion as to whether you would land at Jaluit or Mille. Some thought you would land on Wotje, but there were few who thought you would go right to the heart of the Marshalls and take Kwajalein.⁷⁹

On 30 December 1943 the 1st Amphibious Brigade sailed from Truk for the Marshalls, the last such reinforcements to arrive. The troops were scheduled for Eniwetok, Wotje, Maloelap and Kwajalein Atolls, and on 10 January the ships arrived at the latter base. By that time those ticketed for Eniwetok and Maloelap and a portion of those for Wotje had been disembarked at their respective destinations. The Kwajalein group took up its garrison duties while the balance of the brigade—729 men—were quartered in a warehouse on

⁷⁷ USSBS, 201-202.

⁷⁸ *The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, The American Campaign Against Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit*, GPO (Washington), 1947, 35-36, herein after cited as *Campaign*.

⁷⁹ Nakajima.



VICE ADMIRAL YAMADA, commanding the Japanese 24th Air Flotilla, established his headquarters at Namur.

the island awaiting transportation when the 7th Infantry Division stormed ashore three weeks later, thus unwittingly increasing the size of the defense forces there.⁸⁰

To garrison the Marshall Islands on 15 January 1944—16 days prior to D-Day—the Japanese had 28,000 Army, Navy, and labor forces scattered over the various atolls. These included 3,500 at Wotje, 3,500 at Jaluit, 1,000 at Eniwetok, 3,300 at Maloelap, 4,000 at Kusaie, and 5,500 at Mille—figures remarkably close (and in some cases identical) to previously quoted U. S. intelligence estimates. Inasmuch as Kwajalein Atoll was the hub of military and naval activity for the Marshalls, it naturally contained the largest single garrison force—8,000 troops. Six thousand of these were evenly divided between Roi-Namur and

⁸⁰ JICPOA Bulletin 88-44, 1st Amphibious Brigade, Japanese Army.

Kwajalein, while the remaining 2,000 were distributed variously among the other islands within the atoll.⁸¹

The defenses of Roi-Namur, while characteristic of the laboriousness displayed by the Japanese in such matters, were by no means as formidable as they might have been. For example, they were not nearly up to the standard set at Tarawa.⁸² As previously noted, the Japanese were greatly surprised by the selection of an interior objective such as Kwajalein Atoll, and this surprise was inevitably reflected in defensive unreadiness.⁸³ Glaring deficiencies in the Roi-Namur defense scheme included concrete work of poor quality (and not enough even of that), shortage of barbed wire and little, if any, use of beach and underwater obstacles and mines.

The backbone of the Japanese defenses on each island consisted of a single battery of two twin-mount 127mm (5-inch) dual-purpose naval guns. Those on Roi were installed on the northwest corner, and those at Namur on the northern tip. In addition to these were two 37mm rapid-fire guns (one on each island); 28 emplaced dual-purpose 20mm machine cannon and .50-caliber machine guns; and 19 machine gun-equipped pillboxes (nine on Roi and ten on Namur). The enemy defenses also included four massive circular blockhouses, some 40 feet in diameter, with four-foot reinforced concrete walls. These blockhouses were reputedly of German design, based on works then existing in the Siegfried Line.

The shorelines of both Roi and Namur were ringed with trenches, open rifle-pits and some open mortar and machine-gun emplacements. The north-central portion of Namur contained a veritable maze of trenches amid the heavy undergrowth of this area. Above all, however two factors were notable: first, the general lack of heavy underground or covered defensive

construction; and second, the fact that in all sectors of the two islands, the lagoon shores had received least attention.⁸⁴

The Japanese garrison on Roi-Namur consisted of approximately 3,000 aviation, ground-defense, and service or construction troops, all naval. Some 1,500 men belonged to the 24th Air Flotilla, comprising a headquarters and elements of three squadrons. A 500-man provisional battalion, the Sonoyama Unit of the 61st Naval Guard Force, had its headquarters on Namur. More than a thousand Naval Air Corps Construction and Service troops rounded out the base personnel. All the latter, of course, were armed and prepared to take part in the defense; noncombatants and women having long since been evacuated from Roi-Namur.⁸⁵

As was usual in enemy doctrine of this period, the American "enemy will be destroyed at the beach." Should a lodgment be effected, "the enemy will be destroyed by counterattack." To carry out this Japanese tactical concept, troops and weapons were concentrated on probable landing beaches rather than in depth. Neither of the conspicuous points which commanded the lagoon shoreline (WENDY on Roi, and SALLY on Namur, as they were coded) was organized to deliver flanking fire onto the south beaches.⁸⁶ Few beach obstacles existed, other than some haphazard wire on the Namur end of the connecting sandspit, and around the northeast terminus of Roi airstrip. A few anti-tank ditches had been dug on Roi, and some antitank obstacles, consisting of large boulders set in concrete, had been installed along the north shore of that island. Secondary to this defensive system, such as it was, the enemy plan included local resistance within and about the numerous shelters, command posts and base installations inside the beach-perimeter.

To Lieutenant Colonel A. Vincent Wilson, CE, USA, Engineer, V Amphibious Corps, "The prepared defenses [of Kwajalein] were surprisingly weak.⁸⁷ But to the Commanding General, 7th Infantry Division, "the fortifica-

⁸¹ USSBS, 197.

⁸² JICPOA Bulletin 48-44, Japanese Defenses, Kwajalein Atoll, 10Apr44, 27-64. Hereinafter cited as *JICPOA Bulletin 48-44*, this is the principal source of information on Japanese defenses unless otherwise indicated.

⁸³ Report by Engineer, VAC, 15Feb44, 4, hereinafter cited as *VAC Engineer Report*.

⁸⁴ *VAC Engineer Report*, 3-4.

⁸⁵ This information is a synthesis of that given in USSBS, 201 and *4th MarDiv IntRpt*, 2-3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁸⁷ *VAC Engineer Report*, 1.



ROI WAS POUNDED by carrier-based planes in late January 1944. (Navy photo.)

tions at the south end of the Atoll [Kwajalein] were pretty good.”⁸⁸ As at Roi-Namur, there was a marked paucity of artillery, the principal weapons again being two of the twin-mount, dual-purpose 5-inch batteries. These guns were mounted at either end of Kwajalein and were backed up by two three-gun 80mm dual-purpose naval batteries located in open emplacements equally spaced along the seaward shore, as well as two more 80mm guns sited

⁸⁸ Ltr MajGen Charles H. Corlett to CMC, 29Nov52. Gen Corlett wrote that Kwajalein Island was covered by mutually supporting blockhouses of reinforced concrete. On the other hand, LtCol Wilson's view was shared by a special War Department inspection team. Marshall Islands, Japanese Defenses and Battle Damage, War Department Mission, 1Mar44.

singly for antiboat missions on the lagoon shore. Five 75mm infantry cannon and two 37mm antitank guns completed the main armament of Kwajalein. In 15 concrete pillboxes and one small blockhouse, as well as in some open emplacements, the Japanese had sited 11 13mm and 18 7.7mm machine guns, as well as numerous Nambus, the ever-present Japanese light machine gun.

Fire trenches encircled the island, usually just inland of the dune line behind the beaches. Three cross-island antitank-ditches, located in the vicinity of the airstrip, served partially to compartment the seaward beaches, but failed to reach across the entire island. Other than these, plus a little wire and the seawalls already

noted, no substantial obstacles existed. Numerous air raid shelters, magazines, etc., were located within the defensive perimeter, but these were generally of inferior or too-light construction, and often incomplete.⁸⁹

Like Roi-Namur, finally, the weaknesses of Kwajalein were incompleting work, poor construction, and no employment of underwater or beach obstacles.

According to post-operational tabulation, Kwajalein and the other Southern Islands were garrisoned by approximately 4,850 defenders. It is interesting to note that this was close to the total number which defended Tarawa, but the land area of Kwajalein was more than three

times that of Betio.⁹⁰ Of the combat troops assigned to the defense of Kwajalein, the 6th Base Force, with a provisional battalion of mixed Special Naval Landing Force and Naval Guard Force, plus elements of the 122d Infantry, constituted the most imposing element. In addition to these, there were present various "spare-part" headquarters units, plus part of a rudimentary copy—by the Japanese Army—of U. S. Fleet Marine Force organization in the shape of the 3d Battalion, Mobile Shipborne Force. Air Group 952 (a float-plane reconnaissance squadron), and the inevitable semimilitary construction and service

⁸⁹ JICPOA Bulletin 48-44, 1-20, and VAC Engineer Report, 2.

⁹⁰ JICPOA Bulletin 48-44, 1, and "The Marshall Islands Operation," Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill, USN, *Military Review*, January 1948, 10.



AN OIL DUMP LEFT BLAZING on Namur by carrier-based planes. Roi may be seen in the background. (Navy photo.)

troops completed the Personnel picture.⁹¹

Ebeye Island (BURTON) constituted Kwajalein's principal satellite, and was to become an important secondary objective of the Southern Landing Force. Its terrain and beaches were typical of the atoll. Two 80mm dual-purpose guns covered its eastern (seaward) beach, which was otherwise defended by a few concrete pillboxes and a fairly complete system of fire trenches.

LOGISTICS

Logistics for the FLINTLOCK operation were markedly complicated by the separation of units in the planning and loading phase. As noted previously, the 4th Marine Division was mounted directly from California; the 7th Infantry Division and the 106th Infantry Regimental Combat Team were stationed in Hawaii, and the 22d Marines had to be shipped from Samoa to Hawaii. Despite this, however, the Commander, V Amphibious Corps later reported "no major difficulties were encountered."⁹²

Supply responsibility for the various organizations was as varied as the organizations themselves. Initial supply for the 4th Marine Division was "the responsibility of agencies on the West Coast." The 7th Infantry Division and the 106th Regimental Combat Team were supported by Army and Navy supply channels, principally the Commanding General, Army Forces, Central Pacific Area (who exercised no tactical control over these units).⁹³ The 22d Marines received their support from Marine and Navy agencies in the Pacific.⁹⁴

⁹¹ VAC G-2 Report, 14; also USSBS, 201.

⁹² VAC Report of Logistical Aspects of the FLINTLOCK Operation, 23Mar44.

⁹³ On the one hand there was the supply headquarters (USAFIORA) without tactical authority or especial tactical consideration, and on the other hand there was the (ultimate) tactical headquarters (V Phib Corps) without supply responsibility. Considerable valuable time was lost in processing requests because of the lack of early definition of responsibility." G-4 Report of Operation, Part III, 6 (7th InfDiv FLINTLOCK Rept, Vol VII).

⁹⁴ The 22d Marines was unable to obtain bazookas, bazooka ammunition, and shaped charges from Marine supply services, however, and had to make a last-minute appeal to Army sources in order to have them in time for the operation. *Greene*.

Forty-two days' rations were scheduled for the operation, individuals carrying two days' rations each, four days' emergency rations loaded in bulk on LST's, six days palletized on APA's and 30 days loaded on AKA's. Also allotted were five days' water, ten units of AA and 105mm howitzer ammunition, eight units of other classes of ammunition, and 30 days of all other supplies. These amounts made combat loading of APA's impracticable. Consequently, initial combat equipment and supplies were loaded on APA's and between decks of AKA's, the bulk of remaining supplies were placed in AKA holds and loose emergency supplies were placed on LST's. This resulted in a combat load of about 600 short tons in each APA and AKA, with an additional 1,000 tons of maintenance supplies in each AKA.⁹⁵

The 4th Marine Division was allotted 240 amphibian tractors [LVT(2)] and 75 armored amphibians [LVT(A)(1)] for its landings in the northern portion of Kwajalein Atoll. These were organized into the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion with Company A of the 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion attached, and the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion. No DUKW's were provided, which meant that the LVT's and small boats would transfer supplies from ship to shore. Transportation would be at a premium once the division was ashore, for it carried only 30 percent of its wheeled vehicles: eight 1-ton cargo trucks and 25 2½-ton trucks. General Schmidt later commented that once combat ceased an acute transportation problem arose, requiring the division to borrow defense battalion trucks at the expense of that organization's rapid installation of its weapons.⁹⁶

Admiral Conolly organized his troop-carrying force into three transport divisions, each consisting of four troop transports and one cargo ship. Three transports carried one battalion landing team each, the fourth embarking the regimental support group and regimental headquarters. The cargo ship was assigned regimental supplies.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *AmphibOpn*, 5-1.

⁹⁶ 4th MarDiv SAR, Comments, 29.

⁹⁷ Enclosure H, CTF 53 Report on FLINTLOCK Operations, 23Feb44, hereinafter cited as CTF 53 Rpt FLINTLOCK.

The division's 105mm artillery, with ammunition, was preloaded into 14 LCM's and these in turn placed on board one of the LSD's (*Epping Forest*). The 75mm pack howitzers were preloaded in LVT(2)'s, and these vehicles embarked on board LST's, as were all the LVT's. Fifteen medium tanks were also preloaded in LCM's and loaded on the remaining LSD (*Gunston Hall*), while 36 light tanks were carried on APA's.

One aspect of loading went awry, however. As originally set forth in logistical plans, the combat units were to carry five units of fire for each weapon. Officers of the 7th Infantry Division were fearful that this was not sufficient and successfully pressed for an increase. On 5 January 1944 Admiral Nimitz ordered fire units for 105mm howitzers increased from five to ten and all other ground weapons units of fire increased from five to eight. This change caught the 4th Marine Division in the process of loading and required a revision of plans with attendant difficulties. The Marines later recommended in no uncertain terms "the cessation of logistical planning once the loading has begun." They pointed out that five units of fire would have been sufficient for the operation and that excess ammunition cluttered the beach, making it difficult to land other supplies.⁹⁸

In December 1943 the 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion⁹⁹ arrived in Hawaii and was attached (less Company D) to the 7th Infantry Division for the Kwajalein operation. General Corlett desired both amphibian tractors and amphibian tanks for the landing, however, and thereupon Major James L. Rogers, battalion commander, reorganized his unit to fit the task. Company A of the amphibian tank battalion was retained to spearhead the amphibious assault, but four LVT(2) groups were formed to take the troops ashore. The combined force was designated 708th Provisional

Amphibian Tractor Battalion, Major Rogers commanding.¹⁰⁰ Each LVT(2) group was equipped with 34 tractors, and Company A had 17 amphibian tanks. In addition, a pool of 21 tractors was established on an LSD to replace any LVT's which were damaged or lost. The 7th Infantry Division's total LVT strength amounted to 174 vehicles.

Although possessing fewer LVT's than the Marines, the Army division's amphibious transportation was augmented by 100 DUKW's. This was the first operation in the Pacific in which these 2½-ton amphibian trucks were used on an extensive scale. Sixty of them were set aside to carry ashore the division's four battalions of 105mm howitzers, the weapons being preloaded into the DUKW's and these in turn being placed on board LST's. The remaining 40 DUKW's were scheduled to serve as floating dumps and to land high priority supplies.¹⁰¹

The 7th Division had experimented successfully with palletized unit loads¹⁰² at Attu and planned to use them extensively for the Marshalls. A total of 4,174 loads were palletized including rations, ammunition, fuels and lubricants, engineer, medical, signal and ordnance items.

As Commander, Task Force 52, Admiral Turner organized his craft into transport divisions in much the same manner as Admiral Conolly. The Kwajalein force was embarked in three transport divisions which included 11 APA's, three AKA's, three LSD's, and two APD's. Nineteen LST's were included but were not listed under transport divisions. The Reserve Group made up two transport divisions, which included six APA's, one AP, one AKA, and one AK. The Majuro Force was embarked on USS *Cambria* (Admiral Hill's flagship) and *Kane*,

⁹⁸ Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, *United States Army in World War II, The Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls*, MS, XII-13, XII-14, a forthcoming volume to be published by the Office of Military History, Department of the Army, hereinafter cited as *Crowl and Love; 4th MarDiv SAR*, Comments, 28, 46.

⁹⁹ Marines referred to the LVT(A) as an "armored amphibian," while the Army designation was "amphibian tank."

¹⁰⁰ Special Action Report, Kwajalein Operation, 708th Amphibian Tank Bn, 12Mar44.

¹⁰¹ *AmphibOpn*, 7-7.

¹⁰² A pallet is dunnage, usually of wood, upon which supplies are lashed; so constructed that the pallet and supplies stored thereon may be picked up easily by materials handling equipment. A palletized unit load is a quantity of any item, packaged or unpackaged, which is arranged on a pallet in a specified manner and securely strapped or fastened thereto so that the whole is handled as a unit.

the former being an APA and the latter an APD.¹⁰³

Casualties during the operation were to be evacuated to designated APA's, while LST's were to be used in the event of rough weather. Two hospital ships—USS *Solace* for the Northern Attack Force and the USS *Relief* for the Southern Attack Force—were scheduled to arrive on D-plus 3. All casualties were to be evacuated to Pearl Harbor, and air transportation was authorized for those cases warranting it.

Shore parties were to be organized on the basis of one for each battalion landing team. The basic shore party organization for the Northern Landing Force was to be formed from the 20th Marines, while the 50th Engineer Battalion was the nucleus of the Southern Landing Force shore party.¹⁰⁴ Garrison troops and defense battalions were to augment the groups. To assist in unloading heavy engineer equipment at the objectives, pontoon causeways were taken along. These were transported on four LST's, eight 175-foot sections on each ship.

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

Operations preliminary to actual landings in the Marshalls, as in the case of any major amphibious assault, were directed toward two principal ends; namely, accumulation of intelligence, and preparation of the objectives and their supporting positions. Inasmuch as the most important source of preliminary intelligence was in this case aerial photography, it was usually possible to accomplish both aims concurrently during the air strikes set up by Admiral Spruance.

Obviously, any such daring penetration of Japanese-held territory must be preceded and accompanied by thorough neutralization of the surrounding enemy bases. In addition, a prime lesson of Tarawa had been the demonstration of the need for prolonged and careful preliminary bombardment of actual objective areas. In the case of the Marshalls, this neutralization and preparation, together with the required photo-

sorties, was to be accomplished by a combination of shore and carrier-based air strikes in conjunction with the most thorough preliminary naval gunfire bombardment yet planned in the history of amphibious warfare.¹⁰⁵

As outlined by Admiral Turner, the principal features of the plan were:

- (1) Prolonged early and progressively intensified air and naval bombardment "calculated to wear the enemy down and give him little opportunity to repair damage, replenish food, water and ammunition."¹⁰⁶
- (2) Short-range destruction of carefully pinpointed beach defenses "by accurate, deliberate pointer-fire" in order that every battery, pillbox, blockhouse, or weapon which might oppose the landing would be destroyed or fully neutralized.
- (3) Careful selection of naval ammunition best suited to *destroy* targets.
- (4) Intensive training, including rehearsal firings against replicas of Tarawa fortifications constructed at the newly established Shore Bombardment Range, Kahoolawe, T. H.¹⁰⁷

Achievement and maintenance of neutralization on enemy air bases which could support attacks against our forces in the Marshalls was the logical entering wedge for our advance. As listed by Admiral Spruance in order of importance, these fields were: Roi, Taroa (Maloelap Atoll), Wotje, Kwajalein, Mille, Eniwetok, Nauru, and Wake. Of lesser importance but subject to neutralization attacks were Ponape, Kusaie, and the seaplane base at Jaluit.

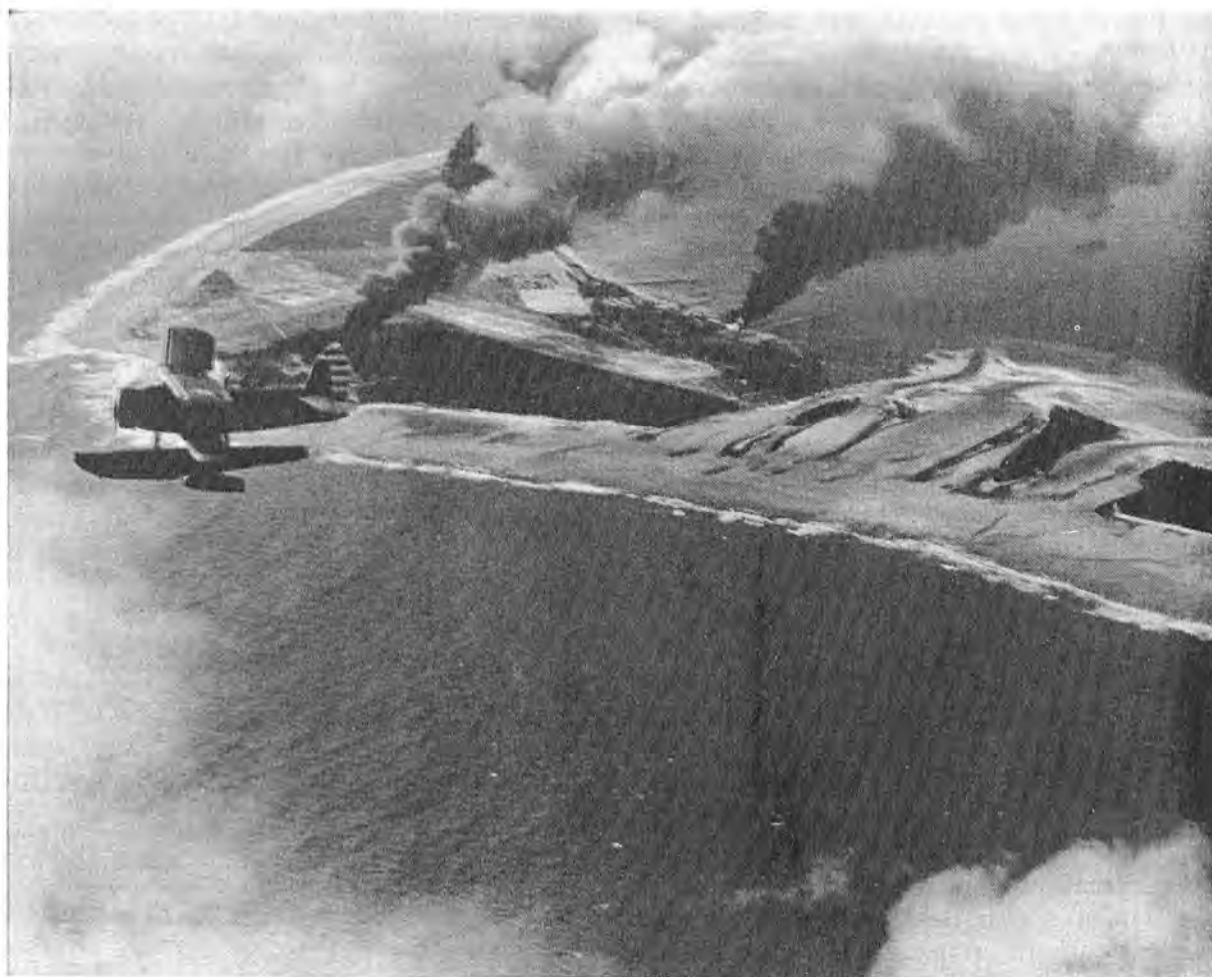
¹⁰⁵ 6,919 tons of naval gunfire ammunition were to be fired from D-minus 2 through D-Day against carefully selected targets in the Marshalls. V Amphibious Corps Naval Gunfire Officer's Report on FLINTLOCK, 1-8.

¹⁰⁶ FifthPhibFor SAR, enclosure (E), 1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-6. The Kahoolawe range, established on an uninhabited island in the Hawaiian group south of Maui, was operated by the Naval Gunfire Section, V Amphibious Corps, and was designed to train fire-support ships in attack of shore targets. Kahoolawe had been reconnoitered by Marine artillery and amphibious gunnery specialists in October 1943, and by the end of that month, had commenced its major role in improving the performance and technique of Pacific Fleet amphibious gunnery under the supervision of Marine and Navy gunnery officers.

¹⁰³ *AmphibOpn*, 5-4, 5-5, 5-6; also Task Group 51.2 Majuro Action Report, 2, hereinafter cited as *TG 51.2 Rpt.*

¹⁰⁴ VAC Opn Plan 1-44, Annex H, 5Jan44.



AERIAL BOMBARDMENT of Wotje was one phase of preliminary operations. (Navy photo.)

Mille, Jaluit, and Nauru fell within the exclusive province of Admiral Hoover's shore-based air (mainly the Seventh Air Force), operating from bases in the Gilberts and Ellices. Wake was to be hit by CinCPac patrol squadron strikes launched from Midway. The remaining fields would be taken out by carrier strikes, and Roi, Taroa, and Wotje, the three highest priority targets, would be kept neutral by surface bombardment close on the heels of Admiral Mitscher's carrier attacks.¹⁰⁸

The campaign of neutralization got underway as planned on 4 December, with carrier and shore-based strikes. Seventh Air Force conducted high altitude raids against both Nauru and Mille, with satisfactory results, but the important events of the day took place at Kwa-

jalein, Ebeye, Roi, and Wotje, which were hit by carrier task forces under Rear Admirals Charles A. Pownall and Alfred E. Montgomery. Off Kwajalein two of the Japanese Fourth Fleet's old light cruisers, *Nagara* and *Isuzu*, received substantial damage at this time, either from direct hits or near misses; three cargo ships were sunk, and approximately ten aircraft destroyed on the island's airfield.¹⁰⁹ At Roi, where vigorous interception was encountered and 19 enemy fighters shot down, damage was confined to the seaplane base and radio station, and at Wotje, one cargo ship was sunk and a

¹⁰⁸ ComCenPacFor serial 0095, 1Mar44, 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Nabeshima*, 412. These results were by no means up to the enthusiastic claims of pilots, who claimed to have sunk both cruisers, as well as four auxiliaries, and to have destroyed more than 50 enemy aircraft. CinCPac serial 001035, 31Mar44, 8-10, hereinafter cited as *CinCPac Summary*.

number of enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground.¹¹⁰ These strikes were followed by a surface and air bombardment of Nauru¹¹¹ on 8 December, and were the prelude to a month of shore-based pounding throughout the Marshalls by Admiral Hoover's B-24's.

The Japanese reaction to the raids of 4 December resembled, in tactics and effect, that of an overturned beehive. Throughout the day and night of 4 December, both Pownall's and Montgomery's task groups were subjected to almost continual "snooper" attacks by small groups of enemy torpedo planes (mainly "BETTY's" and "KATE's"), estimated to total as many as 50. Just prior to midnight, the enemy's persistence gained its reward when, assisted by illumination from flares dropped just previously, the attackers launched a torpedo which found its way to the USS *Lexington*, one of Admiral Pownall's carriers, inflicting 44 casualties and considerable damage aft.¹¹²

Throughout January shore-based attacks from new U. S. bases in the Gilberts and the Ellices increased both in tempo and effectiveness. With Makin, Tarawa, and Apamama now operational air bases, it was possible to provide fighter cover for heavy bombers, as well as to hit the enemy repeatedly with medium bombers (generally PBJ's, or B-25's, as the Air Forces termed them) and even with Marine SBD's.¹¹³ The goal of this progressively intensified attack by shore-based air was not only to

neutralize or destroy enemy air throughout the Marshalls but also to confuse the Japanese as to our exact objectives. These aims had been attained substantially by the latter part of January, when Admiral Spruance's carriers and battleships closed in for the final strikes preliminary to commencement of landing operations in Kwajalein Atoll.

On D-minus 2 (29 January), the full might of the Central Pacific Force descended upon the Japanese in the Marshalls. Carrier task forces struck Taroa and Wotje, to be followed by surface bombardment, while at Kwajalein and Roi-Namur the grim pounding of preliminary bombardment began in earnest.

Taroa was hit by planes from three carriers under Rear Admiral John W. Reeves (USS *Yorktown*, *Enterprise*, and *Belleau Wood*) and bombarded by three heavy cruisers (USS *San Francisco*, *New Orleans*, and *Minneapolis*) with screening craft. Two enemy cargo vessels were sunk by ship's gunfire, and spirited return fire was directed against the cruisers by a coast defense battery which obtained straddles and near misses with such frequency that the Commanding Officer, USS *Minneapolis*, expressed relief when the range was opened and speed increased to evade this fire. *Pensacola*, *Salt Lake City*, and *Chester* maintained neutralization on Taroa by intermittent day and night bombardments through 3 February. Wotje received carrier strikes from planes of USS *Saratoga*, *Princeton*, and *Langley*, and was likewise bombarded by *Pensacola*, *Salt Lake City*, and *Chester*, which received somewhat less effective fire from the Japanese defenses.¹¹⁴

The two-day preparation of Roi-Namur was carried out by a carrier task force under Admiral Montgomery, together with the old battleships and escort carriers of the Northern Attack Force. The first task was eradication of Japanese air at Roi. Admiral Yamada of the 24th Air Flotilla launched his last 20 fighters—Air Group 281—to meet the dawn sweep of Grumman Hellcats from the carriers *Essex*, *Cabot*, and *Intrepid*. Within a matter of minutes, 11 enemy planes had been shot out of the air and

¹¹⁰ ComCenPacFor serial 0082, 27Feb44, 8.

¹¹¹ This was rendered eventful by 6-inch fire from Japanese batteries which put one shell into the USS *Boyd's* engine room and straddled that ship a half-dozen times while it was retiring after the first hit. *CinCPac Summary*, 13.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹¹³ During December and January, the following tonnages of bombs were placed on selected targets in the Marshalls by shore-based air:

	Tons
Maloelap	326
Kwajalein Atoll	313
Jaluit	256
Mille	415
Wotje	367
Total	1,677

During the same period, the enemy placed 193 tons on Makin, Tarawa and Apamama. *CinCPac Summary*.

¹¹⁴ CinCPac War Diary, Jan44, hereinafter cited as *CinCPac WD*; ComCruDiv5 serial 0013, 15Feb44, 1-9; USS *New Orleans* serial 003, 8Feb44.

the balance dispersed. This was the last Japanese fighter opposition to be encountered over Roi.

Grounded aircraft, hangars, communication facilities, fuel and ammunition dumps, and the 5-inch dual-purpose battery on Roi were Admiral Montgomery's targets, for his principal task to ensure local control of the air.¹¹⁵ This he achieved absolutely by effective destruction of the Roi air base as such and by the erasure of Air Group 281's interceptors.

Commencing on the night of 29 January, and continuing until D-Day when it was apparent that air superiority rested with the attackers,

¹¹⁵ Admiral Montgomery's task force destroyed a total of 92 Japanese aircraft on the field or in the air at Roi during these strikes. Commander Carrier Division 12 serial 0060, 25Feb44, hereinafter cited as *Montgomery SAR*.

the fast battleships and screening craft of the task force began intermittent bombardment of Roi and Namur, first giving area coverage to Roi's runways and air facilities, then concentrating on the destruction of located blockhouses on the north shore and the 5-inch battery on the west shore. On Namur, the 5-inch battery likewise received attention, as did blockhouses on the west and north shores. Lagoon beaches of both islands were thoroughly covered, and the bombarding ships shifted their fires to cover Ennubirr and the islands immediately southeast of Namur. On 30 January Admiral Montgomery's planes were reinforced by those from the three escort-carriers of Admiral Conolly's Northern Attack Force (*Sangamon*, *Swanee*, and *Chenango*), which continued the air and anti-submarine patrolling necessary to isolate the



A PORTION OF ADMIRAL CONOLLY'S TASK FORCE 53 en route to Roi-Namur. (Navy photo.)

objective, as well as the pounding necessary to soften it.¹¹⁶

On 29 January Kwajalein and Ebeye fell to the successive attentions of a carrier task force under Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, USN (USS *Bunker Hill*, *Monterey*, and *Cowpens*), and on 30 January of Rear Admiral Samuel P. Ginder's *Saratoga*, *Princeton*, and *Langley*. These were likewise reinforced by Southern Attack Force escort carriers (USS *Manila Bay*, *Coral Sea*, and *Corregidor*) as the latter arrived in the area on the 30th. Known ground defenses, plus all means of air defense, such as radar, the seaplane base on Ebeye, and anti-aircraft weapons were bombed by the carrier planes and then shelled by the fast battleships and destroyers of the carrier task forces.

As a final insurance against interruption, on D-minus 1 assorted blows were dealt to the already heavily pummelled enemy-held atolls in the Marshalls. Battleships and destroyers from the Northern Attack Force renewed the bombardment of Wotje, as did a similar detachment from the Southern Attack Force at Taroa. Admiral Sherman's task force, which had hit Kwajalein the day before, now appeared off Eniwetok to neutralize and ground the two feeble enemy squadrons at that place, while shore-based bombers hit Mille and Jaluit at the same time as Midway's patrol bombers were over Wake.¹¹⁷

MOUNTING OUT

On 21 January, the main body of the Northern Attack Force reached Lahaina Roads, the water area between the Hawaiian Islands of

Maui, Lanai, Molokai, and Kahoolawe. This was the day after the tractor groups of both the Northern and Southern Forces had set sail for the Marshalls. The 15th Defense Battalion, which had been training on Oahu and was attached to the 4th Marine Division for the Marshalls operation, joined the larger unit at this time. A busy day was spent in final conferences and briefings, particularly of and by the amphibious group's Navy officers, and the next day both Northern and Southern forces sailed for their final objectives.

On the night of 30 January, D-minus 1, the Marshall Islands were literally threaded by the approaching United States naval task forces. Moving down parallel tracks, with almost the precise timing of a great railroad, the bulk of the Northern and Southern Attack Forces passed between Ailuk and Utirik, well north of Wotje, and swung south towards Kwajalein Atoll. Earlier in the day, Majuro's little task group had broken off and headed southwestward toward its objective, passing less than 50 miles east of smouldering Taroa.

On board the carriers and fire-support ships which had already opened the battle, aviators and gunners prepared for an even more thunderous morrow, while in the humid, cramped troop-compartments of the attack transports, Marines and soldiers waited. They passed the time checking weapons or perhaps working their way onto the blacked-out upper decks for a breath of fresh air and a look at the stars—unknowing that a Japanese diarist at the radio station on Ennubirr Islands a few days previously had recorded, "Convoy left Pearl Harbor on 22d to attack us."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *Montgomery SAR*; and USS *Alabama* serial 018, 6Feb44.

¹¹⁷ *CinCPac WD*.

¹¹⁸ Movement schedules are from Commander, Fifth-PhibForce serial 00180 to CinCPac, 25Feb44, 8-9. The diary extract is quoted in 4th MarDiv G-2 Report, 14.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER III

D-Day in the Marshalls

IVAN AND JACOB

Shortly before dawn 31 January the attack transports and fire-support ships of the Northern Attack Force reached station for their D-Day operations: securing key outlying islands adjacent to Roi-Namur and forcing passage into Kwajalein's great lagoon.

The initial objective of the day was to secure Mellu (IVAN) and Ennuebing (JACOB) Islands, southwest of Roi, in order that the intervening passes into the lagoon might be opened, and that the guns of the 14th Marines could go into position to support the next day's main assault.

Landings on both Mellu and Ennuebing were to be executed simultaneously at H-Hour (tentatively set for 0900) by the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Clarence J. O'Donnell) reinforced by Company D,¹ 4th Tank Battalion.² Company B, 25th Marines, would seize Ennuebing—it was planned—from seaward, landing on Beach Blue 1; Company C of the same battalion, together with the scout company, would land over Blue 2 on Mellu, like-

¹ Under the organization in effect at this time the missions now performed by a division reconnaissance company were then assigned to one company (scout company), D, within the division tank battalion.

² These units were elements of the IVAN Landing Group, which components were listed in Chapter II. This group was dissolved at 0700 on D-plus 1.

wise from seaward. Battalion troops would proceed from their transports³ by LCVP to rendezvous with and transfer to the amphibian tractors which would take the leading waves in. Thereafter the mine sweepers, a covering fire-support unit, and the balance of the IVAN group would enter the lagoon for the remaining landings, while the 14th Marines' artillery went into position.

The morning, save for the rough sea, was typical of the Marshalls. An overcast, with promise of tropical rain squalls, filled the sky. A steady 19-knot easterly breeze kicked up spray in the faces of the Marines as the ramped LCVP's butted their way toward the area where rode the LST's preparing to disgorge their amphibian tractors.

A few minutes before sunrise, the fire-support units had reached station. Theirs was the task of final preparation for the main landings to come. Southeast of Namur steamed two battleships (*Tennessee* and *Colorado*), two cruisers (*Louisville* and *Mobile*), and a pair of destroyers. These would work over Roi-Namur and (if needed) Ennugarret. One destroyer each was assigned, from this same area, to bombard Ennumennet (USS *Porterfield*) and Ennubirr (USS *Haraden*). West of Roi, lay Admiral

³ 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, was embarked in USS *Warren*, and the scout company, following standard amphibious reconnaissance practice, in a destroyer-transport, USS *Schley*.

Spruance's flagship, the heavy cruiser *Indianapolis*, together with one old battleship (*Maryland*), two light cruisers (*Santa Fe* and *Biloxi*), and two more destroyers. These ships would concentrate on Roi, which was still believed to be much the tougher of the two main objectives.⁴ Despite the good work of the carrier task force and the fast battleships, much remained to be done in the way of deliberate, short-range destructive fire. This was the task of Admiral Conolly's hard-hitting old battleships and escort-carriers, and at 0651 the first salvos cracked out.

Two miles out from IVAN and JACOB as the sun rose, the destroyer *Phelps*, primary control vessel, marked the lines of departure for both islands⁵ and conducted fire-support missions. Nearby rode the submarine chaser *SC 997* bearing General Underhill, who would personally oversee the initial assault of O'Donnell's battalion.

As soon as they could get off carrier decks by first light, Navy torpedo planes and dive bombers were on their way toward Roi-Namur for the day's first air strike, which was duly executed at 0715 while the ships checked bombardment so as not to endanger planes.⁶

The Marines of O'Donnell's battalion had been up since reveille at 0330. Following a

⁴ Historical Division Interview with Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, 10Jul45, hereinafter cited as *Litzenberg I*. Information on fire-support plan from Commander, Amphibious Group 3 Operation Order A157-44, hereinafter cited as *OpnOrder A157-44*.

⁵ This ship, whose role was destined to occasion considerable discussion, was also flag of Fire Support Unit 5, composed of herself and six of the new landing craft, infantry (gunboat), designated LCI(G)'s which were to support the landings and cover the mine sweepers. Commander, Destroyer Squadron 1, in *Phelps*, thus had not only his normal duties to perform, but those of fire-support, covering dispatch of boat-waves and supervision of the line of departure. On the bridge of this destroyer, 11 voice-radio circuits were being manned that morning. *Litzenberg I*.

⁶ This and following chronological narrative of IVAN-JACOB landings and associated operations, represent a synthesis of the following sources, unless otherwise indicated: *4th MarDiv SAR*, enclosure (A), 6-8; 4th Marine Division Journal, D-Day, hereinafter cited as *4th MarDiv Jnl*; Action Report, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, 16Feb44; Action Report of Commander Destroyer Squadron One, 25Feb44, hereinafter cited as *ComDesRonOne SAR*.

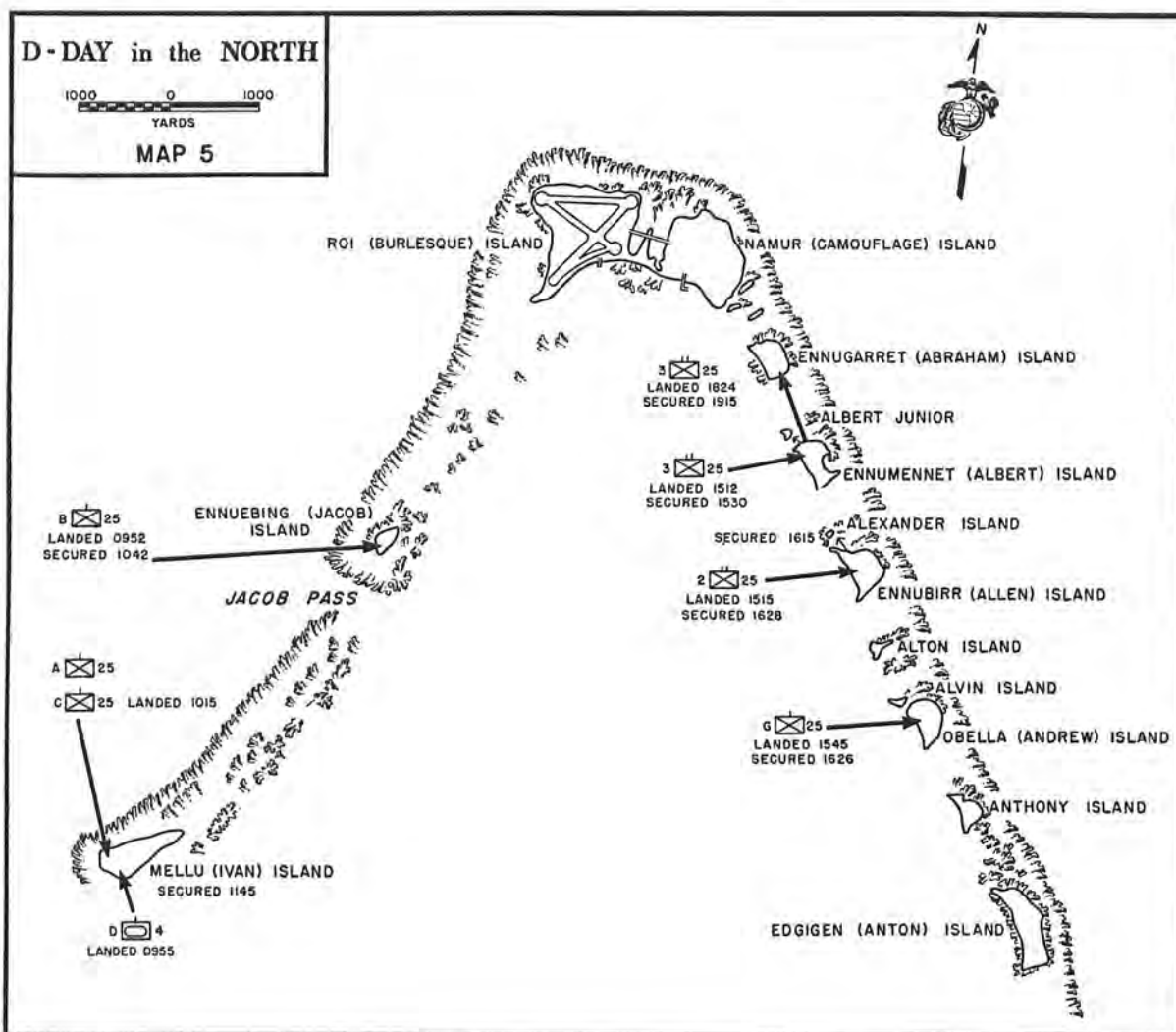


GENERAL UNDERHILL AND COLONEL CUMMING directed the seizure of the Northern Landing Force's objectives on D-Day.

breakfast of canned fruit juice,⁷ cold meat and coffee, they had boated in LCVP's at 0530, and were now, after their choppy wet run into the LST area, transferring to the tractors of Company B, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, getting thoroughly drenched and occasionally seasick in the process. Furthermore, with the wind blowing steadily from the east, the rough seas could be expected not only to delay all boating and transfers, but especially the movement of the amphibian tractors toward the beaches. Amtracs, never the most speedy craft, could not make more than two knots (approximately half speed), in the face of this wind and sea.

While the IVAN and JACOB landing forces were thus occupied, the balance of the 25th Marines (reinforced) was likewise boating for its subsequent landings within the lagoon. Due to the multiplicity of objectives scheduled for D-Day, the supply of available amphibian tractors would only permit assault waves of the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, to embark in these craft. The 3d Battalion would ride out the morning in LCVP's prepared to transfer later in the day to amphibian tractors released by the Mellu and Ennuebing forces. Under the best of circumstances this would be a complicated arrangement.

⁷ Styled "battery-acid" in the lingo of the Marines.



At 0800, not yet fully mindful of the potential delays already becoming apparent in lower echelons, Admiral Conolly announced by radio that H-Hour (the time for IVAN-JACOB landings) would be 0900, as previously planned; A-Hour (for Ennubirr and Ennumennet), at 1130; and B-Hour (for Ennugarret), 1600. Twenty-five minutes later the naval bombardment lifted and 17 aircraft from the escort carrier, *Chenango*, swept down to plaster the southwest point (WENDY) of Roi and the southeast point (SALLY) of Namur. While this strike was in progress the 4th Division air-observer, flying beneath a 1,000-foot ceiling, carefully scrutinized Mellu and Ennuebing, reporting no signs of enemy activity in the thick brush below.

By the time the air strike had lifted, it was apparent to the Control Officer at the line of departure in the *Phelps* that H-Hour would not be met. At 0835, he predicted a 15-minute delay; a few minutes later, he anticipated 20 minutes before the leading waves could land. By 0900, Admiral Conolly and General Schmidt, on board the Northern Attack Force command-ship *Appalachian*, realized that H-Hour must be delayed, and this was done at 0903 by a dispatch establishing the revised time as 0930.

At almost the moment of Admiral Conolly's signal postponing H-Hour, the armored amphibians of Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, churned across the line of departure past the *Phelps*, preceded by the specially armed LCI(G)'s.

Ten minutes later, when the amphibian tractors were 3,000 yards offshore, planes from the *Essex* screamed down on Ennuebing and Mellu, bombing and strafing the still-silent undergrowth of the two green islets. Roi, however, was not silent at this moment, for hardly had the air strike commenced than the twin-mount 5-inch battery on the northwest tip of Roi opened on Fire Support Unit Two. To this intermittent and fortunately inaccurate fire, the *Indianapolis* replied with several 8-inch salvos which quieted but, as subsequent events proved, did not destroy the Japanese battery.

As the air strike lifted the LCI(G)'s released their rocket-barrages with an unholy "whoosh," and a few seconds later the beach (Blue 1) was smothered in thudding, erupting clusters of smoke, sand and vegetation. At the same time a final strafing attack by fighters commenced, and both Mellu and Ennuebing received a ten-minute "dusting."

While the tractors bearing the 1st Battalion churned toward Ennuebing, Colonel Samuel C. Cumming, commanding the 25th Marines, radioed the landing team, "Good luck to first Marines to land on Japanese soil."⁸

The armored amphibians passed through the line of gunboats, firing as they advanced, and sheered off to port and starboard. One platoon [six LVT(A)'s] lay within 200 yards of the beach on each side of the boat-lanes down which the advancing tractors headed for Ennuebing. At 0952 the vehicles bearing the leading wave of Company B, 25th Marines, crunched over the coral reef, and for the first time in World War II U. S. Marines in assault had landed on pre-war Japanese soil.⁹

⁸ Col Cumming erred in his enthusiasm. Although his unit was the first to assault Japanese soil, as will be seen later in this chapter elements of the VAC Reconnaissance Company had already landed on Majuro Atoll the night before.

⁹ "... immediately preceding the landing [on Ennuebing], Capt Ed Asbill, commanding officer of Company B . . . obtained the signatures of a great many men and officers on an American flag which he promised would be the first to fly over prewar Japanese territory. I saw him late in the afternoon of D-Day and he told me that he raised this flag on the stub of a coconut tree immediately after his company landed on Ennuebing. . . ." Ltr LtCol Arthur E. Buck, Jr., to CMC, 21Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Buck*.

While all this was in progress, events seemed to be conspiring against the Mellu landing by Company C and the Scout Company. Not only had the reef off Mellu proved more formidable than Ennuebing, but the heavy seas, heaped up by the wind, seemed enough to make the amphibian tractors hesitate.

Despite this, the LCI(G)'s loosed their rocket-barrages, and the LVT(A)'s formed to shell Beach Blue 2 as planned. At the same time, although the ubiquitous fighter-aircraft continued to buzz back and forth over Mellu to cover the mounting delay, fire from Roi began to be received in the vicinity of the *Phelps* and the assemblage of congregated boat-waves awaiting dispatch to the beach.

Realizing the difficulty and danger in attempting to mount Mellu's reef, the leading waves of the Scout Company were diverted by Colonel Cumming to a more suitable beach just inside Mellu Pass, on the southeast (lagoon) side of the island. Here, only three minutes after the first waves had beached on Ennuebing, the Scout Company reached Mellu. At the same time fighters continued strafing other parts of the island near Beach Blue 2, where Company C was vainly trying to cross the reef.

Offshore, after being peppered by what seemed to be light anti-aircraft weapons, the *Phelps* was now under fire again from the 5-inch battery on Roi. The destroyer promptly replied, finally silencing the Japanese guns after an eight-minute duel.¹⁰

It was now past 1000, and the situation on Beach Blue 2 was evidently too much for the tractors carrying Company C, one of which had already capsized in the surf. Providentially at this time one of Colonel Cumming's staff reached Major Michael J. Davidowitch, 1st Battalion Executive Officer, and directed a landing on the southwest shore of Mellu.¹¹ Inasmuch as the Scouts had built up a cross-island skirmish-line facing north, it was a simple matter at 1015 for Company C to land and form in support.

¹⁰ The 6-inch battery of the USS *Santa Fe* also worked over this enemy battery at 1000. USS *Santa Fe* serial 0034, Action Report on bombardment of Roi Island, 16Feb44.

¹¹ Historical Branch interview with MajGen Samuel C. Cumming, 24Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Cumming*.

Within another quarter of an hour, as the Marine skirmish-line moved northward up the island, encountering slight resistance from what seemed to be no more than a platoon of the enemy, Lieutenant Colonel O'Donnell had landed and opened his battalion command post on the southeast beach (lagoon shore) of Mellu. By 1145, after a methodical mop-up, in which 17 enemy dead¹² were counted and two prisoners taken,¹³ Mellu was secure.

Meanwhile, on Ennuebing even less resistance had been encountered, and within an hour after the initial landing word was flashed back that the island had been secured. Thirteen enemy dead were counted, and three prisoners were in the hands of Company B.

It was a matter of only a few minutes after news of Ennuebing's capture had reached General Underhill, that the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines was en route in LVT's to the beach. By 1145, the artillerymen were landing their 75mm pack howitzers (less two lost at sea in swamped LVT's).¹⁴ Shortly after the artillery battalion landed, the 14th Marines' command post was established on Ennuebing and steps were taken to establish centralized control over the battalion firing units.¹⁵

Colonel Cumming had landed on Mellu at 1045 and opened his command post in the vicinity of that already established by Lieutenant Colonel O'Donnell. By early afternoon the 105mm howitzers of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, had come ashore on Mellu, and the gunners were heaving their pieces into the position-areas previously selected on the north shore of the island.

Mellu (IVAN) and Ennuebing (JACOB) were now in the hands of the 4th Marine Division, and the first D-Day missions had been accomplished.

¹² At least eight of these were suicides. Ltr LtCol M. J. Davidowitch to CMC, 26Nov52, and *Buck*.

¹³ "Having determined from two prisoners that the Japanese forces, except for small detachments, had been withdrawn from the outlying islands to Roi and Namur, I proceeded to the line of departure for the attack on Ennumennet and Ennubirr Islands. . . . On reaching the LD I boarded the *SC 997* and reported to Gen Underhill the conditions on and previous information received in the capture of Mellu. . . ." *Cumming*.

¹⁴ Ltr Maj Alfred T. Brown to CMC, 7Feb53.

¹⁵ Ltr Col Randall M. Victory to CMC, 9Dec52.

ALLEN, ALBERT AND ABRAHAM¹⁶

The second stage of the Northern Landing Force's complex plan of operation on D-Day involved the assault and seizure of three small islands just southeast of Namur: Ennubirr (ALLEN), Ennumennet (ALBERT), and Ennugarret (ABRAHAM). With these in Marine hands it would be possible to emplace the remainder of the 4th Division artillery to support the main landings on Roi-Namur. Possession would also secure the right flanks of the boat lanes during the assault on that objective. Like the capture of Mellu and Ennuebing, this task was assigned elements of the IVAN Landing Group.

Ennubirr, wooded site of the main Japanese radio-transmitter, was the objective of the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines (reinforced), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis C. Hudson. Ennumennet, slightly smaller, lay just north of Ennubirr and contained no military installations of importance. It was held only by a security detachment of 10 Japanese, whose sole fortifications consisted of a fire-trench. This island was to be overrun by the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Justice M. Chambers, who would then on order cross the shallow strand separating Ennumennet from Ennugarret, the island immediately adjoining Namur. It was hoped that Ennugarret could be secured, prior to nightfall inasmuch as the enemy defenders were known to be few and lightly armed.

Again, due to the multiplicity of objectives, initially there were only enough amphibian tractors to embark the Ennubirr landing force, and even this unit was required to load one boat-wave (the eighth) in LCV's. The Ennumennet and Ennugarret force was boated initially in LCV's. This force was to remain afloat in the transfer-area outside the lagoon and then shift into amphibian tractors released

¹⁶ Unless otherwise cited this account is a synthesis of the following sources: *4th MarDiv SAR*, 8-10; Report of Operations, Landing Team Two, Combat Team 25, 20Feb44, 1-6; Report of Operations, D and D-plus 1 Day, 3d Bn, 25th Marines, 9Feb44, 1-3, hereinafter cited as *3/25 SAR*; *ComDesRonOne SAR*; Report of Operations, 10th Amphibian Tractor Bn, *FLINTLOCK*, 17Mar44, hereinafter cited as *10th Amtrac SAR*.

from the Mellu and Ennuebing landings. Both the 2d and 3d Battalion Landing Teams would then be guided into the lagoon as soon as Mellu Pass was swept, the landings on Ennubirr and Ennumennet proceeding simultaneously at A-Hour. As may be readily realized, this boating and landing plan was necessarily complicated and subject to the operation of numerous variables beyond the control of the Marines themselves.

Two destroyers were assigned as fire-support vessels, one each for Ennubirr and Ennumennet, plus the same combination of LCI rocket and gunfire and armored amphibian fires as that which had been used against Mellu and Ennuebing. Fifteen-minute air strikes would hit both objectives prior to the landings.¹⁷

¹⁷ *OpnOrder A157-44*, Annex A, 2, and Annex G, Appendix 3, 4.

The 2d Battalion had been in reserve for the Mellu and Ennuebing landings and had, therefore, made a 0230 reveille and begun debarkation from the USS *Sumter* in the dark at 0530. By 0720 the entire landing team had completed the wet and arduous transfer to amphibian tractors and was destined to spend an unhappy morning in the cradle of the ground swell.

At 0830, following a more leisurely schedule, the 3d Battalion began boating in LCVP's from the USS *Biddle*. This landing team constituted the reserve for IVAN Landing Group as a whole and therefore would be the last battalion to land; as a result it was possible to defer debarkation until daylight.

For both units, however, the morning, though not marked by the urgency and confusion already dogging the Mellu-Ennuebing operations, presented problems. In the case of Hudson's battalion, by 1030 all radio communication was



NOT QUITE THE COMFORTS OF HOME! The Marines who seized the islands near Roi-Namur on D-Day set up their bivouac.

lost due to the drenching swells which splashed over and into the amphibian tractors. Chambers' battalion, although it had commenced debarkation promptly, was interrupted from 0950 until 1130 when the *Biddle* found it necessary to remain underway in order to maintain correct position. This halted debarkation and left part of the battalion in boats while the balance chafed on board ship.

By mid-morning, with Mellu and Ennuebing in Marine hands, Admiral Conolly ordered mine sweepers into the two channels and thence into the lagoon itself. As the stubbily built vessels butted their way in, carrier planes dropped down south of Roi-Namur to lay smoke which would obscure the vision of Japanese gunners on the main islands. By 1116 the sweepers had cleared Mellu Pass without finding any mines and were less than a mile from Beaches Blue 3 and 4, located respectively on Ennumennet and Ennubirr. In their wake followed the LCI(G)'s¹⁸ prepared to rake the two islets with 40mm and 20mm fire.

While the gunboats pounded Ennubirr and Ennumennet with flat trajectory automatic-weapons fire, the *Intrepid's* planes commenced bombing and strafing runs which culminated in a noon strike by six torpedo bombers (TBM's) and seven dive bombers (SBD's) on Ennubirr, coordinated with an attack by four TBM's and four SBD's on Ennumennet. Three minutes later the destroyers lying east of the two islands reopened fire with their 5-inch batteries.

The reinforced concrete radio station on Ennubirr could not stand up under this pounding, and already afire, its central portion caved in at 1219. At the same time numerous small fires added smoke and debris to the dust pall over the island.

A similar fate on a larger scale was befalling Namur, which was dotted with magazines and ordnance installations. As early as 1123 a 4th Division air observer reported a "huge fire" which obscured much of the island. The south beaches of Namur were then under fire from the battleships *Tennessee* and *Colorado*, while

the heavy cruiser *Louisville* dropped 8-inch shells into the southeast corner, and the light cruiser *Mobile* covered the north coast with 6-inch projectiles. Then at 1245, and again at 1256, immense explosions rocked Namur's central explosives area, throwing skyward great columns of smoke, flame, sand, brush and rubble.

Meanwhile, Admiral Conolly, earning the soubriquet which was to follow him throughout the Pacific war, had at 1210 signalled *Maryland*, then bombarding Roi from the west, to "move really close-in" during the afternoon to fire on enemy batteries and blockhouses. From that moment on, the Admiral became "Close-in" Conolly, a nickname which he was to justify on future occasions when landing Marines.¹⁹

A few minutes earlier, however, at 1156, the destroyer *Phelps*, control vessel for all the D-Day landings, had received from Admiral Conolly an order to leave station as control vessel and enter the lagoon through Mellu Pass.²⁰ In itself, this procedure was in accordance with plan, inasmuch as it was desired to get a destroyer inside as soon as possible in order to support the small craft now sweeping and bombarding in preparation for the afternoon landings. Moreover, this sequence of events had been anticipated in the operation plan of Commander, Initial Transport Group, (Trans Div 26) which directed that should the *Phelps* quit station she should turn over primary boat control to *LCC* (Landing Craft, Control) 33, a vessel properly staffed and equipped with the radio gear necessary to handle the complete landing plan. But this procedure was not carried out. Simultaneously with *Phelps* being ordered through Mellu Pass, *LCC* 33 was directed to enter the lagoon through Ennuebing Pass.²¹ Thereupon, *Phelps* swung by *SC* 997, in which General Underhill was embarked, and announced by bull-horn, "Am going to support mine sweepers. Take over."²²

As the *Phelps* then headed into Mellu Pass, this left General Underhill and *SC* 997 in some-

¹⁸ One gunboat, LCI(G) 450, grounded in the uncharted waters of the pass and remained there until the next day.

¹⁹ 4th MarDiv Jnl, D-Day, 6.

²⁰ ComDesRonOne SAR, 4.

²¹ Ltr VAdm Richard L. Conolly to CMC, 26Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Conolly*.

²² Report by BrigGen J. L. Underhill to CG 4th MarDiv, 29Feb44, hereinafter cited as *Underhill*.

thing of a predicament. The general and his staff were neither prepared nor supposed to control the boat-movements into the lagoon;²³ and the little ship in any case did not possess the communication equipment with which to discharge any such task.²⁴

Thus, with A-Hour only two hours away, General Underhill found himself confronted with a major, unexpected task, while the troops involved tossed aboard their LVT's and LCVP's awaiting Navy control personnel to lead them into the lagoon. Moreover, due to the failure of Transport Division 26 to mark the correct transfer areas in which the 2d and 3d Battalions were supposed to remain, both units were in fact off station,²⁵ a matter further complicated by the fact that most of the amtracs of the 2d Battalion had been led off by their control officers in the wake of the *Phelps* as she departed.

The first task of Commander IVAN Landing Group was, therefore, to regain control of his two battalion landing teams and to assemble these in the correct transfer areas. The errant tractors of the 2d Battalion were returned after a chase in the *Phelps'* wake by *SC 997*. During this maneuver, the LCVP's of Lieutenant Colonel Chambers' battalion were also directed to follow Underhill to the transfer area, where a

number of the amphibian tractors from the morning landings were awaiting orders. To these were shortly added 12 more tractors from Company B, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which had been rounded up by the energetic Chambers.

The balance of the LVT's for the 3d Battalion failed to materialize, however, due partly to losses in the Mellu-Ennuebing landings and partly to the defective control arrangements. The situation then as described by Underhill's report was as follows:

By about 1250, a few more LVT(2)'s had come to the transfer area, and I directed *SC 997* to lead LT 3/25 and 2/25 through JACOB Pass to the *Phelps* . . . Lt Col Chambers was encountered in his boat. He reported 1½ waves in LVT's. I directed him to make his attack with such LVT's and boats as he had available, and sent an order to the artillery battalion commander on JACOB (3d Battalion, 14th Marines) to send all LVT(2)'s there to the line of departure. A few arrived later . . .

At 1305, under pressure of time and realizing that little was to be gained by further delay in the transfer area, General Underhill led the two landing teams through Ennuebing Pass while a succession of carrier aircraft buzzed in repeated strikes against Ennubirr, Ennumennet, SALLY Point on Namur, and tiny Obella (ANDREW), a minuscule islet south of Ennubirr.

The *Phelps*, now nearing station at the new line of departure, was in position to observe what slow work was being made of getting the landing teams into the lagoon. This was reported to Admiral Conolly, who had already sought General Underhill's advice as to the most suitable time for a new A-Hour. At 1315 the Attack Force Commander set this time as 1430. A few minutes later this was changed to 1500, a more realistic selection, and at 1342, the *Phelps* reached station for the afternoon assaults.

During the next half hour, as General Underhill's amtracs (from Company A, 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion) churned to the line of departure, naval gunfire continued, mainly on Ennubirr where the *Phelps* had spotted what appeared to be a concrete pillbox. This was neutralized by a direct 5-inch hit. By 1420, as the assault waves of both battalions formed up behind the line, bombers and torpedo planes from the USS *Cabot* and *Essex* hammered En-

²³ "This was a totally unexpected event [departure of both *Phelps* and *LCC 33*] and had to be handled by emergency measures. Gen Underhill was called upon to assist in restoring order in the LVT formations. . . he was most ably assisted by the officers in the control LCVP's and other small naval vessels as directed by me. . . This was to prove the only case in my experience before or later where I had difficulty controlling the craft making the landings. . . However, the plans were made to work and that is the final test of a command and its organization." Conolly.

²⁴ *SC 997* possessed four radio sets (two TCS, one SCR-608 and one combined TCE transmitter and NC100 receiver) as contrasted with the 11 aboard *Phelps* which were assigned to control missions alone. Further, due to causes not known, neither TCS had received prior test before D-Day, and one was found to have faulty transmitter and power-supply, while the other in turn developed a defective receiver. The SCR-608 had been preset for use on naval channels of no service to General Underhill for command purposes, and the TCE combination was the only set which could be used. Underhill, 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.



MARINES ON BOARD SHIP watch progress of IVAN Landing Group. (Navy photo.)

nubirr and Ennumennet again, and as the air strike lifted the leading waves of the 2d and 3d Battalions crossed the line of departure and headed for Beaches Blue 4 and 3 respectively.

As in the morning, these boat waves of amphibian tractors were preceded first by LCI(G)'s and then by armored amphibians of Company D, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion. From this time on, the destroyer and LCI gun-fire increased in intensity against the two islands. At 1446, the LCI(G)'s released their rocket salvos at the beaches, swept the islands with 40mm and 20mm fire, and then turned to port and starboard as the armored amphibians plowed past, firing their cannon. Three minutes later the fire-support destroyers, *Haraden* and *Porterfield*, augmented by *Phelps*, lifted fires from Ennumennet and Ennubirr while carrier planes formed overhead for the final strafing attack.

Three hundred yards offshore, the armored amphibians parted and the troop-carrying LVT's passed through, receiving scattered automatic-weapons fire from Ennugarret; at this moment the air strike swept down along the beaches, and at 1510, approximately one minute later, the first wave of the 3d Battalion ground

through the coral shallows onto the sands of Ennumennet. Within five minutes the assault wave of the 2d Battalion had likewise landed on Ennubirr.

On Ennumennet, which was held by little more than a security-squad, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers' battalion made quick work of the enemy in the face of scattered small-arms fire which killed one Marine and wounded seven more. By the time his tanks had got in, approximately 1530, the assault companies had already pushed across the island, flushed ten Japanese (all of whom were killed), and Chambers had reported the island secured.

The 2d Battalion assaulted Ennubirr with Companies E and F abreast, E on the right with a zone which included the now almost-demolished radio station. This unit encountered no opposition, advanced rapidly and secured the ruins. Company F, however, advancing through the wooded and brush northern half of the island, ran into the Japanese defenders, about one platoon in strength, who had apparently taken to the woods during the shelling. Backed up by the attached light tank platoon (3d Platoon, Company A, 4th Tank Battalion), Company F attacked this position, and, after sustaining seven casualties, reached its objective. Twenty-four Japanese were killed.²⁶

A secondary mission of this battalion had been to land one platoon from its reserve company (Company G) on Obella Island. At 1545, supported by five armored amphibians, this landing was accomplished without casualties or opposition (although, a few hours earlier, 40mm fire had been reported from here) and by 1628 Lieutenant Colonel Hudson could report that both Ennubirr and Obella were secured.

Meanwhile (as nightfall approached and it was evident that no serious opposition had developed on Ennumennet and Ennubirr, the assault of Ennugarret and the landing of the 14th Marines' artillery battalions became the top priority tasks.

²⁶ "While we were advancing through the jungle growth on the northern half of Ennubirr Island, we came upon a group of five or six Japanese soldiers [alive] who were sitting in a circle. Each one had a string tied around his toe and the trigger of his rifle apparently preparing to commit *hara-kiri* [sic]. . . ." Ltr. LtCol H. V. Joslin to CMC, 27Jan53.

Well prior to 1700 the artillery was on its way in, the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines proceeding to Beach Blue 4 on Ennubirr, and the 2d Battalion of the same regiment to Beach Blue 3 on Ennumennet. Both battalions were equipped with 75mm pack howitzers, boated one per amphibian tractor. Once the LVT's were ashore, they delivered the howitzers directly to battery positions previously selected from aerial photographs.²⁷ By 2000 both battalions were in position and the only remaining duties were those of registration (which would be accomplished at dawn next day), and of building up the ammunition supply on Ennumennet and Ennubirr,²⁸ a problem which involved repeated hauls during the night by the already overtaxed amphibian tractors.²⁹

Ennugarret (ABRAHAM), it will be recalled, was to have been attacked on order at B-Hour (originally set as 1600) by the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines. In an effort to set this attack in motion,³⁰ Colonel Cumming landed on Ennumennet at 1630 and conferred with Lieutenant Colonel Chambers³¹ as to the best means

²⁷ "The approach to positions was as seen from air photos, and only one battery had to change its front about 50 yards from the area planned . . ." Ltr LtCol William McReynolds to CMC, 6Jan53, hereinafter cited as *McReynolds*.

²⁸ FLINTLOCK Operation, 14th Marines, report submitted by that unit to CG, 4th MarDiv, undated, 1-2.

²⁹ "The actual landing of artillery . . . was not entirely successful because of the failure of the amphibians to meet our expectations from a logistic standpoint . . . Our convoy took a position several miles to the southwestward of the lagoon entrances and the northeast wind caused the loss of fuel before the tractors could accomplish their assigned task . . . There was not enough ammunition ashore for the artillery to use . . ." *Rogers*.

³⁰ "... we did not know at the time the enemy strength on the island [Ennugarret] and it was considered dangerous to leave it on our flank for the main landing on 1 February. Furthermore, if it had not been taken that evening there was nothing to prevent occupation during the night by considerable Japanese forces, thereby making the main landings more difficult because of the island's proximity to the right flank of the 24th Marines, and because its subsequent capture would have cost more American lives." Ltr MajGen W. W. Rogers to Dir PubInfo, 1Oct48, hereinafter cited as *Rogers II*.

³¹ Details regarding the Ennugarret assault have been obtained from a Historical Section interview with Col Justice M. Chambers, 6May48.

of accomplishing the mission before dark.

Chambers' problems had been aggravated by premature departure of virtually all the amphibian tractors which had landed his unit. These LVT's had not received orders which covered the contingency of their employment against Ennugarret.³² Moreover, the amtracs could not locate the Navy bowser boat³³ from USS *Epping Forest* which had been ordered to meet them at Ennumennet with fuel. Consequently, after looking in vain for the missing bowser boat, virtually all of the LVT's and armored amphibians departed in search of the LST's from which they had been launched.³⁴ An exception to this general withdrawal were the two command tractors which had landed Lieutenant Colonel Chambers and his headquarters; these remained with him on Ennumennet.

Added to Chambers' problems was the fact that neither air, artillery, nor naval gunfire support was available. Although it had been hoped that artillery on Ennuebing could be ready to support this attack, the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines had only just landed and could not fire. Commander Support Air refused a requested air strike, and at this time no direct support ship was assigned to the battalion for naval gunfire.³⁵ This left Chambers in the position of having to assault a defended island over water without landing craft and with no support other than the weapons under his own command. Fortunately, the latter included three 75mm half-tracks of the Regimental Weapons Company which, together with a platoon of 37mm

³² "We never received orders to include the subsequent operations of LtCol Chambers' battalion on the afternoon of D-Day." *Croizat*.

³³ A bowser boat is equipped with a fuel tank and used for the refueling of boats, seaplanes or amphibious vehicles.

³⁴ *OpnOrder A157-44*, Annex "L", and report by 3d Platoon Leader, Company A, 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 19Mar44. Running out of fuel while afloat was a far more serious mishap for the amphibian tractor of those days than may be supposed, since the pumps then installed in those vehicles were power-operated, without manual auxiliary, and an LVT out of gas very soon became an LVT sunk.

³⁵ *PhibGrp3 SAR*, encl (B), 7, states, "Final landing on Dog Day were made on Ennugarret with direct support from Fire Support Units One and Five," but Col Chambers explicitly states that no naval gunfire support was available or employed in this assault.

antitank guns, had been attached to the 3d Battalion for this landing. In addition to these, the battalion had its own 81mm and 60mm mortars, as well as its machine guns.

As soon as it had been decided to attempt this, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers prepared for the attack, which was to jump off—if landing craft were available—at 1800, the most favorable stage of the tide.

During the hour-and-a-half remaining, the battalion secured ALBERT JUNIOR, a small islet 200 yards northwest of Ennumennet. No resistance was encountered here, but fire was received from Ennugarret at this time. Since this sandspit flanked the intended beach, the machine guns of the battalion were manhandled out from Ennumennet, set up and laid to support the assaults. Shortly afterward, two LVT's³⁶ appeared off Beach Blue 3 and were commandeered by Chambers, thus doubling his force of these precious vehicles.

Meanwhile, despite small-arms fire, First Lieutenant Robert E. Stevenson had waded from Ennumennet almost to Ennugarret and returned to give his battalion commander a reconnaissance report. Thereupon Lieutenant Colonel Chambers set up every available weapon to command Beach Blue 5 on the south end of Ennugarret. He planned to risk the assault with a first (and only) wave of four amphibian tractors crammed with 120 officers and men from Company L. This force would seize a limited beachhead pending the return, by shuttletrips, of the LVT's with the balance of the battalion.

At 1750 a preparation by mortars and the 75mm half-track, was laid on Blue 5. Ten minutes later, as the tractors shoved off, the 81mm mortars laid smoke on the intended beachhead, holding it under an impenetrable cloud until the crossing had been accomplished. Fortunately, it turned out that enemy resistance was light, and the Japanese made no attempt to hold at the water's edge. By 1830, all of Companies K and L had been ferried across to Ennugarret,

and the attack had penetrated 250 yards inland, the enemy withdrawing in the direction of Namur. Six Japanese were killed, one enemy machine gun was captured, and the only reported casualty of the entire movement was one Marine wounded by a friendly aircraft which strafed the beachhead through an excess of zeal or confusion. At 1915 Ennugarret was under control. Mopping up continued, however, under intermittent fire from Namur and by the light of star shells from the supporting destroyers.

With Ennugarret in the hands of the Marines, the Northern Landing Force had completed seizure of all its D-Day objectives. Of the individual operations it must be admitted that they proceeded and succeeded despite, rather than in accordance with, plan.

Setting aside the more general origins, such as the enforced hastiness of planning and the newness of organizations, it may be observed that the primary sources of D-Day's troubles were:

- (1) Multiplicity of objectives, five of which had to be taken by one regiment during one day on a schedule with interdependent timing; this in turn required a scheme of maneuver which could only be a complicated one.

- (2) Faulty or inadequate communications, a product in part of the almost universal tendency of radio sets then mounted in LVT's to swamp out under high seas. Another factor here was the difficulty involved in setting up radio frequencies. Inasmuch as they had been unable to set the TCS radios on assigned frequencies while on the LST's, the LVT(A) crews attempted to do this while moving to the line of departure. This procedure, unavoidable at the time, was not conducive to good radio performance.

- (3) Failures of control (many of them in turn begotten by failures of communication), especially on the part of the boat-control personnel of Transport Division 26.³⁷

- (4) Heavy seas and difficult reef conditions which imposed maximum strain on the whole landing control organization.

³⁶ These had been assigned the artillery, one of them being the command LVT of the executive officer, 2d Bn, 14th Marines. They were given up without protest, however, when the occupants learned of the urgent need of the vehicles. *McReynolds*.

³⁷ For a detailed analysis of this, see *Underhill* in entirety, as well as the Memo from ADC to CG, 4th MarDiv, 24Mar44, 1-3.

The then division chief of staff subsequently pointed out that what had occurred on D-Day was not totally unexpected:

The Commanding General and Staff of the Northern Landing Force were well aware that things might not go as planned on D-Day. In fact, the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was withheld entirely on D-Day in spite of urgent requests from subordinate units in order that we would be sure to be able to land the 23d Marines on Roi on D-plus 1, either from the outside or the inside of the lagoon. In other words, it was considered that the mission could have been accomplished by the capture of IVAN and JACOB and the subsequent landing on Roi by the 23d Marines utilizing the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, even if landings on the east side of the lagoon had not been possible on D-Day. This would have involved the subsequent capture of Namur by assault from Roi, with or without a landing from the lagoon.³⁸

It is rare that a military operation proceeds exactly as planned, but the final test is whether the objectives were taken within an acceptable period and with minimum loss. It appears that this was accomplished on 31 January.³⁹

Despite all these serious and annoying difficulties, however, the 4th Marine Division was ashore on its objectives, and D-Day, in terms of the missions accomplished and the timetable of the operation, had ended in success.

CECIL AND CARTER ⁴⁰

In the early hours of 31 January two destroyer-transport, the USS *Manley*⁴¹ and *Overton*, approached Ninni Pass, which lies between the islets of Ninni (CECIL) and Gea (CARTER). Designated the Channel Islands Transport Group, the two APD's carried troops of the

³⁸ Ltr MajGen W. W. Rogers to CMC 1Dec52.

³⁹ *Rogers II*.

⁴⁰ Principal sources for this account are: Task Force 51 Operation Plan A6-43, 17Jan44; Field Order #1, 7th InfDiv, 6Jan44; *TF52 OpPlan*: LtCol S. L. A. Marshall, *Island Victory*, Infantry Journal Press, 1945, 2-19; V Amphibious Corps G-3 Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, 18Feb44, hereinafter cited as *VAC G-3 Report*, encl (A), 1-10; *7th Div Report*; USS *Overton* Marshalls Action Report, 8Feb44, 1-18.

⁴¹ The USS *Manley*, well known to Marines of the prewar Fleet Marine Force, was a veteran flush-decked destroyer which had been converted on Marine Corps recommendation for duty as a fast, small transport (APD). The *Manley* served as the prototype U. S. destroyer-transport. She had supported the Fleet Marine Force in virtually every prewar landing exercise of importance and was based at Quantico over long periods.

Southern Landing Force who were charged with the predawn seizure of those two islets. Close behind was the Advance Transport Group bearing the landing teams earmarked for Ennylabegan (CARLOS) and Enubuj (CARLSON).

The mission of securing Ninni and Gea had been entrusted to the 7th Reconnaissance Troop, 7th Infantry Division, and Company B, 111th Infantry under the over-all command of Captain Paul B. Gritta, commander of the former unit. Both organizations were split into two groups for purposes of the operation. One-half of the Reconnaissance Troop and one-half of Company B were embarked for Ninni in the *Overton*, and the remaining elements of the two units were in the *Manley*, scheduled for Gea. At 0330, it was planned, the reconnaissance men would land by rubber boat, secure a beachhead and set up the signal lights. They would then cover the landing of the infantrymen of the 111th Regiment.⁴²

As has already been seen from the difficulties which beset the Northern Landing Force's initial landings, such complex and tightly coordinated operations as the seizure of these tiny offshore islands do not always take place as planned, and here darkness further complicated the situation. It was 0341 (11 minutes past the scheduled landing time) before *Manley* and *Overton* were in position to lower boats. The LCVP's, carrying the infantrymen, were to tow the rubber boats, loaded with the reconnaissance men, and at 0530 these craft departed *Manley* for Gea.

At 0700 the rubber boats from the *Manley* rode up through the surf in one last leap, and the reconnaissance men found themselves on the beach at the south end of the island. Not a round had been fired, and surprise seemed complete.

Twenty-six Japanese, quartered in a small barrack building, had comprised the garrison of Gea, serving, in all probability, as a harbor-entrance control detachment for the Pass.

⁴² The 111th Infantry was not a part of the 7th Division, although attached for this operation. It was a separate, nondivisional infantry regiment destined for garrison duties at Kwajalein once the atoll had been secured.

Although no defenses of any importance had been put in, the little island (only 250 yards long by 100 yards wide) was densely wooded, a factor which slowed up the initial advance.

As the soldiers moved along a trail they spotted some Japanese and immediately opened fire. The defending enemy had entrenched themselves a short distance away and a fight developed with numerous grenades being hurled by the opposing forces. By the time this skirmish ended 20 Japanese had been killed. Two more were shot when the reconnaissance men conducted a sweep of the island, and four were captured.⁴³ By 0948 the little island was mopped up and secured.

Meanwhile, the force scheduled to take Ninni had not been so fortunate, although it had departed *Overton* an hour earlier than the *Gea* group left *Manley*.

The rubber boats were hooked up to the LCVP's by tow lines. . . . After traveling about 3,000 yards, [Captain Gritta] looked behind to check the rubber boats and they were not there. Checking, he discovered that the radio operator in his boat had become excited when the *Overton* notified him we were 1,200 yards from shore. He [the radio operator] gave the signal for the rubber boats to cast off, which they did. . . . [Gritta] had the LCVP he was in, turn around and locate the rubber boat he was to ride in. . . .⁴⁴

Not a sound of hostile activity broke the silence. So low on the horizon as to be almost imperceptible, the shapes of Kwajalein Atoll's barrier islands could be discerned, and lights glimmered faintly on Kwajalein itself, still smouldering from the pounding it had received the day before.

The bearing on which the boats were supposed to steer in order to reach Ninni was 059°, or approximately east northeast; the heading actually made good, however, turned out to be nearer 015°, a course much to the north of that intended. To the northwest of Ninni lay Gehh (CHAUNCEY), and it was on Gehh's beach the soldiers unknowingly jumped when the first boats touched sand at 0500. Ninni was lightly held, if at all, whereas Gehh not only contained a resident garrison but the shipwrecked crew

of a seagoing tug which had been beached during the preliminary strikes against Kwajalein. All told, at least 135 enemy were on this inadvertent objective.

Men in Gritta's boat, the first to hit the beach, set up a signal light to guide the remainder of the force, and by 0600 all troops were ashore. As soon as day broke the Reconnaissance Troop detachment began advancing across the island. Four Japanese were killed and two captured in isolated encounters, although one member of a 60mm mortar section was wounded and the mortar ammunition was abandoned. Upon reaching the southern end of the island, it was discovered that the beached tug on the lagoon shore of the island was occupied by Japanese, one of whom showed himself briefly and ducked back to cover before he could be captured or fired on. A wounded Japanese, lying amid a group of dead from the preliminary bombardment was discovered, however, and evacuated to the *Overton*.

While all this was in progress, it was becoming increasingly apparent to those on board the *Overton* that something was wrong. Finally, daylight showed that the troops were not on Ninni at all, but on Gehh.

"Viewed from many angles," reported the ship's commanding officer, "it looked, especially in the darkness, exactly like Ninni and *Gea*, instead of what it actually was, Gehh and Ninni."

As soon as this mistake became evident, the *Overton* notified both the infantry commander on Gehh and Admiral Turner. Since it was important that Ninni Pass be secured, at 0927 the Landing Force Commander ordered that the troops disengage as rapidly as possible, reembark and secure Ninni. Leaving a security detachment of the 111th Infantry with a machine-gun squad on the southeast tip of Gehh, the balance of the detachment reboated for a new landing, this time on the correct island.

At 1124 elements of the 7th Reconnaissance Troop landed on the northern end of Ninni and, without opposition, proceeded to work their way down the island's long axis (approximately 1,000 yards). Not a shot was fired, for Ninni was unoccupied by the enemy. At 1145 the island was reported secured.

⁴³ Ltr MSgt Paul B. Gritta, USA, to CMC, 6Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Gritta*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Thus, a little more than two hours after Melli (IVAN) and Ennuebing (JACOB) had fallen to the Northern Landing Force, Ninni (CECIL) and Gea (CARTER) were in the hands of the southern troops.

CARLOS AND CARLSON ⁴⁵

At 0544, just before early dawn, the transports, LST's and fire-support ships with the Advance Transport Group,⁴⁶ entered their assigned areas south, east and west of Kwajalein Island, whereupon Admiral Turner lost no time in making the traditional signal, "Land the landing force." H-Hour, he announced, would be at 0830, and all landings on Ennylabegan (CARLOS) and Enubuj (CARLSON)

⁴⁵ Sources for this section, unless otherwise cited, are the same as those given in footnote 40.

⁴⁶ The Advance Transport Group consisted of Trans Div 4, including the USS *Zeilin*, *Ormsby*, *President Polk*, *Windsor*, *Virgo* and *Ashland*, and of Tractor Group 1 which included eight LST's and three LCT's.

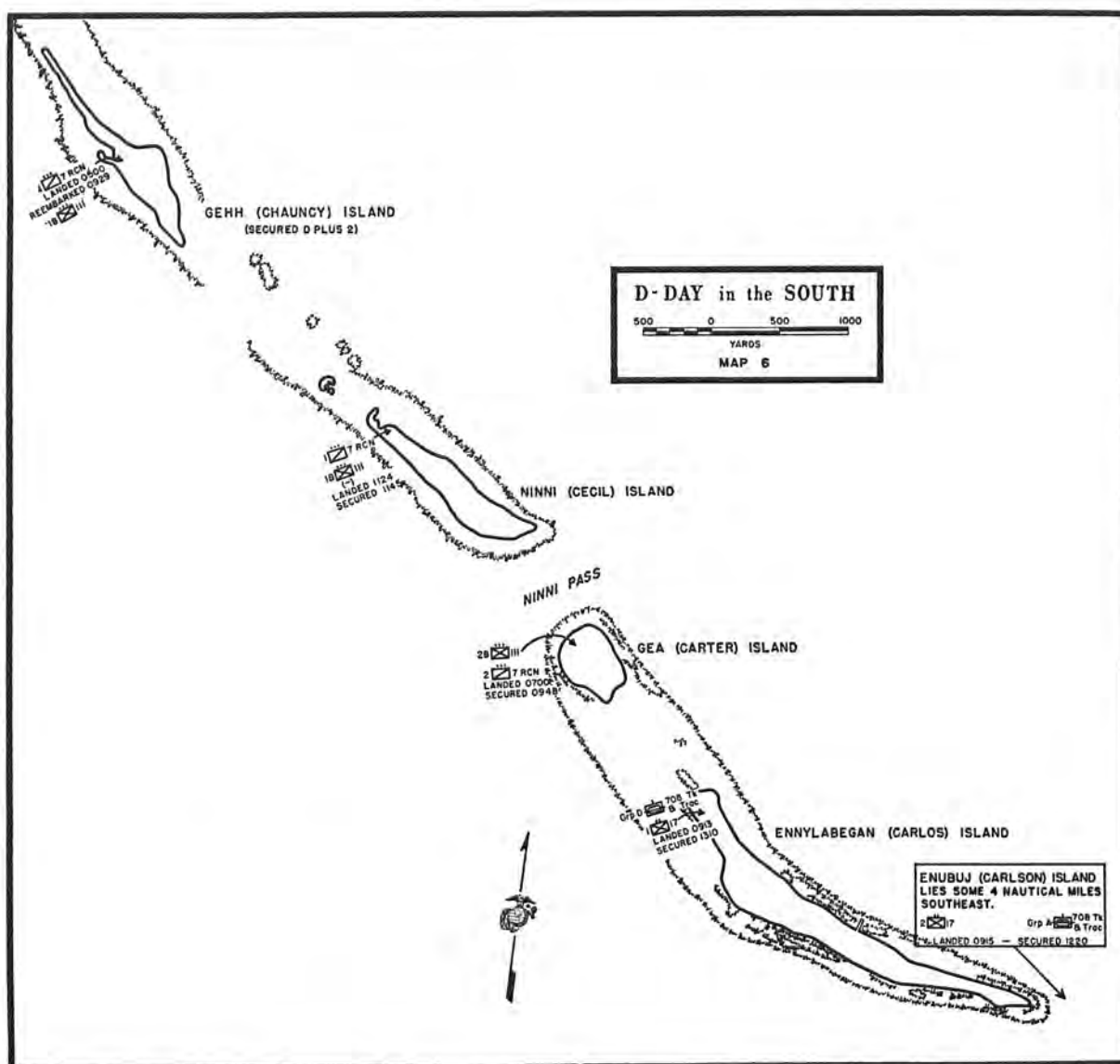
would be on the seaward beaches, which were respectively White 2 and Yellow 2.

The task of executing these landings had been entrusted to the 17th Infantry (reinforced), commanded by Colonel Wayne C. Zimmerman. The 1st Battalion of that regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Albert V. Hartl, was to seize Ennylabegan, while the 2d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Edward P. Smith) would land on Enubuj. Being nearest to Kwajalein, the latter island had been selected as the position-area for the 7th Division Artillery. The 3d Battalion, 17th Infantry was boated in reserve on the Enubuj line of departure, and Company C, 767th Tank Battalion, was available in the LSD, *Ashland*.

Less than a half hour after Admiral Turner's signal had set the ball rolling, the fire-support ships of the Southern Attack Force were on station. South of Kwajalein itself lay the battleships *Idaho* and *Pennsylvania* and the heavy cruisers *Minneapolis* and *New Orleans*.



ARMY TROOPS inspect damaged Japanese power plant on Enubuj (CARLSON). (Army photo.)



Screening these larger ships and delivering 5-inch fires were five destroyers (USS *Bailey*,⁴⁷ *Frazier*, *Hall*, *Meade*, and *Halligan*). Covering the eastern islands and northern end of Kwajalein were the battleship *New Mexico* and the heavy cruiser *San Francisco*. On the opposite (southwest) side of the V-shaped angle of the atoll, lay the battleship *Mississippi*, two destroyers, *McKee* and *Stevens*, and six

⁴⁷ Named for Major Kenneth D. Bailey, posthumous winner of the Medal of Honor on Guadalcanal. To some Marines it seemed more than coincidence that the destroyer *Bailey* should be supporting the battleship *Pennsylvania*, in which Major Bailey had served prior to the war.

LCI(G)'s (LCI(L), 77, 78, 79, 80, 336 and 437). This fire-support unit would cover the landings on Enubuj. Further still to the northwest, the destroyers *Ringgold* and *Sigsbee*, together with six more LCI(G)'s (LCI 365, 438, 439, 440, 441 and 442), were on station to support the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry, when it landed on Ennylabegan.

At 0618 the 14-inch guns of the *Pennsylvania* and *Mississippi* broke the dawn calm, and a few seconds later sand, brush, and palm-fronds churned skyward from the south end of Kwajalein as the massive salvos landed and D-Day's battle commenced.

Meanwhile, as the LST's swung into the

transfer areas, amphibian tractor operators of the 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion warmed up their vehicles prior to debarkation. The sea was choppy (but nothing like that being encountered by the Northern Attack Force), the breeze was brisk, and light showers played across the skyline.

At 0700 *Ringgold* opened fire on two small merchantmen northeast of Ninni, sinking them after 17 minutes of deliberate 5-inch fire. Within the half hour *San Francisco*, patrolling slowly off south Gugegwe, north of Kwajalein, had repeated the performance, scoring one 8-inch hit on a single merchantman within the lagoon.

Meanwhile, embarkation and transfer of troops had been proceeding slowly, due to delays of the same character, though not so aggravated, as those being experienced by the Northern Landing Force. In the predawn gloom, the LST's had difficulty locating the transports, and there was delay in movement of LVT's to the line of departure. Army amphibian tractor operators had looked to their own section-leaders for control, rather than to the Navy control boats and personnel of Transport Division 4.⁴⁸ As the situation became apparent to Admiral Turner and Captain John B. McGovern, Commander of Transport Division 4, the former concluded his original H-Hour of 0830 could not be met, and announced a postponement to 0900, which in turn was further delayed until 0910.⁴⁹

At 0810 the fire-support ships opened with full throat on the prelanding preparation. The *New Mexico* pounded Ebeye Island (BURTON) with 14-inch shells; *Mississippi*, *Idaho* and *Pennsylvania* smothered the formidable dual-purpose battery on the west end of Kwajalein with 14-inch and 5-inch fire, assisted by the 8-inch guns of *Minneapolis*' main battery. Another heavy cruiser, *New Orleans*, worked over the radio station and supporting installations on Enubuj. At the same time the destroyers *McKee* and *Stevens* commenced direct 5-inch fire on a number of pillboxes which had been located along the seaward beaches.

⁴⁸ Commander Transport Division 4 Operational Report, Marshall Islands, undated, 3 and 8.

⁴⁹ Turner.



A HOWITZER OF THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION, positioned on Enubuj, places harassing fire on Kwajalein Island. (Army photo.)

At 0840 the naval bombardment of Kwajalein checked, and carrier aircraft raked the island from end to end. On their heels droned bombers which dropped sticks of bombs from 4,000 feet. Planes from the escort carriers swooped back and forth over Enubuj and Ennylabegan while the destroyers continued point-blank fire at pillboxes. At the lines of departure south of White and Yellow Beaches, the amphibian tractor waves and LCI(G)'s formed up and headed for Ennylabegan (CARLOS) and Enubuj (CARLSON).

As the gunboats came within 1,200 yards of the beaches, they released rocket salvos and parted to permit the leading waves of amphibians to pass through. In the Enubuj landing (2d Battalion, 17th Infantry) armored LVT's covered the flanks and front of the first wave. At Ennylabegan, armored amphibians were not considered necessary. From all LVT's, however, fire by machine guns or 37mm guns swept the beaches ahead.

At 0913 the tractors bearing the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry shouldered their way through surf to a poor beach, and soldiers disembarked without opposition⁵⁰ on Ennylabegan, still

⁵⁰ VAG G-3 Report, 3.

smoking and debris-covered from the rocket fire and strafing. The battalion first crossed the island and secured the northern end, then moved southeastward 3,000 yards to the opposite end. Light enemy small-arms fire was encountered, but by 1310 the commanding officer could report that Ennylabegan was secured with no U. S. casualties, 16 enemy dead and seven prisoners.

Two minutes after the Ennylabegan landing the first wave of amtracs bore the 17th Infantry's 2d Battalion ashore on Enubuj without initial resistance. With the support of rockets and armored amphibians the battalion established a 300-yard beachhead on the island's northwestern tip by 0930. The front lines moved forward against meager opposition, and four light tanks were landed to provide additional fire power. By noon the battalion gained the southeast tip of Enubuj, and 20 minutes later the island was reported secure.⁵¹ Twelve Japanese had been killed, and 21 prisoners (largely Korean laborers) were in the hands of the 2d Battalion, while only one U. S. soldier had been wounded.

Almost an hour earlier, when Army front lines had passed Chain Pier,⁵² it was plain that the area already taken as well as the light resistance encountered would permit landing the 7th Division artillery (31st, 48th, 49th and 57th Field Artillery Battalions, all 105mm) on Enubuj. This was accordingly ordered. By 1250 the artillery-filled DUKW's were bobbing clear of parent LST's, and two hours later the four battalions were all on shore and going into position. Registration commenced at 1355 upon completion of the initial surveys. At the same time the forward echelon of the 7th Division's command post under Brigadier General Joseph L. Ready, assistant division commander, was landing over Yellow 2. Only the 155mm howitzers of the 145th Field Artillery Battalion remained to be landed by LCM's (due to their greater weight and bulk, which precluded use of DUKW's). Two of these batteries were ashore by 1700, and the third moved into position after darkness.

⁵¹ 7th Div Report, 9, states that Enubuj was secured at 1122. The 1220 time is taken from VAC G-3 Report, 4, which seems more accurate inasmuch as not all the island was occupied at the earlier time.

⁵² A 200-yard finger pier which jutted into the lagoon.

With the advance division command post established ashore at 1800 and the landing of the 17th Infantry's reserve battalion, the Enubuj operation was complete and the D-Day objectives of the Southern Landing Force attained.

MAJURO, BLOODLESS CONQUEST ⁵³

A glance at a map of the Marshall Islands will show that Majuro Atoll (SUNDANCE) lies in the eastern portion of the group and in the midst of the more important atolls which were being by-passed. (See Map 1, Map Section.) The early seizure of Majuro was important because of its intended use as an advanced air and naval base.

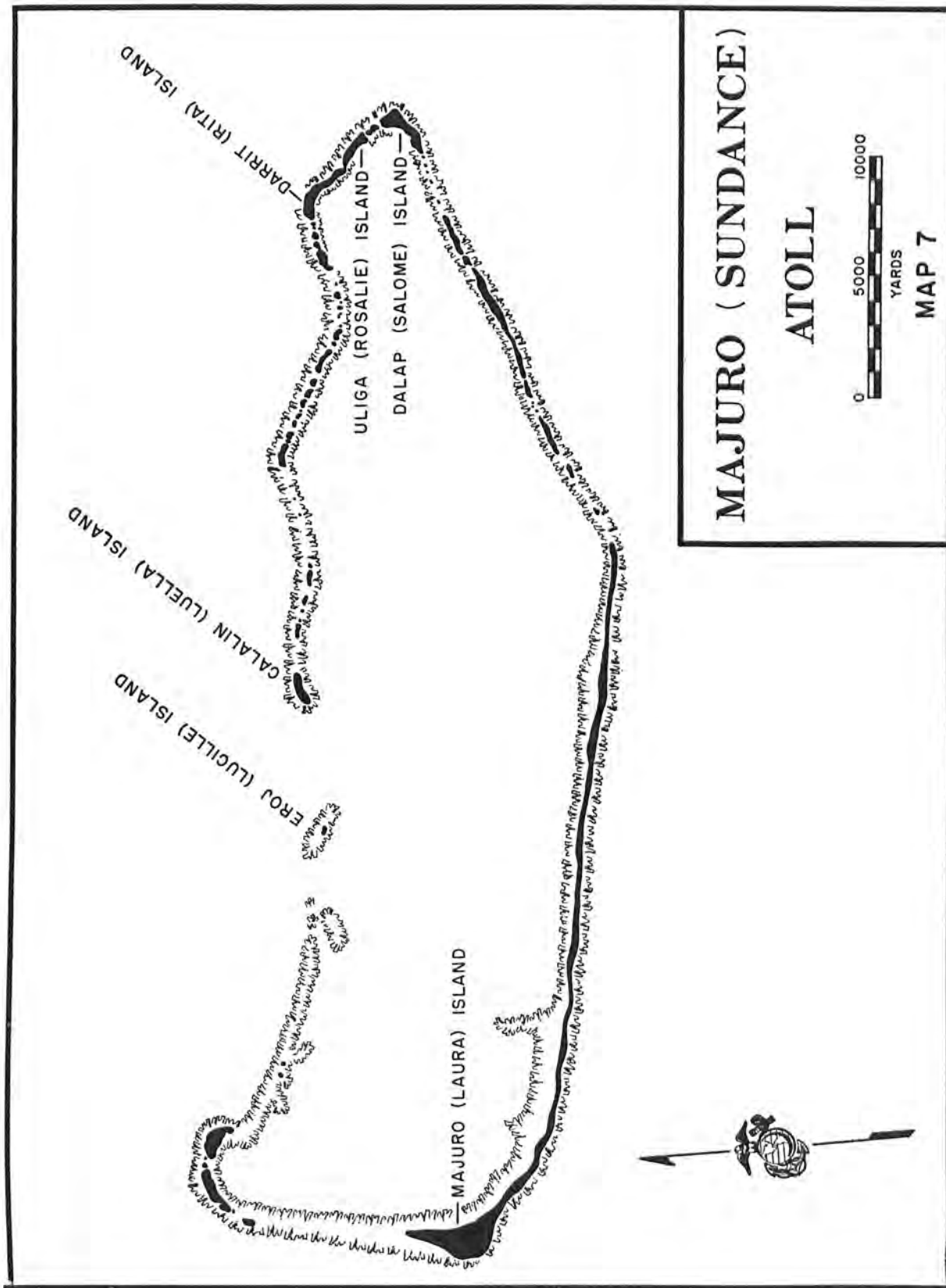
The Majuro lagoon is about 24 miles long by five miles wide and extends generally east and west. On the north and west lie long stretches of reef devoid of islands. Most of the south side of the atoll consists of Majuro Island (LAURA) which curves, snakelike, for 21 miles with a width not exceeding 300 yards until the extreme western part.

The other important islands, all at the eastern end of the lagoon, are Dalap (SALOME), Uliga (ROSALIE) and Darrit (RITA). All are heavily overgrown. The entrance to the lagoon lies on the northern side, something over halfway to the westward, flanked by the islands of Calalin (LUELLA) and Eroj (LUCILLE).

It will be recalled that seizure of Majuro Atoll had been assigned to the Majuro Attack Force (Task Group 51.2), under command of Rear Admiral Hill. The landing force consisted of the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, reinforced by the V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company (Captain James L. Jones) and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sheldon. It was planned that the Marines would land, locate and fix the enemy defenders, and that the infantry landing team would be committed as and if necessary.

Admiral Hill's fire support group consisted of the heavy cruisers *Portland* and the destroyers *Bullard* and *Kidd*. Two escort carriers, *USS Nassau* and *Natoma Bay*, were to provide air support of all types.

⁵³ Sources for this account are Operation Report, V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company, FLINT-LOCK; VAC SAR, 10; TG 51.2 Rpt.





MICHAEL MADISON, an English-speaking native, rendered valuable assistance to VAC Reconnaissance Company on Majuro.

On 23 January 1944, the destroyer-transport, USS *Kane*, departed Pearl Harbor carrying the VAC Reconnaissance Company. *Kane* remained in the main convoy until 30 January, when she parted company to proceed singly toward Majuro. The APD arrived off the northern passage that night and disembarked the detachments (4th Platoon and Mortar Platoon) which were to reconnoiter Calalin and Eroj, the islands commanding the entrance

channel. Despite high seas, the scout group under Lieutenant Harvey C. Weeks landed from rubber boats on the eastern tip of Calalin at 2300. Thirty minutes later a native was discovered who reported 300–400 Japanese on Darrit Island.

The reconnaissance units then proceeded across Calalin and reached the main native settlement at 0100 on 31 January, an hour after D-Day officially began. Questioning of the natives here disclosed that the Japanese force had been withdrawn some months before. It came to light, however, that one Japanese naval warrant officer and a handful of civilians were on Majuro Island. During this time a detail from the Mortar Platoon had proceeded to Eroj Island on the west of the channel at 0230 and found it unoccupied.

The remaining three platoons and the headquarters of the Reconnaissance Company, meanwhile had proceeded on board the *Kane* to Dalap Island where an initial landing was made on the southwest tip at 0330. Four rubber boats capsized in the high surf, but no one was lost and the bulk of the equipment was saved. Patrols pushed northeastward rapidly without flushing out any Japanese and subsequently worked across the reefs to Uliga with the same result. On Uliga, however, was found an English-speaking half-caste, Michael Madison, who confirmed the report that there were no Japanese forces on Majuro.

Communications had been far from satisfactory. Consequently the Attack Force Commander (and thus the fire-support ships) were not immediately aware that the earlier report of Japanese forces on Darrit was erroneous.

At 0637 naval surface and aerial bombardment of Darrit began, but at 0645 all ships were ordered to cease firing at the nonexistent enemy. The proposed air strike was cancelled, which did not prevent a spotting-plane from USS *Portland* from strafing the 2d Platoon as it crossed the reef to Darrit, luckily without casualties. No Japanese or natives were located on Darrit, but more than 20 frame buildings in good condition, a narrow gauge railroad, construction equipment, a concrete seaplane ramp, and a considerable amount of building materials of various character were found. Fortu-

nately the brief bombardment had done them no damage. The island itself was covered with coconut palms and thick undergrowth.

There now remained, however, the task of capturing the few Japanese reported on Majuro Island. Landings were made by the 4th Platoon at the western part of the neck just where the island begins to bulge. Natives led the Marines to the houses occupied by the Japanese. Apparently having gotten wind of what was afoot, the alarmed inhabitants (who were in the midst of a chicken dinner, complete with wine) rushed out to conceal themselves in the bush. A search of the houses produced two U. S. .50-caliber machine guns with ammunition, which had been taken from the wreck of a B-24. The natives, still helpful, assisted a detail to dispose itself so that within an hour Japanese Naval Warrant Officer Nagata was seized without resistance, but his companions escaped into the bush.

Meanwhile, another detachment had been dispatched in the *Kane* to Arno Atoll, lying some ten miles to the east. Although the atoll did not figure in assault plans, it had been reported that the crew of a crashed U. S. plane was there and the scouts were directed to rescue the grounded airmen. A landing was effected just after midnight 1 February. A stray native was found who reported four Japanese traders and no military installations on the island. It was also learned that the surviving crew members of the crashed U. S. plane had recently been removed to Maloelap. Although the Japanese could not be located, their possessions yielded considerable intelligence material. The patrol could find no evidence of military installations and at 1150 reembarked in the *Kane* and returned to Majuro.

While the Marine Reconnaissance Company was so busily engaged, Admiral Hill's main task force was approaching Majuro. On D-Day (31 January) after daylight, the channel was swept and permanent buoys planted at the lagoon entrance in order that the atoll might be employed as an anchorage at the earliest possible date.

After bombardment had ceased on Darrit, the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, (embarked in *Cambria*) anchored off the island at 0953. Lieu-



ADMIRAL HILL AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHELDON directed the bloodless conquest of Majuro.

tenant Colonel Sheldon, the Landing Force Commander, was immediately advised that no enemy were present and that debarkation of the Army landing team could be deferred pending word that it might not be needed at Kwajalein. When this was clear, on D-plus 1 (1 February), the troops were finally landed. On the same day, the first LST's arrived and began to unload garrison and base-development troops and equipment on Uliga and Dalap Islands. As a precaution, however, radio silence was still maintained.

On D-plus 2, units of the Fleet began to arrive, including the seaplane tender USS *Casco* and patrol planes. On D-plus 3 more than 30 ships lay in the anchorage, with others due to arrive in considerable numbers. Work had already begun on the Dalap airfield.

On 4 February 1944, Admiral Spruance announced that the capture and occupation phases of Majuro had been completed. The island commander, Captain Edgar A. Cruise, USN, took over the bloodless prize at 0600 that day.

AFTER NIGHTFALL

When darkness descended over Kwajalein Lagoon on the night of 31 January, the forces of the V Amphibious Corps had successfully accomplished all objectives. Nine enemy islands (plus Majuro Atoll) were in the hands of

American forces. In the north, held by Marines were Mellu, Ennuebing, Ennumennet, Ennubirr and Ennugarret. The 7th Infantry Division, in the southern landings, had carried out its missions of seizing Ninni, Gea, Ennylabegan and Enubuj, in addition to fighting an action on Gehh. At all these initial objectives troops were now hard at work emplacing artillery, manhandling ammunition, siting infantry weapons and preparing local defenses. Still afloat, but equally busy with final preparations, were the assault units for the main landings. During the day, in both attack forces, these had been transferred to LST's as a preliminary to boating them in amphibian tractors.

After dark, (in the north) and during the day (at Kwajalein Island), final reconnaissance of the main landing beaches had been effected.

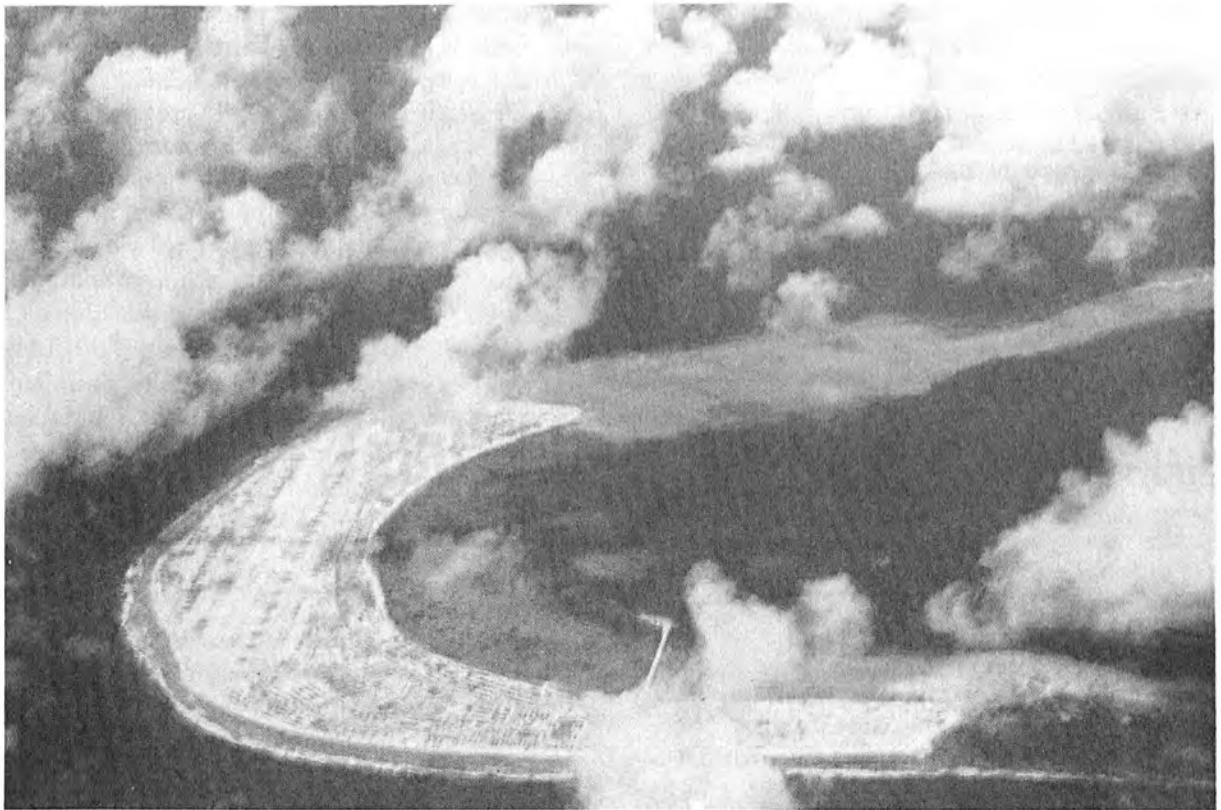
In the Northern Attack Force zone, because of the proximity of Ennugarret to Namur (no more than 460 yards from shore to shore) it was

quickly realized that the former would provide a direct fire base against the latter. During the night infantry weapons of the 25th Marines plus those of the Division Special Weapons Battalion were concentrated along the north shore of Ennugarret to bear on Namur, and thus support the 24th Marines' assault. By morning the following emplaced firepower glowered menacingly from the north beaches of Ennugarret: five 75mm half-tracks; 17 37mm antitank guns; four 81mm mortars; nine 60mm mortars, and 61 machine guns. Under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Chambers, whose battalion had seized the island, all weapons were duly coordinated, laid in and registered.⁵⁴ While the weapons were being emplaced during the night intermittent fires were exchanged between the two islands, but it seemed that the Japanese were more afraid of an attack in the darkness than bent on provoking further trouble.

⁵⁴ 3/25 SAR, 2.



THE FIFTH FLEET found Majuro lagoon an excellent anchorage. (Navy photo.)



KWAJALEIN ISLAND after its capture by 7th Infantry Division Troops. (Air Force photo.)

In the Southern Attack Force zone, the battleship *New Mexico* and the destroyer *Murray* cruised slowly off the southeast angle of Kwajalein, interdicting and illuminating areas be-

lieved critical to the Japanese defenders, while the battalions of the 7th Division Artillery fired harassing concentrations until dawn.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER IV

D-Plus 1, Roi

LST'S, LVT'S AND WET TCS-TBX¹

The mission of seizing Roi and its airfield, had been assigned to the 23d Marines (reinforced), which was to land from within the lagoon across the south beaches (Red 2 and 3) of the flat, sandy island. Namur, to the east, was the objective of the 24th Marines (reinforced).

During the afternoon of D-Day, Marines of both regimental combat teams transferred from the transports, outside the lagoon, to the LST's from which (it had been planned) amphibian tractors would in turn run the assault waves into the lagoon and thence to the beaches.² Meanwhile, both Admiral Conolly and General Schmidt had already seen the confusion incident to boating the IVAN Landing Group. They concluded that the only realistic course of action would be to move the LST's inside the lagoon and launch the morrow's assault amtracs from positions reasonably near

¹ TCS and TBX radios were set up in the LVT's and LCVP's for communication during the ship-to-shore operation.

² Sources for this and following summary of the initial ship-to-shore movement of the 4th Division are, unless otherwise cited, *4th MarDiv SAR*, 5-6; *PhibGrp3 SAR*, 6; Action Report, 23d Marines, *FLINTLOCK*, 4Mar44, 2-3, hereinafter cited as *23dMar SAR*; Unit Journal, 23d Marines, 31Jan-3Feb44, hereinafter cited as *23Mar Jnl*.

the line of departure. Moreover, considering both the scattered location of many tractors, as well as their dwindling fuel supply, movement of the LST's would bring sources of support nearer the hard-pressed, dispersed vehicles of the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

The decision was not only wise, but the only one practicable under the circumstances. Elaborate arrangements had been blocked out in advance for the return of each amphibian tractor to its parent LST for refuelling and servicing. But nightfall found many tractors stranded inside the lagoon or hopelessly lost, groping through the blackout from hulk to hulk seeking the assigned "parent." Although a number of LST's took on board whatever wandering tractors approached, others, apparently straitjacketed by plan, not only refused to provide gasoline but even to receive LVT's which would inevitably sink unless fueled or immediately retrieved. At least six of the 23 tractors sunk during the operation were casualties to this unfortunate situation while the remaining losses were attributed to high surf, faulty bilge pumps, coral heads and miscellaneous damages.³

³ Report by CO, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, *FLINTLOCK* Operation, 27May44, hereinafter cited as *10th Amtrac SAR*. This report includes detailed individual reports by each platoon leader in the battalion, and presents a detailed picture of the amphibian tractor situation at Roi-Namur.

Thus on the morning of D-plus 1, as soon as daylight permitted, Admiral Conolly dispatched his LST's inside the lagoon, there to launch tractors of the yet-uncommitted 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

While the boating situation developed, the northern portion of the atoll again felt the whiplash of carrier air strikes and the sledge hammer of ships' gunfire.

The planned hour for landings (W-Hour), to which all gunfire and air strikes were keyed, had been tentatively set in advance as 1000, and, as late as 0822, Admiral Conolly so signaled in confirmation. Thus, commencing at first light, ships and aircraft began timing their final preparatory fires to this reference point in the schedule.

Before sunrise, the ships of Fire Support

Unit Two, commanded by Rear Admiral Laurance T. DuBose with his flag in *Santa Fe*, had approached station west and southwest of Roi, and the early morning antisubmarine and combat air patrols from carriers *Chenango* and *Essex* were winging out. In the western fire-support area, LST's moving into the lagoon momentarily fouled the range for the bombardment-ships. But at 0710 bombardment commenced, chiming in with the deep-throated 14-inch salvos of the *Tennessee*, which at 0650 had already begun to pound southeast Roi and the blockhouse PAL⁴ which squatted on the spit between Roi and Namur.

⁴ Blockhouses and what were thought to be blockhouses on Roi were labeled with code names for the operation. For instance, there were PAL, BRUCE, BERNIE, BOBBY, and others. In this narrative they are referred to by name when known.



LANDING CRAFT gather for the amphibious assault on Roi. (Navy photo.)



HEAVY SALVOS were fired on Roi before the Marines went ashore. (Navy photo.)

Division of the targets on Roi was proportioned to the batteries of the various ships. *Maryland*, with her 16-inch main battery, worked steadily along the south beaches, probing for the batteries and four blockhouses reported in that sector and on WENDY Point. Covering somewhat the same area, especially back of Red 3, the light cruiser *Santa Fe* dropped 6-inch shells on a blockhouse just west of Tokyo Pier.⁵ Another light cruiser, *Biloxi*, was at work on the northwest 5.5-inch batteries, as well as the neighboring blockhouses and pillboxes on the north shore. The heavy cruiser, *Indianapolis*, was responsible for Roi's west coast, firing 8-inch salvos about the blockhouses and pillboxes between the two western extremities of the shore. From within the lagoon, the destroyer *Phelps* commenced 5-inch fire on Beach Red 2.

Meanwhile, the 3d and 4th Battalions, 14th Marines, firing from Mellu and Ennuebing, had joined in the preparation.⁶ The 3d Battalion

⁵ A small pier that extended from Roi into the lagoon, but which was wrecked during the bombardment. A larger L-shaped dock, labeled "Yokohama Pier," extended from Namur and was taken virtually intact. It was about 15 yards wide, extended 100 yards into the lagoon and had a 50-yard ell. At the other end was a hammerhead crane that had been severely damaged by naval fire.

⁶ 1st and 2d Battalions, 14th Marines, were firing on Namur. See Chap V.

(75mm pack howitzers) shelled Beach Red 3, while the 4th Battalion (105mm howitzers) thickened the heavy naval gunfire on Red 2, to the west.

Fires and explosions were soon visible on Roi, adding smoke and flame to the pall of dust and debris. At 0919 a heavy explosion spouted up near the boundary between Red 2 and Red 3. A lowering sky combined with the smoke to obscure targets and hinder good air observation.

But even as the bombardment grew in volume and effectiveness, the boating situation gave increasing cause for concern. The 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion with Company A, 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion attached, had been employed on D-Day to land the 25th Marines on the five outlying islands seized that day. Now assigned to the 24th Marines, the 10th was without many of its vehicles as a result of D-Day operations. On the other hand, the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which was to land the 23d Marines on Roi, was as yet uncommitted and accordingly intact.

Despite the fact that all of the 4th Battalion's vehicles were available, the radio communication problems which had deviled the 25th Marines and the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion were now reappearing in full force. Because of the heavy swells, frequent rain squalls and long running distances involved, virtually every radio mounted in the LVT's had drowned out by mid-morning.

This situation was of direct and grave concern to the commanding officer of the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, for communications were essential to carry out his mission. Colonel Jones, commanding the 23d Marines, had directed that the tractor commander take charge of all the regiment's attached amtracs, assemble them prepared to replace losses and to supervise transfer of reserve elements (Landing Team 3/23) from LCVP's to LVT's if necessary. With communications out, and with hundreds of landing craft⁷ now inside the lagoon, the combat team commander found himself confronted by an increasingly confused state of affairs. To compound his difficulties he was unable to locate the amtrac battalion commander,

⁷ 4th MarDiv SAR, 5-6.

who at that time was endeavoring to get his companies into the water.

In face of this confusion and difficulty, it became evident to Admiral Conolly and General Schmidt that W-Hour at 1000 could not be met. At 0841 the admiral queried his transport group commander as to whether W-Hour might have to be postponed. It required but two minutes for the latter to flash back an affirmative reply, recommending an hour's delay; at 0853 Admiral Conolly, therefore, signaled a change in W-Hour to 1100.⁸

While bombardment and air strike schedules were being adjusted to this change, the LST's began to straggle to their new stations south of Roi and Namur. Some of the ships had got as far as 40 miles away during the night's cruising. This meant that beginning at dawn and traveling at ten knots, the vessels would require four hours to reach the lagoon. Further delay was caused when one LST inadvertently let go her anchor in one of the lagoon passes, thus blocking the pass until the anchor could be weighed.⁹ It was 0822 by the time the LST's carrying 1st Battalion, 23d Marines (an assault unit) were ready to launch amtracs.¹⁰ Thirty-eight minutes later the LST's with the 2d Battalion (the other assault unit) embarked discharged their first LVT.¹¹

Amphibian tractors loaded on the LST tank decks were discharged without incident, but removal of the LVT's from the weather decks was a complicated affair at best. Plans called for lowering the vehicles to the tank deck by means of an elevator, but while still at San Diego it was discovered that the amtracs were too long to clear the elevator openings. To remedy this situation, a wooden incline was constructed and placed on the elevator platform. When run onto this incline, the tractors were usually sufficiently canted to clear the opening.¹² It was necessary, however, for an LVT to develop full power and have a clutch in top adjustment in order to make the grade.

Once the vehicle was sufficiently canted on the incline, the elevator would be lowered to the tank deck, the LVT driven off and the procedure repeated. This was slow and subject to failure, but apparently it was the only method available to get the tractors from the weather deck to the water.

Additional complications were encountered on LST 126. Here the incline was somewhat steeper than those on other LST's, which made the task of climbing it all the more difficult. Few, if any, LVT's climbed it sufficiently to clear the elevator opening, and in those cases cutting-torch details had to shear away the rear splash fenders on the tractors, thus permitting narrow but sufficient clearance.¹³

A badly jammed elevator halted virtually all debarkation of Company E, 23d Marines on board LST 42, which like all her sisters, was scantily supplied with personnel experienced in operating the complicated elevators.¹⁴ It later came to the attention of Colonel Jones that on one of the landing ships bearing his regiment, only one member of the crew knew how to operate the elevator which was to lower the tractors to the tank deck.¹⁵ Under such circumstances it was no wonder that the launching was a long drawn-out, hit-or-miss affair.

At 0925, to compound the confused state of affairs in the lagoon, Salvage Boat 8 reported by radio to its parent, the USS *Biddle*,

WE ARE ON ABRAHAM ISLAND X JAPS ARE
COUNTERATTACKING FROM CAMOUFLAGE X
SEND SUPPORT IMMEDIATELY.

This alarming message was at once relayed by the commander of TransDiv 26 to Admiral Conolly. A few minutes later the admiral received from the 4th Division air observer a report that no such enemy counterattack could be discerned. Despite the conservative reports from the observer, however, torpedo planes from *Chenango* plastered SALLY Point on Namur, and a rain of naval gunfire and artillery began dropping on the southeast corner of the island. By 1000, it became apparent that the air ob-

⁸ 4th MarDiv Jnl, 1Feb44.

⁹ Historical Section interview with Col E. J. Dillon, 15Mar49.

¹⁰ Ship's log, USS *LST 119*, 1Feb44.

¹¹ Special Action Report, 2d Bn, 23d Marines, 14Feb44, 1-3, hereinafter cited as 2/23 SAR.

¹² *Croizat*.

¹³ Ltr Maj Theodore M. Garhart to CMC, 14Nov52, hereinafter cited as *Garhart*.

¹⁴ 2/23 SAR, 3.

¹⁵ 23dMar SAR, 2.

server had the last word; the "counterattack" had been illusory. If anything, such a Japanese maneuver would have been welcomed on Ennugarret by the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, which was heavily reinforced by attached regimental and divisional firepower.

At 1026, while boat and LVT groups were beginning to form in rear of the line of departure, naval gunfire lifted, and 16 Grumman Avengers from USS *Intrepid* and *Oabot*, each carrying a 2,000-pound bomb, hit the beaches on Roi and Namur. At 1035, as the TBF's pulled out, 15 dive bombers from *Intrepid* peeled off in a precision strike on the south beaches. Four minutes later, Hellcat fighters from the same carrier buzzed and swarmed over their targets for final strafing passes, and at 1055, as the last fighter shot upwards to rendezvous on his section leader, the grim pounding by naval gunfire resumed.¹⁶

The situation at the line of departure, where destroyer *Phelps* was again acting as control vessel, was now clearing.

Colonel Jones reached the line of departure in his LCVP 15 minutes prior to W-Hour. But he was unable to locate the two LVT's assigned to combat team headquarters and found that none of his armored amphibians or other boat groups was fully formed.¹⁷ A few minutes later, however, the various groups began arriving. To expedite matters, the commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, ordered his tractors to proceed independently to the line of departure. In the 1st Battalion word had not filtered down that W-Hour was delayed. As a result, when the first tractors reached the line of departure at 1045, all hands felt that "they had failed miserably" in not making the original 1000 deadline.¹⁸

Prior to 1100 the assault waves of the 23d Marines were formed, and all hands were boated in amphibian tractors generally as planned. In the adjacent zone, the 24th Marines ever since

0630 had been desperately trying to accumulate enough tractors for the assault, and matters were by no means so well along. Although sufficient LVT's were now on hand to boat some elements of the assault companies the balance of the regiment was being embarked in LCVP's assembled from every available source to make good the deficiency of tractors. As of W-Hour, this process was not completed.¹⁹

What now confronted the control officer on board *Phelps* was one regiment (23d Marines) ready to attack, and the other (24th Marines) still struggling to complete boating and forming up. Seven minutes after W-Hour, with no signal to commence the assault, Colonel Jones found the waiting too much and impatiently queried *Phelps* why the attack had not yet been ordered. Five minutes later (1112) in reply to Jones' question, the red "Baker" flag dropped from the yardarm of the control destroyer, and the first waves of the 23d Marines churned forward toward the smoking, explosive-torn shore of Roi, followed by the combat team commander in his LCVP.

Preceded by rocket-firing LCI(G)'s (449, 451, 452, 453, 457), and then by a total of 30 armored amphibians from Companies A and C, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, the 23d Marines traversed the 5,000-yard (33-minute) run toward Red Beaches which were still being hammered by ships' guns. In the welter of confusion the only thing certain was that the attack was underway. As Colonel Jones subsequently reported:

Adding to the confusion was the diversity of agencies who originated orders or claimed to have orders . . . Boat Group Commanders, Flotilla Commanders, amphibian tractor company commanders and platoon leaders and tractor drivers all handled and at times executed erroneous or garbled orders to land. . . . Our assault waves went in to the beach still not knowing how much water they would find over the reef, whether there were any coral heads to be watched for, or whether there were any man-made obstructions in the water.

After the battle the Marines were to learn about the beach reconnaissance of the night before, results of which had been on board the Attack Force flagship since 0500.²⁰

¹⁶ Action Report by 24th Marines, FLINTLOCK, 10Mar44, 6-8, hereinafter cited as 24thMar SAR.

¹⁷ 23dMar SAR, 2-3.

¹⁸ Details of the air strikes are taken from 4th Mar-Div Jnl, 10-12, passim.

¹⁹ Col Jones was never able to find his two LVT's and he eventually went into the beach in his LCVP. Comments on preliminary draft by BrigGen Louis R. Jones, 11Apr49.

²⁰ Action Report, 1st Bn, 23d Marines, FLINTLOCK, hereinafter cited as 1/23 SAR, 2-3.

LANDING ON RED THREE

The 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Dillon, had been selected to land on Beach Red 3 (see Map 8, Map Section), and deliver the main punch up the relatively short east shore of Roi. Within this battalion's zone lay most of the aviation base facilities, hangars and buildings on the island. In accordance with its leading role, the battalion had been allocated a full company of armored amphibians (as compared with the two platoons given 1st Battalion on the left), and it likewise had attached Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, the division's medium tank company.²¹ In addition, one platoon of light tanks from Company A was attached to the medium company.

The 2d Battalion would land with two companies (E and F) in assault, Company F in turn making the battalion's main effort on the right; two platoons of medium tanks and three light tanks were to give direct support to Company F's assault. Company E on the left of Beach Red 3 would be backed up by one platoon of medium tanks plus two lights, and would guide on and assist the attack of the right assault company.²²

The 2d Battalion's first wave consisted of 18 armored amphibians (Company A, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion) which dipped and plunged through the wakes of the LCI(G)'s ahead. Behind the LVT(A)'s came two assault waves of infantry embarked in LVT(2)'s. Behind these, in turn, were two waves of tanks embarked in LCM(3)'s which would be called in as soon as conditions on the smoke-enveloped beach permitted.

A thousand yards offshore, while naval gunfire still blanketed the beach, the LCI(G)'s let loose salvos of 4.5-inch barrage rockets which hissed through the air, marking their trajectories with flashing parabolas. The massed

rockets fell in the warren of fire-trenches and smashed against pillboxes near the water. Less than five minutes later, while the LCI's raked the beach with 40mm bursts, the 12 rocket launcher-equipped amphibian tractors likewise let fly,²³ but their explosives "did not hit the beach, but rather landed about the LVT(A)'s leading them in."²⁴ By now the dust and smoke were drifting steadily over from the burning ordnance stores on Namur. Across the few hundred yards left to go, the advancing waves could discern Roi only as a shore dimly seen.

Three hundred and fifty yards offshore the machine gunners opened up from the amtracs, now in the edge of the smoke. A few futile Japanese shell-spouts appeared between the boat-waves and the beach. At 1150 all naval gunfire lifted from inside the lagoon, and two minutes later the LCI's checked fire as the waves neared shore. To the west of Roi, the fire-support ships lifted fires to targets well clear of the beaches, on the north portion of the island. Shortly after 1150, the leading tractors bearing assault riflemen ground past the remains of Tokyo Pier and onto Beach Red 3.²⁵

In the smoke and turmoil there were bound to be difficulties incident to the landing itself, and these were experienced by the armored amphibians.

We had so many vehicles in the first wave that, with our poor maneuverability and poor driver visibility, we would have had very close work if everyone had maintained perfect interval . . . there was a good deal of accordion action," with the result that several [LVT(A)'s] were squeezed out of line from time to time, and there were a number of collisions, especially after we were near enough to the beach for the drivers to button up. My own vehicle was involved in one of those collisions, and had holes knocked in all the pontoons on one side, causing my driver to lose partial control. However, we did hit the beach in fairly good alignment.²⁶

Japanese beach defenses had been blasted to

²¹ At this time, due to general shortages of supply as well as to the fact that medium tanks still constituted somewhat of a problem in terms of weight and bulk for amphibious shipping, only one company of the Marine tank battalion was equipped with the M4 medium tank which later became standard. The balance of the battalion was equipped with light tanks.

²² Operation Order 2-44, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, 19Jan44.

²³ "The rockets discharged properly from the launchers . . . [but] the LVT's pitched up and down in such a manner as to have some rounds go high while others fell miserably short." *Garhart*.

²⁴ *Metzger*.

²⁵ The ship-to-shore movement of the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, has been synthesized from *23dMar SAR*, 4; *4th MarDiv Jnl*, 1Feb44.

²⁶ Ltr Maj Ellis N. Livingston to CMC, 8Nov52.



MARINES PINNED DOWN by Japanese immediately after landing on Namur.

pieces. Every pillbox in the zone of Company F had been hit by naval gunfire. There were no vestiges of an organized enemy defense. As the Marines scrambled clear of their tractors, they were confronted only by one machine gun at the southwest corner of Roi and a few "dazed and bewildered" Japanese,²⁷ remnants of the aviation units which had garrisoned the island.

... five Japanese [came] out from a destroyed pillbox just five yards from the water's edge. The first Japanese who came out was unarmed, but seemed fully composed and his manner and uniform indicated ... that he was a pilot. He looked around for a second or two, then waved to his comrades to come. Four Japanese followed him, only two of whom were armed. They started to run, but were eliminated.²⁸

Four tractors of Company F had edged eastward to land on the left boundary of Beach Green 1 in the zone of Company K, 24th Marines, and a few third-wave tractors, similarly lost, ended up to the left on Red 2. Noncommissioned officers promptly took charge, however, and led their boat teams to Red 3 in the

case of the Green 1 stragglers, taking out a few Japanese positions along the spit between Roi and Namur.

Over on the left Company E was encountering the same sort of disorganized resistance. As that unit's first wave hit the beach, two Japanese armed only with bayonets rushed the Marines in a futile effort to stem the invasion. Just inland of the beach some defenders in open trenches fought determinedly, but the bombardment had left them dazed and few in number. Encountering only scattered enemy and small-arms fire, Company E rapidly advanced toward the battalion objective.²⁹

By two minutes past noon tanks were rumbling down the ramps of the LCM's into coral shallows which had stopped the barges just left of Tokyo Pier. The antitank ditch in this area had been caved in by gunfire and rockets, and with the aid of the company's tank retrievers the M4's were soon grinding and lurching their way through the rubble past advancing Marine fire teams.

²⁷ Action Report, Company F, 23d Marines.

²⁸ Ltr Maj John J. Padley to Director, DivPubInfo, 16Apr49.

²⁹ Ltr Maj Carl O. J. Grussendorf to Director, Div-PubInfo, 30Mar49.

At 1215 Colonel Dillon was on the beach, and the battalion command post was opened on the south edge of the aircraft taxiway at Road Junction 11, amid revetments badly battered but still capable of sheltering a CP. One hundred and fifty yards forward, Marines were being halted (more or less) by their platoon leaders along the initial objective line: 0-1. Company G, in battalion reserve, had landed in rear of Company F and was already at work flushing out and mopping up surviving Japanese who had hidden in the ruins or, particularly, in the drainage culverts which flanked the hard-surfaced airstrip.

The regimental commander had good reason for optimism following his landing at 1204. Less than an hour later, at 1311, from the 23d Marines' command post, 200 yards west of Tokyo Pier, Colonel Jones radioed his first personal report to General Schmidt, still on board the *Appalachian*:

THIS IS A PIP X NO OPPOSITION NEAR THE BEACH. . . .

Fifteen minutes later, his second report confirmed the first:

O-1 OURS X GIVE US THE WORD AND WE WILL TAKE THE REST OF THE ISLAND.³⁰

LANDING ON RED TWO

The 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hewin O. Hammond, had been assigned the left (west) half of Roi, a zone of action which included by far the greater portion of Japanese emplacements on the island. The beach assigned for this landing was Red 2 (see Map 8, Map Section), extending roughly from WENDY Point east to the coral-reefed edge of the channel which approached the south shore beside Tokyo Pier.

Because of the reported presence of two blockhouses on WENDY Point, together with the ever-present danger of enfilading fire from that area, the main and initial effort of the battalion was to take out these blockhouses and secure the Point. After this had been accom-

³⁰ *4th MarDiv Jnl*, 1Feb44; Unit Journal, 2d Bn, 23d Marines, 1Feb44; 2/23 SAR, passim.



MOVING across Roi's shattered airfield.

plished, the main effort would shift to the right, assisting what was projected to be the advance of the adjacent 2d Battalion.

To aid Lieutenant Colonel Hammond in his task, two platoons of armored amphibians (actually, Company C, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, less one platoon) had been attached to the battalion.

Hammond's first wave, also preceded by the LCI(G)'s, consisted of 12 armored amphibians. His two following waves contained the assault echelons of Companies A and B and were organized in much the same manner as already described in the case of the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines.

The first two waves were dispatched with reasonable promptness, but the third did not cross the line of departure until 1129, having been held up 13 minutes after the second wave departed. This was the first evidence of what seemed to the landing team commander a most annoying hesitancy on the part of wave commanders to move up, and of the control officer (in *LOC 71*) to keep the waves moving on schedule. However, here as elsewhere, the failure of radio communications during the ship-to-shore movement injected exasperating frustration into every delay.³¹

Following the same deluge of rockets which had pulverized adjacent Red 3, the armored amphibians shouldered their way onto Beach Red 2 at 1133. Here they sought out positions in hull defilade, concentrated the fire of their 37mm guns and machine guns on the shattered hulks of WENDY Point's installations and then swept the entire zone of action. The earlier touchdown on Beach Red 2 (which preceded that of the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, by some minutes) resulted from the southwestward projection of Roi, which shortened the final run in by approximately 300 yards. Both Companies A and B followed the armored amphibians, and the two infantry waves were on the beach by 1158,

³¹ Action Report, 1st Bn, 23d Marines, *FLINTLOCK*, 4-5, hereinafter cited as *I/23 SAR*. LtCol Hammond finally had to send written orders to the control officer to dispatch the landing team's call waves in accordance with the plan previously worked out. Even then, the fourth and succeeding waves were not ordered in until Hammond's orders had been ratified, so to speak, by the Beachmaster in *SO 1012*.

but crowded by elements of Company E, which had eased over onto Beach Red 2.

While Company A moved to secure WENDY Point, one platoon of the armored amphibians pivoted left, proceeding across the Point itself, and, again waterborne, commenced firing on the NORBERT Circle area, in the northwest corner of Roi. Meanwhile, the riflemen of Company A soon found that if WENDY Point had ever amounted to much, the naval gunfire and air preparations had drawn its sting. Despite its critical location on the flank of the south beaches, WENDY showed evidence of comparatively scant defensive organization. In place of the two blockhouses reported by aerial-photographic interpreters, the Marines found but one stove-in pillbox, surrounded by a profusion of fuel drums and jetsam from what had evidently been a dump area.³² Light small-arms fire, with the unmistakable crack of the Japanese .256 caliber rifle, annoyed but did not appreciably hinder the Marines.

At 1210, meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Hammond had landed and opened his command post on WENDY Point. As Company A advanced up the west beach toward the 0-1 line, the telling effect of the bombardment became even more evident. The first blockhouse to be encountered—near the first objective line—had taken a direct 16-inch hit, together with a less effective peppering from smaller projectiles. One concrete pillbox was very new, and scattered evidence of construction in progress still strewn the ground.

The first face-to-face enemy resistance encountered by Company A came from a large blockhouse (BUSTER) 100 yards north of the 0-1 line on the coast beside a wrecked radar station. One Japanese (several were within) charged out of the exit with a grenade in each hand, but popped back in under a fusillade of rifle fire. Marines covered the approach of grenadiers who silenced the blockhouse by lobbing hand grenades through the entrance.

Whenever grenades proved insufficient in the debris, bangalore torpedoes and satchel charges of high explosive were hurled up the drainage culverts beside and under the airstrip, in

³² *Ibid.*, 6.



A DIRECT HIT by naval gunfire was required to make an impression on this Japanese fortification on Roi.

which enemy snipers were hiding and firing intermittently.

Even as the Marines mopped up the littered wreckage, eight SBD's and seven TBM's from USS *Sangamon* added to the sum of destruction by a strike which raked the north shore of Roi.

While the 1st Battalion's assault companies were advancing after a virtually unopposed landing, the medium tanks attached to both battalions began hitting the shore at noon. It had been intended that the channel west of Tokyo Pier be used to get the tank-lighters to the beach itself. While some LCM's were able to do this, many coxswains could not find the channel because of the demolished pier and consequently grounded on the coral shelf about 200 yards offshore. Having been waterproofed for such a contingency, the tanks clanked in to the beach through five and one-half feet of water, led in each case by a crewman outside who guided his vehicle around potholes. On

the beach the entire tank company formed up as a unit and moved eastward in column until a breached spot could be found in the antitank ditch behind the Red Beaches. The mediums then advanced inland in line toward 0-1, overtaking the infantry and receiving nothing heavier than Japanese rifle fire which rattled and spattered harmlessly against their armor.³³

By 1217 the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, was on the first objective, reserve companies had been landed throughout the entire regimental zone, and few live Japanese had been seen. Numerous enemy dead were scattered about, however, some wearing the familiar olive-drab blouse, shapeless breeches and wrapped puttees of the Japanese forces, others more appropriately clad in shorts and shirts; a few enemy

³³ Action Report, Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, FLINTLOCK, 25Mar44, hereinafter cited as C/4thTkbN SAR 1.



DEBRIS and equipment litter the landing beaches on Roi.

helmets lay about, but the headgear of most, bearing the Special Naval Landing Force anchor device, was of the truncated-cone type. Many Marines stared curiously for the first time at the split-toed sneakers which projected mutely from piles of debris.³⁴

ROI IS SECURED

Although Colonel Jones, after looking over the situation on Roi, could rightfully characterize the over-all picture as "a pip," a similar reaction on the part of most of the Marines, not to speak of the tanks, had caused some embarrassment to orderly continuation of the attack.

The lack of much organized resistance, the discovery that it was reasonably safe for riflemen to advance on foot, and, it was later claimed, the virtual obliteration of the land-

marks which denoted the 0-1 line³⁵ had combined to permit individuals and small units to press forward without waiting on the initial objective for a coordinated attack. The first result of this more or less spontaneous reaction was the required lifting of all naval gunfire and air strikes as early as 1222.

Claiming poor radio communications and want of further instructions, the Commanding Officer of Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, had pressed his mediums forward from their exposed 0-1 line position on the airfield taxiways. The tank's vulnerability while stationary on this flat terrain caused him, he reported, to fear anti-

³⁴ Report by Battalion Intelligence Officer, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, 11Feb44.

³⁵ Beginning at the Peter Road causeway on Roi's east beach, the 0-1 line extended west of the intersection of the runways, then just forward of Runway Able southwest 350 yards, then directly west to a Japanese medium AA gun position, labeled BW 22 (on the map), on the west coast of Roi.

tank fire unless the machines kept moving. As a result, the tanks swarmed northward, machine-gunning Japanese who popped up from ditches and placing 75mm fire on every structure in sight. By 1338, three tanks reached NAT Circle, on the northeast corner of Roi, where Japanese resistance was encountered from the emplacements and gun pits thereabouts. At 1400 the 4th Division air observer could see six tanks working along the north runway of Roi.³⁶

The officer who commanded Company A, 23d Marines, explains his men's action thus:

Men of Company A were holding at the 0-1 line until the tanks barged on through. Having been trained to protect our tanks, my men stayed with them, even to within a stone's throw of the northern beach.³⁷

At almost the same time, about 1345, a platoon of armored amphibians, not to be outdone by the tankers, was working its way, afloat or ashore as practicable, up the west beaches of Roi, raking the trenches and pillboxes that remained intact, and flushing out confused Japanese who scurried northward.³⁸

The net result of this situation, while it indicated well-developed offensive spirit among the Marines, was highly annoying from the point of view of both the regimental and division commanders. Coordination and control, not only of infantry-tank maneuver but of all supporting fires, was virtually nullified as long as the tanks and armored amtracs galloped about northern Roi, assisted and cheered on by impatient (and frequently trigger-happy) riflemen with only a hazy idea as to exactly where 0-1 lay.

As early as 1325, when the medium tanks were just coming to grips with Japanese machine gunners firing from the northeast corner of Roi, General Schmidt asked Colonel Jones if he could get the tanks back to the 0-1 line in order to make a coordinated attack across the island. To accomplish this and to regain control of all

³⁶ *C/4thTkbN SAR*, passim; *4th MarDiv Jnl*, 1Feb44.

³⁷ Maj James S. Scales comments on preliminary draft, 18Mar49, hereinafter cited as *Scales*.

³⁸ "The commanding officer of Company C, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, the company involved . . . informed me at the time that he had been ordered by the battalion commander of the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, to stay on the flank and keep abreast with the advancing infantry. This he did, and his LVT(A)'s neutralized several pillboxes and killed an undetermined number of Japanese." *Metzger*.



PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RICHARD B. ANDERSON, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, fell on an armed hand grenade in order that his companions' lives might be spared.

hands required about an hour, during which the tank company commander attempted, under the handicap of continuing radio interference, to urge that infantry be ordered up across the airstrips to consolidate the impromptu bite which the tanks had taken.

By 1445 both troops and tanks on Roi were being recalled to the 0-1 line in preparation for a coordinated attack ordered by the combat team commander for 1515. The assault battalions were to make main efforts up the respective east and west shore lines of Roi, where more cover was to be had, and also where the bulk of enemy positions lay. The fire-swept, billiard-table flatness of the center would of course fall to whoever held the edges. At 1510, on call from the fire control party attached to the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, the light cruiser *Santa Fe* placed a five-salvo 5-inch preparation on NAT Circle, where mixed Japanese aviation personnel from the 281st, 752d, and 755th Naval Air Groups still held out. The bulk of the

enemy fire came from 20mm antiaircraft guns, machine guns and rifles in the dozen-odd emplacements and fire trenches which surrounded the end of NAT Circle and covered the northeast corner of Roi.³⁹

At about 1530 the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines' attack jumped off on the right, covered by flanking fire from a 75mm half-track in position just north of the central junction of runways. Within seven minutes Company F had reached the northern hangar, a twisted tangle of girders and sheet metal, and four medium tanks were again working into the NAT Circle area. Some Japanese, flushed out of their trenches, attempted to take cover behind the seawall which ran along the shore in this vicinity. After noting their presence, the 4th Division air observer reported:

³⁹ Sketch map of Roi, prepared by 2dLt Charles J. Stines, to accompany Intelligence Report of 3d Battalion, 23d Marines.

THERE ARE SEVEN JAPS ON SEAWARD SIDE OF SEAWALL X THEY ARE RECEIVING FIRE FROM OUR TANKS.

Five minutes later, the observer radioed:

OF SEVEN HONORABLE JAPS ONLY TWO REMAIN WHO HAVE NOT AS YET MET HONORABLE ANCESTORS.

By 1600, resistance in the zone of the 2d Battalion had been confined entirely to NAT Circle, which was even then under tank-infantry clean-up. Directly in rear of the 2d Battalion advanced Company K of the 3d Battalion, which had landed at 1450. The remaining two companies (I and L) of the reserve battalion were assembled on Beach Red 2, awaiting orders and in position to cover the right flank of the 23d Marines against any Japanese attempt to cross the spit between Roi and Namur.⁴⁰ Consid-

⁴⁰ Action Report, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, FLINTLOCK, 2. The landing of this battalion had been



THESE JAPANESE PLANES, once a part of the 24th Air Flotilla, will fly no more.



DRAINAGE CULVERTS, such as the smashed one in the foreground of this photograph, furnished excellent hiding places for Japanese.

erable small-arms fire, both U. S. and Japanese, from the hot action on Namur only 500 yards away was falling among the Marines along the east shore of Roi.

The 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, did not launch its attack until almost 1600, supporting

confused badly by misunderstandings on the part of boat control officers of TransDiv 28, who insisted on sending in elements of Companies I and K, on the strength of orders to land reserve waves of the assault battalions. In the course of this and immediately subsequent events, the battalion commander, LtCol John J. Cosgrove, received orders from regimental headquarters, first, to land his battalion across Beach Red 2 (at 1320); and then (at 1404), after four waves had reached Red 2, to land across Red 3, where the fifth, sixth and seventh waves were then landed. This resulted in understandable confusion within the battalion, which, however, once on the beach, assembled promptly. 1Feb44, 23dMar Jnl.

the advance on its right by fire. Both Companies A and B (those which had landed in assault) stood fast on the 0-1 line, and Company C (the reserve company) passed through Company A to attack northward up the shoreline on a 200-yard front. This advance was preceded by a platoon of medium tanks (attached from the 2d Battalion) and backed up by three 75mm half-tracks from the Regimental Weapons Company.

Only rifle and light machine-gun fire was encountered. By 1642, Company C was mopping up NORBERT Circle, northwest corner of Roi, and organized enemy fire had ceased in the battalion zone. A trench just north of the circle was found to contain more than 40 recently killed Japanese, many of whom had evidently committed suicide. By 1800, all resistance had ceased, and Company C, together with



A MEMBER OF THE 23d MARINES moves past a gutted hangar on Roi.

Companies A and B, still on O-1, had commenced taking up defensive positions for the night, covering the northern and western beaches against any possibility of counterlanding.⁴¹

There now remained to be dealt with only the defenders of NAT Circle, and the 2d Battalion, closing in behind medium tanks, was systematically reducing this strong point. Japanese riflemen continued to fire from the trenches around the circle, and from three pillboxes on the periphery; in the Island Administration Building, remarkably untouched

by the bombardment, a single determined Japanese was killed by Company F. Three Japanese machine gunners in a concrete pillbox just west of the circle offered resistance, but Company F by-passed them and moved in on the adjacent trenches.

Company G, in reserve, assumed the pillbox problem. A moving 75mm half-track was obtained from the Regimental Weapons Company; five rounds blew in the one-half-inch steel door,, and the company demolitions squad placed charges and a bangalore torpedo at each fire-port. That was the end of that.⁴² The

⁴¹ All information on the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines' advance from O-1 taken from Report of Activities, Company C, 23d Marines, 13Feb44, 3.

⁴² Combat Report, Company G, 23d Marines, 14Feb44, 5.

three log-and-sand pillboxes still firing from amid the trenches were neutralized by 37mm guns of the Division Special Weapons Battalion, and Company F demolition squads did the rest. The open trenches were now occupied only by dead Japanese, and NAT Circle was secured. The time was 1802.

Colonel Jones radioed to General Schmidt:

GRADUALLY MOPPING UP X JAPS HIDDEN
IN DRAINAGE DITCHES ON AIRFIELD FIR-
ING MACHINE GUNS AND RIFLES X BLOW-
ING THEM UP FOUR OR FIVE AT A TIME.

And to Colonel Jones the 1st Battalion Operations Officer, Captain James R. Miller, had just reported:

HAVE GOOD BIG FLAG TO RUN UP WHEN
YOU WANT IT.⁴³

CLEAN-UP ON ROI

As soon as it was plain to General Schmidt⁴⁴ that the situation on Roi was well in hand, he ordered that the medium tanks attached to the 23d Marines be withdrawn from action and sent to the aid of the 24th Marines on Namur, where the going was anything but easy. At 1701 these orders reached Colonel Jones on Roi, and within 20 minutes the tanks were being pulled back and assembled for movement across the spit.⁴⁵

At about 1800, just as NAT Circle was being overrun, the east shore of Roi was the scene of a violent, uncontrolled, and highly contagious outburst of indiscriminate firing, largely localized just north of the main Japanese hangar in the area of the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines. The wounding of a single Marine in Company G nearby, presumably by a sniper, caused men of the 3d Battalion first to take cover, and then to open fire on what appeared to be a Japanese rifleman on the hangar roof. Within a matter of seconds, the hangar became the target of a deluge of fire from rifles, carbines, machine

guns, and even pistols. The battalion commander, who was present and managed to stop the firing in remarkably quick order, considering the extent of the outbreak, estimated that 3,000 to 5,000 rounds were discharged in a matter of minutes. Fortunately only three men—all in the 2d Battalion, forward of the hangar—were wounded, and none was killed. Two dead Japanese were found on the roof next day.⁴⁶

But this was not the only outbreak of wild firing that day. Company A on the west coast of Roi found imaginary targets which were subsequently described:

Late in the afternoon of the first day [on Roi] firing broke out along the southwestern beaches. I questioned several Marines who were pumping round after round out to sea in a westerly direction. One lad I questioned told me, "The Japs are swimming in on us!" Upon focusing my glasses on the "counter-landing," I readily observed that the Japanese "swimmers" were nothing more than coral heads along the edge of the outer reef. Still, to the unaided eye, those coral heads did look like swimmers. As far as I could tell there were no casualties—either Marine or Japanese—from the spirited and contagious firing.⁴⁷

After the smoke and din of the hangar episode had been dispelled, the 23d Marines completed their night defensive dispositions on Roi. To guard against any incursions from the Japanese gradually being compressed into the northwest portion of Namur, the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, was ordered into defensive positions along the east shore of Roi, with particular attention to covering the spit, shallows, and causeway between the two islands. To the 3d Battalion's left, the 2d Battalion covered the northeast angle of Roi, while the 1st Battalion occupied beach positions along the remainder of the north, as well as all the west shore.

Despite the hot action in progress less than a quarter-mile away on Namur, there remained on Roi only the tedious business of tidying up a messy, demolished island and of converting it into an efficient air base. This task was pri-

⁴³ 23d Mar Jnl, 1Feb44.

⁴⁴ Gen Schmidt landed on Namur, where his command post was established. This will be dealt with in Chapter V, which takes up the Namur phase of the operation.

⁴⁵ 23d Mar Jnl, 1Feb44.

⁴⁶ A penetrating, detailed, and analytical report of this incident is given as Enclosure (D) to SAR 3/23, by LtCol Cosgrove, the battalion commander, who directed an on-the-spot, man-for-man investigation. The results of these interrogations, while too detailed for this work, present a remarkable case history in trigger-happiness, both as to cause and cure.

⁴⁷ *Scales.*

marily one for the 20th Marines, but it was shared by the assault troops themselves, who in two days flushed out the few surviving Japanese from the wreckage. There was also the far less pleasant duty of the burial details, working to keep pace with flies, humidity, and tropical sun.

The preponderance of the Japanese on Roi, it was evident to the Marines, had been killed by the crushing air and naval gunfire bombardment. Those who survived had been, in most cases, too dazed or disorganized to offer resistance of the type which Tarawa had led the division to expect. Lieutenant Colonel Dillon reported that of the 400 dead Japanese in his 2d Battalion area, some 250 showed signs of death by bombardment, and perhaps 150 had been killed by Marines after W-Hour. Those figures appeared typical of the ratio of enemy

casualties induced by bombardment as compared to those sustained in combat.

Roi had indeed been "a pip." Despite very logical apprehensions that the capture of Roi's airstrips might precipitate another Tarawa, it was apparent that Betio's lessons had been well learned and applied, especially in terms of preparation before the landing. For the Marines who secured Roi, the day's combat had afforded inexpensive lessons regarding control, fire discipline, and landing technique. As men of the 23d Marines settled down for the night, they might well congratulate themselves not only on successful accomplishment of a mission, but on good fortune and light opposition—opposition which was in marked contrast to that which Marine comrades were encountering but a few hundred yards away on Namur.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER V

Namur, D-Plus 1 and 2¹

THE 24TH GETS ASHORE

The mission of assaulting and seizing the island of Namur and the neighboring spit of land (PAULINE Point) to its left was assigned Combat Team 24, commanded by Colonel Franklin A. Hart. Within this organization the 2d and 3d Landing Teams were selected to spearhead the ship-to-shore movement, Companies F and G, I and K making the initial landing for their respective battalions. Landing Team 3 was scheduled to hit Beach Green 1 in the combat team's left zone, while Landing Team 2 was responsible for the right and Beach Green 2. (See Map 9, Map Section.)

In preparation for the landing, Fire Support Unit 1 under Rear Admiral Howard F. King-

man moved to within 3,500 yards² of Namur's beaches and at 0650 on D-plus 1 unloosed salvos on the 24th Marines' objective. The cacophony of ships' guns began with *Tennessee's* 14-inch shells rushing toward the blockhouse PAL on PAULINE Point between Roi and Namur. *Colorado*, sister-ship of *Maryland*, quickly chimed in with her armament, duly followed by the cruisers *Louisville*³ and *Mobile* and the destroyers *Morris* and *Anderson*.

Dawn's first light also brought artillery fire on Namur from the 14th Marines' batteries. The 1st Battalion, established on Ennubirr (ALLEN), and the 2d Battalion on Ennumenet (ALBERT), registered on SALLY Point and Yokohama Pier respectively prior to the 75mm pack howitzers contributing their pre-landing support. This naval and artillery preparation was augmented by the massed fires of the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines. On newly won Ennugarret (ABRAHAM), Lieutenant

¹ Unless otherwise cited, this chapter represents a synthesis of the following sources: *4th MarDiv SAR*; CT 24 Report on FLINTLOCK, 10Mar44; Prelim Rpt 1st Bn, 24th Marines, 8Feb44; Prelim Rpt 2d Bn, 24th Marines, 7Feb44; Incomplete Prelim Rpt 3d Bn, 24th Marines, 7Feb44; undated and incomplete Rpt 2d Bn, 24th Marines titled Narrative Battle of Roi Namur, 1-3 February 1944, hereinafter cited as *2dBn Narrative*; *10th AmphTrac SAR*; LtCol Richard Rothwell, "A Study of An Amphibious Operation, The Battle of Namur," 31Jan44-2Feb44, written for Amphibious Warfare School, Quantico, Senior Course 1946-1947; hereinafter cited as *Rothwell*; LtCol Austin R. Brunelli, Historical Tactical Study, "The Capture of Namur Island," February 1-2, 1944, written for Amphibious Warfare School, Quantico, Senior Course 1946-1947.

² This distance is contrasted with the 1,900 yards separating Admiral DuBose's Fire Support Unit 2 from Roi. *TF 53 Rpt FLINTLOCK*, Encl B, 4, points out that because of this difference in distance, Unit 1's support of CT 24 on Namur was not as effective as that received by the 23d Marines from Unit 2.

³ Since Fire Support Units 1 and 2 were firing toward each other during the D-plus 1 bombardment, pains were taken to prevent overshooting the targets. Later in the morning, however, *Louisville* was hit by 8-inch fragments from a ricochet fired by *Indianapolis* which injured five men and caused superficial damage.



COLONEL FRANKLIN A. HART discusses the plan for Namur with his subordinates. Lieutenant Colonel Litzenberg is on Colonel Hart's left.

Colonel Chambers had every available weapon aimed at Namur's southeastern shore, providing a base of fire which was lifted only when the assaulting Marines neared the beach.

But while Namur was being worked over in preparation for Combat Team 24's landing, the LVT difficulties noted in Chapter IV were complicating the picture. It is well to remember that the amtracs allotted Combat Team 24 for its D-plus 1 assault had been dispatched on multiple missions on D-Day. Some of these had been lost in operational accidents, while a great many had been stranded by lack of fuel. Thus Colonel Hart's carefully laid plans for the assault on Namur were frustrated in the initial

stages through no fault of his own.⁴

As General Schmidt later recalled:

The major difficulty [at Namur] was, of course, the inability of the amtrac crews to meet H-Hour on the morning of the principal assault. . . . Many of them could not find their parent ships and many needed service and gas. Many Navy transport commanders were to blame in not providing help at this time.⁵

Within Landing Team 2 (Lieutenant Colonel Francis H. Brink), Company G reported at 0300 that it had none of its allocated 12 tractors,

⁴ The views of both Col Hart and Col Rogers on this matter are given at the end of this chapter when the factors affecting the operation are summarized.

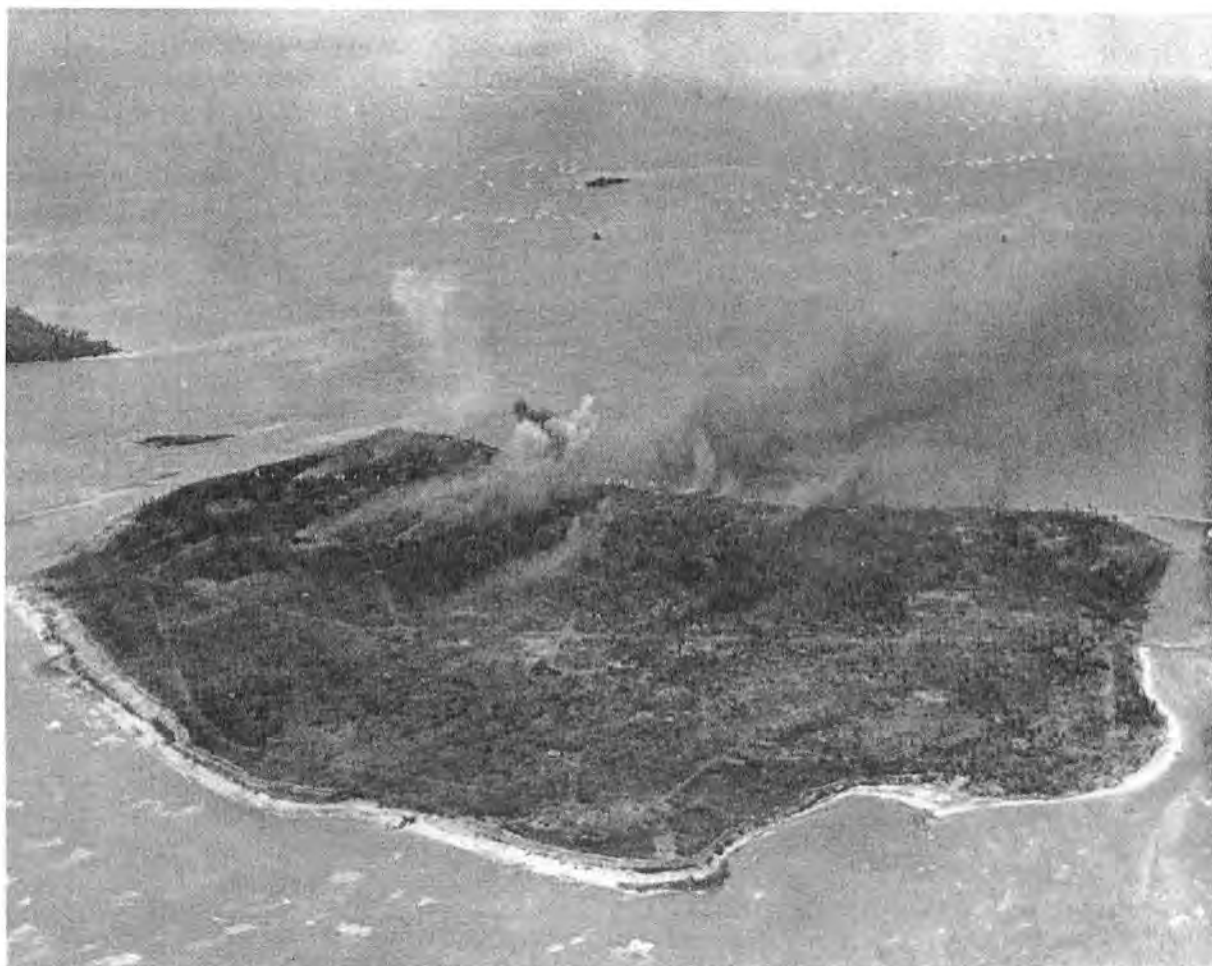
⁵ Ltr Gen Harry Schmidt to CMC, 13Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Schmidt*.

the number set aside (on paper) for each of the rifle companies in the two assault landing teams. Three and one-half hours later this company had accumulated only three amtracs. Company F was only slightly better off with seven tractors available, while Company E, in reserve, had its full quota. Obviously an immediate remedy was required, and Company E was ordered to replace Company G in the assault, the latter unit reverting to landing team reserve.

Landing Team 3 was faced with an identical problem which Lieutenant Colonel Austin R. Brunelli resolved in a different manner. Company I had only four of its required 12 LVT's, whereas Company L (reserve) had ten. Brunelli promptly redistributed the amtracs at hand, leaving his reserve company without transportation and thus his landing team without an embarked reserve.

Taking Combat Team 24 as a whole, at 0630 it was short 48 of its allocated 110 LVT's and Colonel Hart so notified General Schmidt, who suggested that LCVP's be utilized as a substitute. Colonel Hart fully expected this suggestion and promptly filed a request for the needed boats with the Transport Group Commander. An hour later the combat team commander started for the line of departure, arriving there at 0845.

Shortly after 0900 Colonel Hart received word of W-Hour's delay until 1100. While this was good news, it was not quite good enough. With a 33-minute run to the beach from the line of departure, the first wave would have to begin moving at 1027 at the latest. It was evident that Combat Team 24 would not be formed for the assault by that time, and Hart requested a further delay of another hour. He



LANDING CRAFT bearing the 24th Marines start in toward Namur's beaches. (Navy photo.)



MARINES on Namur's beaches. Damaged LVT's may be seen in the background.

interpreted the reply he received to mean that launching the assault would be held up until his organization was ready.

Landing Team 3 arrived on the scene with its two assault companies properly embarked, but, as noted previously, with no reserve. In Landing Team 2's area, Company F was loaded in only seven LVT's and necessarily minus elements of its 2d, 3d and Weapons Platoons. Company E's arrival at 1015 threw Navy control officers into confusion inasmuch as that unit had been scheduled as the fourth wave and it now became the left element of the second and third waves.⁶ Furthermore, the control officers never ceased interfering with the efforts of Captain John F. Ross, Jr., commanding Company E, to form his waves properly.

We never were able to make the Navy boat wave commander understand the change in plans. He kept trying to keep the company in one wave [the formation for the company in reserve] and nullified my efforts to form two waves.⁷

⁶ The first wave was made up of LVT(A)'s exclusively.

⁷ Ltr LtCol John F. Ross, Jr., to LtCol J. A. Crown, 21Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Ross*.

Shortly after 1100 the remainder of Company F joined the group, loaded in two LCVP's which had been commandeered by the company commander from the bridge of his LST. Thus the landing team now had its full complement of assault units.

In combat team reserve was Landing Team 1 (Lieutenant Colonel Aquilla J. Dyess) which was boated in LCVP's 3,000 yards to the rear of the line of departure.⁸ Colonel Hart was fully aware of the inherent dangers in permitting his assault units to hit the beach with no reserve. Therefore, Companies A and B were dispatched to the 2d and 3d Landing Teams respectively to take the place of their own absent reserve companies. As these two units reached the line of departure, however, elements of Company G appeared, embarked in LCVP's and LVT's, thus obviating the use of Company A with Landing Team 2. At that moment the control vessel dropped the Baker flag which signaled the movement to the beach. Colonel Hart was caught by surprise at this move and he attempted to intercept Landing Team 3 which had responded promptly to the signal. But when he saw that Combat Team 23 was underway, he realized that efforts to stop the drive would hurt more than help. Consequently he ordered his waves to continue.

As the tractors churned their way to the beach, explosive fury emanated from the LCI gunboats, destroyers, and other naval artillery and air support. When the approaching waves reached a point 750 yards from the beaches, the Navy planes ceased bombing Namur, and at 500 yards naval gunfire was lifted and then resumed two minutes later on targets beyond the 0-1 line just forward of PETER Road and SYCAMORE Boulevard.

Companies B and D of the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, constituting the first wave, had been directed to proceed 100 yards inland upon landing. Apparently because of a misunderstanding, however, the LVT(A) formation split, turning to either side and stopping

⁸ LCVP's were available for the combat team reserve because they had been so allocated. On the other hand, the assault elements had expected to use LVT's, and therefore some of their units were without transportation.

some 50 yards from the beach. And some of the armored amphibians continued firing their 37mm and machine guns, endangering Marines in Landing Team 2's area.⁹

GREEN TWO TO 0-1

Landing Team 2 hit Beach Green 2 at 1155 with Company F on the right in the lead, followed five minutes later by Company E. Instead of landing on the left, however, the lat-

⁹The record that this occurred is contained in *24thMar SAR*, 8; *2dBn Narrative*, 2, and *Rothwell*, 12. As noted in Chapter IV, LVT(A)'s in the Roi landing did go ashore and materially assisted the advance there.

ter unit landed in the center of the beach, some of it behind Company F and some of it covering a portion of the left zone. Captain Ross later recalled, "My last instructions . . . were that we substantially constituted the assault wave. Accordingly, we landed smack in the middle of the battalion zone of action."¹⁰ Both companies pushed rapidly inland, receiving only scattered rifle and machine-gun fire. As on neighboring Roi, there was no indication of an organized or planned defense on the part of the Japanese.

At 1210 about 50 percent of the landing team reserve (Company G) came ashore, followed

¹⁰ *Ross*.



WAITING for the word to move out on Namur.

by its remaining elements in LVT's at 1330. Landing team headquarters arrived on the beach at 1215.

Just inland of the narrow beach a huge anti-tank ditch which had not been previously spotted prevented the LVT(2)'s from carrying the Marines 100 yards inland as they were supposed to do. This resulted in an aggregation of tractors and troops on the water's edge, impeding incoming waves and giving particular trouble to the tanks which were now beginning to land.

With the exception of its own extreme right flank, Company F covered the first 200 yards from the beach with a minimum of difficulty. Just north of SALLY Point two enemy machine guns which went into action halfheartedly after the first wave hit the beach were quickly overrun, but a series of pillboxes and one blockhouse which had survived the bombardment delayed the advance in this area.

The advance toward 0-1 was being made by boat teams and assault teams¹¹ rather than by organized platoons and companies, which meant that there was no general line in the accepted sense. Division training had emphasized that upon landing the Marines would drive straight for the 0-1 line in their boat team organizations, not pausing for reorganization into normal squad, platoon and company formations until they reached that objective.¹² Thus, while each team was commanded by an officer or NCO, there could be little, if any, over-all coordination until 0-1 was reached.

¹¹ Each platoon of each assault company was divided into three units: an assault team consisting of the platoon leader and 18 men, and two boat teams. The assault team was specifically designed to attack pillboxes and blockhouses and contained a demolitions group, bazooka group, light machine-gun group and support group. The boat teams contained the remainder of the platoon.

¹² *Litzenberg II; Ross.*



LIGHT TANKS come ashore and attempt forward movement.

Two other factors made coordination and control difficult during the initial stages of the landing. The streets which had been so clearly defined on the maps and on which unit commanders were depending for boundary control were actually indistinguishable in the rubble and debris that littered the island. Moreover, the undergrowth just off the beaches was more than six feet high in many places, and so dense that it was impossible to see more than a few feet. "[The undergrowth] was a major factor in preventing unit commanders from gaining control promptly."¹³

As noted earlier, Company E landed in the middle of the Landing Team 2's area, rather than on the left flank. As the advance toward 0-1 continued it was virtually impossible to correct this error due to the minute unit organizations, and therefore the landing team's left flank was uncovered. Upon establishing his command post on STRAWBERRY Lane, 100 yards from SILVERLEAF Lane, Lieutenant Colonel Brink sought to plug this gap by dispatching the available elements of Company G forward to contact Company E.

Moving along Landing Team 2's left boundary inland about 100 yards, the Company G contingent met an assault team from Company E. But this was an isolated group with no idea where its parent organization might be. Furthermore, the team, under Lieutenant William R. West, was engaged in a fight with an undetermined number of Japanese entrenched around a badly damaged blockhouse 40 yards to the left front. This obstacle was eventually knocked out by Lieutenant West's assault unit, but he was killed in the engagement.¹⁴

As it progressed forward, Company G ran into increasing enemy resistance in the form of rifle and machine-gun fire. By 1300 the unit was inland 175 yards, out of contact with friendly units and receiving fire on front and flanks.¹⁵ The company command post was

pinned down by machine-gun fire and suffering its first casualties. Thirty minutes later the remainder of Company G landed on Beach Green 2 and Lieutenant Colonel Brink ordered it forward to join the company's advance elements.¹⁶

By 1300¹⁷ a majority of the boat teams of Companies F and E were on 0-1, with the exception of the latter's right flank which was still engaged with the enemy to the right rear. There was no clear cut boundary between the two companies, their component teams having become thoroughly intermingled between the beach and 0-1. Company officers and NCO's had kept the advance moving by placing under their respective commands any lonely cluster that appeared to need leadership.

LANDING TEAM 3 REACHES 0-1

At 1200 the amtracs in which Companies I and K were embarked ground ashore on Beach Green 1. As noted previously, Landing Team 3 would secure Combat Team 24's left area, Company I operating on the right and Company K attacking on the left. The latter unit's zone included the spit of land that lay between Roi and Namur. But the smoke and dust drifting from the explosions on Namur limited vision, and once ashore the Marines discovered elements of the two companies intermingled. Disregarding this temporary confusion, however, the landing units drove straight for the 0-1 line.¹⁸

Company B, landing team reserve in the absence of Company L, hit the beach 45 minutes later, while the latter unit was not able to obtain LCVP's and join its parent organization until about 1530.

The situation in Landing Team 3's zone was quite similar to that described in Landing Team

ments were on 0-1, Companies F and E had somehow switched assigned zones, the former being toward the left while the latter was on the right.

¹⁶ Ltr Maj Charles T. Ireland, Jr., to CMC, 3Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Ireland*.

¹⁷ There is some difference of opinion among participants regarding this hour. A few take the view it was much later. The weight of opinion favors 1300, however, and it apparently ties in with other events. That is why it is used in the narrative.

¹⁸ Ltr LtCol Albert Arsenault to CMC, 10Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Arsenault*.

¹³ *Litsenberg II*.

¹⁴ Historical Branch interview with LtCol Frank E. Garretson 12Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Garretson*.

¹⁵ As noted earlier, Company E landed in the center of the battalion area, and thus a sizable gap was created between the left flank of Landing Team 2 and the right flank of Landing Team 3. Obviously, Company G was moving in this gap. By the time all ele-



FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN V. POWER attacked a pillbox on Namur and was seriously wounded. Holding his hand over his wound he attacked a second pillbox and while so engaged was fatally wounded. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

2's area. "Each boat team attacked straight to its front, under the leadership of its boat team commander, until reaching the initial objective 0-1."¹⁹

The assaulting elements met enemy fire from pillboxes, shell holes, and debris, as did Landing Team 2 on the right. The Japanese de-

fenders were punch-drunk from the constant hammering they had received from naval, artillery, and air bombardments and were unable to put up an organized or coordinated defense. Resistance was a matter of small groups of defenders armed only with light weapons and the ingrained will to resist.

Although unknown to the Marines at the time, the lack of positive Japanese command also played an important part in preventing the enemy from organizing an effective resistance. Preliminary bombardment of Namur had virtually destroyed the administration building housing the communication and intelligence facilities for both Namur and Roi. Thus at one swoop the means of effective command were lost. Moreover, the enemy was early deprived of the very source of command—experienced high-echelon officers. Many of the ranking officers of Roi-Namur, including Vice Admiral Yamada, air commander for the Marshalls, perished in the destruction of the administration building. And on D-plus 1 the seven surviving senior officers were killed almost simultaneously while seeking sanctuary in a bomb shelter. The few prisoners taken during the operation reported that from then on it was a matter of every man for himself and no attempt was made to organize resistance.²⁰

The landing team shore party landed at 1230 and began operations on the beach. Fifteen minutes later two half-tracks of the 2d Platoon, Battery D, 4th Special Weapons Battalion, approached Beach Green 1. One of the vehicles drowned out during the landing, but the other proceeded to the landing team's right boundary to take pillboxes under fire with its 75mm gun.

Meanwhile, the boat teams of Companies K and I were punching toward SYCAMORE Boulevard. In Company K's zone, First Lieutenant John V. Power's assault team attacked a series of pillboxes which were holding up the advance. As the lieutenant set a demolition charge on one of the fortifications, he was severely wounded. Holding his left hand over his wound, he rushed the opening made by the explosion, firing his carbine with his right hand and emptying the weapon. As he paused to reload he received two additional severe

¹⁹ Ltr Col Austin R. Brunelli to CMC, 5Feb53.

²⁰ 4th MarDiv IntRpt.

wounds. For his action he was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.²¹

At 1300 three light tanks of Company B, 4th Tank Battalion, came ashore in support of Landing Team 3, the vehicles landing on the left flank of Beach Green 2 (Landing Team 2's area). The armor attempted to move laterally across the beach to Lieutenant Colonel Brunelli's unit, but the beach was littered with equipment²² and crowded by men reluctant to give way. While trying to avoid the congestion, two tanks bellied in the soft sand, one of them throwing a track in the process. The third tank proceeded inland about 30 yards where it slipped into a shell hole and threw a track when it began climbing out.

Although the crews were temporarily immobilized as tankmen, this did not keep them from combat. As they worked on their stalled armor, they were rushed by 15 Japanese from a nearby pillbox (thought to have been cleared). The tankers beat off the attack and cleared the pillbox. This enemy sortie was quickly followed by another attack from a second pillbox, with the same result. After that the crewmen were undisturbed. They accounted for 30 Japanese dead and two prisoners at the cost of one fatality. Two remaining tanks of the 3d Platoon landed at 1500 and 1630 respectively and these were used to get the three disabled vehicles back into service.²³

Lieutenant Colonel Brunelli had come ashore at 1250 in order to direct his landing team's advance to 0-1, and by 1400 the boat teams of Companies K and I had knocked out or sidestepped enough Japanese resistance to reach it. In fact, elements of Company I had progressed 150 yards past the initial objective, but were required to withdraw.

Having attained the initial objective, the assault elements reorganized and stood fast²⁴

²¹ CinCPac serial 2543, 26Jun44.

²² The tankers had been emphatically ordered to avoid equipment left lying on the beach.

²³ Action Report, Company B, 4th Tank Battalion, FLINTLOCK, 27Mar44, hereinafter cited as *B/4thTkbN SAR*, 2-3.

²⁴ "It is my belief that if I Company could have been allowed to continue the attack at 1400, it would have cleared its zone to NORA Point long before dark and facilitated the advance of the entire RCT that day." *Arsenault*.

awaiting orders for a coordinated attack, which Colonel Hart subsequently set for 1630.

WARHEADS IN THE BLOCKHOUSE

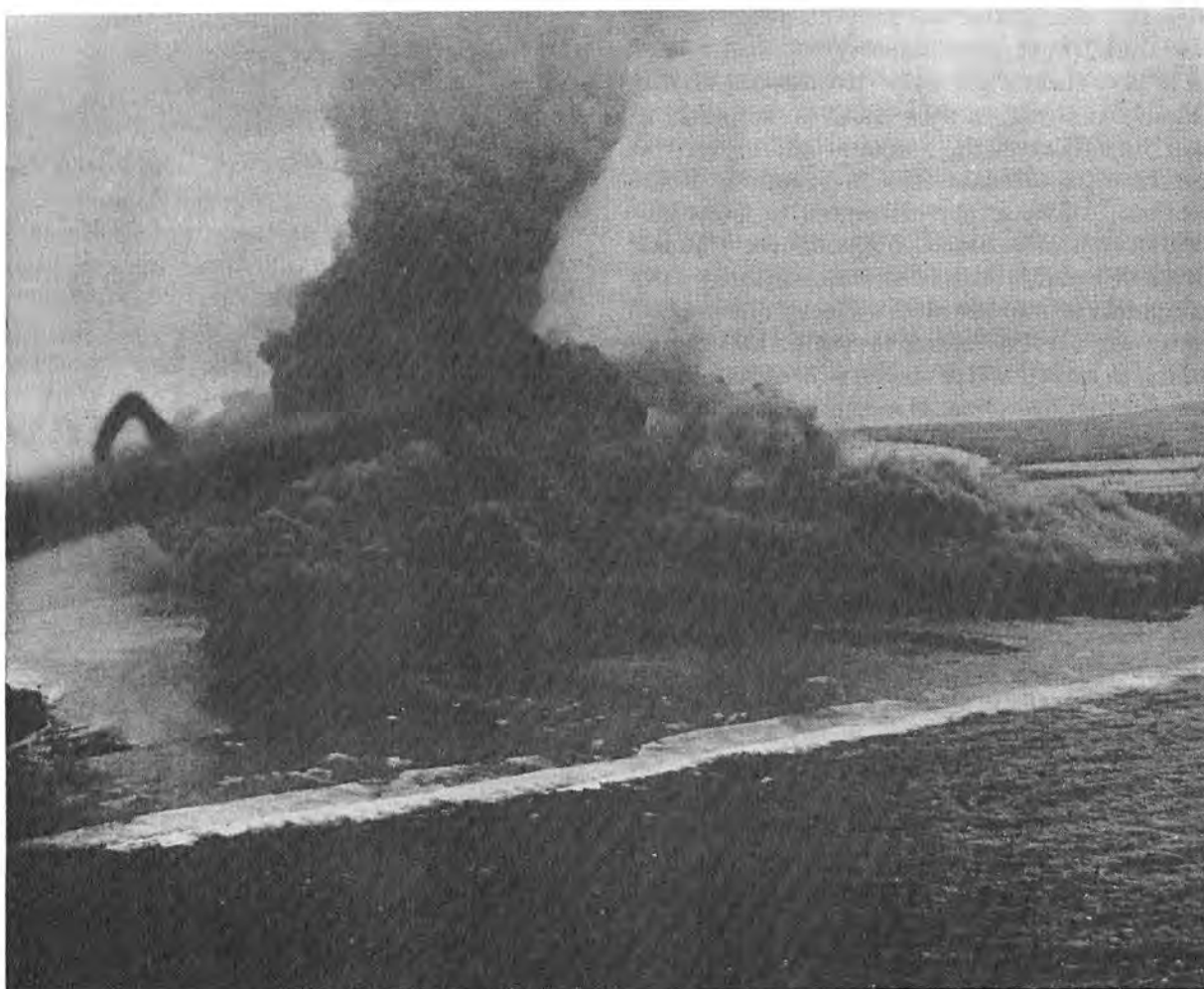
At 1305 a tremendous explosion shook Namur's eastern shore and covered Company F's area with a dense pall of smoke that soon spread over most of the island.²⁵ There were two immediate reactions. Some Marines thought a 500- or 1,000-pound bomb had been dropped in the area, and all bombing was ordered canceled immediately. Others, coughing and choking in the swirling acrid smoke, were certain that a gas storage tank had exploded and that poison gases were being released. This latter group began frantically searching for gas masks which had been discarded almost simultaneously with the landing on the beaches.

As the column of smoke shot skyward more than 1,000 feet, the Marines on Namur were subjected to a rain of concrete chunks, wood, shrapnel, and torpedo warheads which crashed down for what seemed eternity to the unprotected men. When the smoke gradually cleared, it developed that a large blockhouse crammed with torpedo warheads had blown up. On Company F's right flank such a concrete structure had been silhouetted against the skyline just before the explosion. Where it had stood there was now only a large water-filled crater, surrounded by the remains of a concrete foundation.²⁶ The building's obliteration cost the combat team 20 dead and 100 wounded. Included in the latter classification was Lieutenant Colonel Brink, who refused evacuation. The unit hardest hit was Captain Frank E. Garretson's Company F, which suffered 14 fatalities and 43 wounded.

In the heat of battle it is impossible for as-

²⁵ "Col Hart and I were perhaps 300 yards offshore when the explosion took place at 1305. From our position the whole of Namur Island disappeared from sight in a tremendous brown cloud of dust and sand raised by the explosion." *Litzenberg II*.

²⁶ "... Whole trunks of palm trees and chunks of concrete as large as packing crates were flying through the air. . . . The hole left where the blockhouse stood was as large as a fair sized swimming pool." Ltr Mr Samuel H. Zutty to CMC, 28Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Zutty*.



DENSE SMOKE rises over Namur from exploding blockhouse containing torpedo warheads. (Navy photo.)

sault teams²⁷ to determine that one blockhouse is used solely for defense and that another identical building is used only for the storage of torpedo warheads, as was the structure that exploded in a disintegrating blast. Two assault teams had approached the blockhouse simultaneously. Lieutenant Joseph E. Lo Prete of Company E led one group, Lieutenant Saul Stein of Company F heading the other. As was customary at that particular time and place, the Marines placed a shaped charge against the side of the building, blowing a hole in the wall. Immediately a group of Japanese fled the fortifica-

²⁷ Theories have been advanced that the explosion was touched off by either the Japanese or a shell from one of the fire-support ships. The weight of evidence indicates, however, that the Marines themselves unknowingly set it off.

tion, apparently realizing what was about to happen. The assault teams then threw several satchel charges into the hole, and the building vanished in an unforgettable roar.²⁸ Lieutenant Stein was among those killed in the immediate vicinity.²⁹

Before Combat Team 24 could fully recover from the effects of the blast, two other concrete structures blew up in the area, apparently set off by the desperate Japanese. Although these explosions were not as large as that of the tor-

²⁸ Historical Branch interview with Maj Joseph E. Lo Prete, 8Jan53.

²⁹ One man in Lt Stein's platoon was blown 35-50 yards out to the sea by the force of the explosion. He was rescued from the water and apparently suffered no aftereffects. *Garretson*.

pedo warhead, they produced their share of casualties and temporary confusion.

These [lesser explosions] were of no mean proportions. The regimental CP had just landed when the second explosion took place. Chunks of concrete and other debris . . . landed among personnel of the regimental CP, causing some casualties.³⁰

The cumulative effect of the three explosions was to account for 50 percent of Landing Team 2's total casualties for the entire operation. Further, it eliminated all landing team communications except by runner.

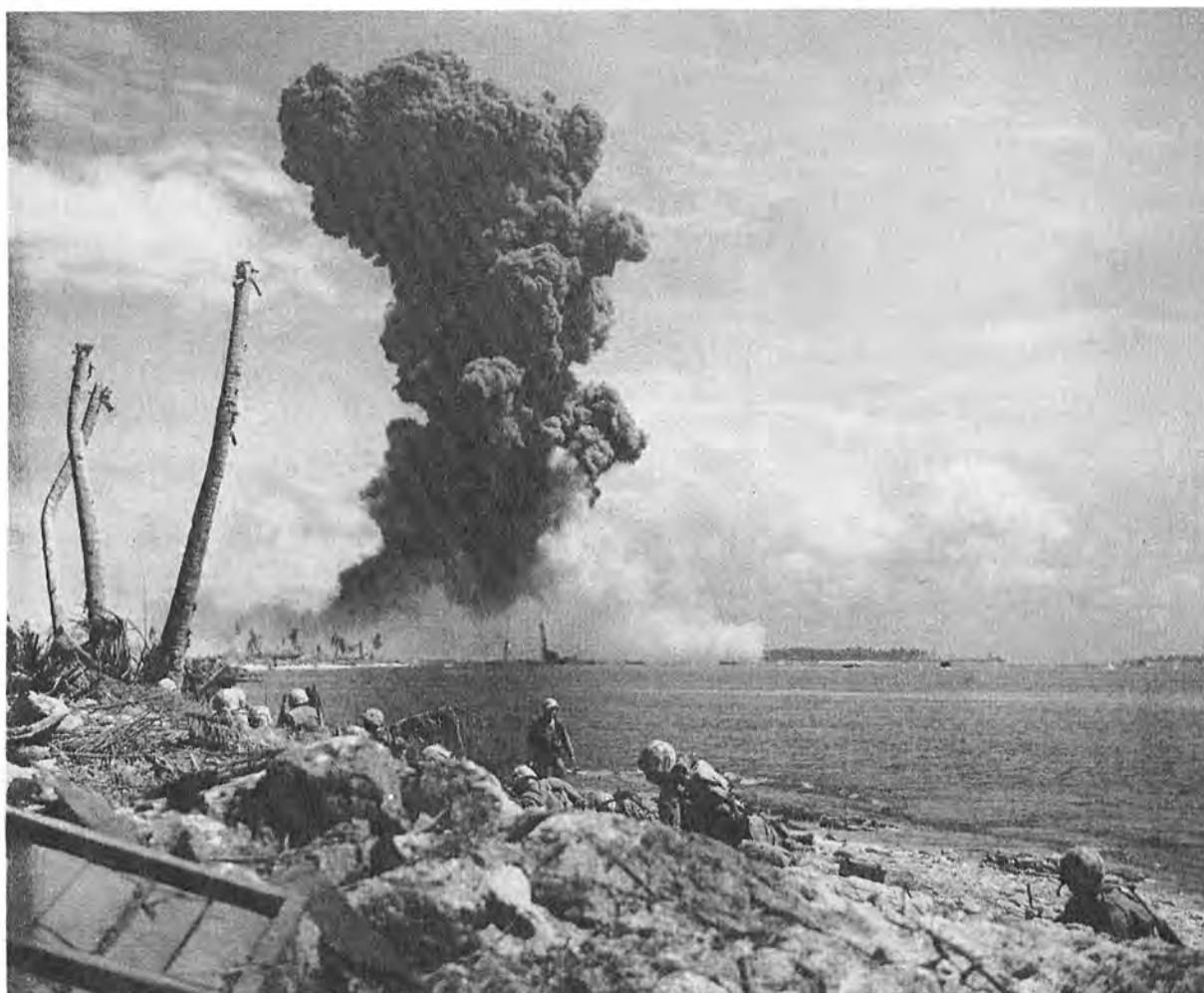
Colonel Hart landed his command post on Namur at 1325, and upon learning how the blockhouse explosion had damaged Landing Team 2, ordered Company A attached to it. Meanwhile, the boat teams which had reached

0-1 were receiving intensified fire from the Japanese who were recovering from the earlier bombardments. Particular trouble spots were three blockhouses located respectively at the end of NUBBIN Lane, the end of NUT lane and at a point 90 yards west of Road Junction 58. All three poured forth enfilading machine-gun and rifle fire along SYCAMORE Boulevard, making open movements along 0-1 virtually impossible.

NORTH FROM SYCAMORE

Whereas Roi was open and clear, an airfield with buildings, Namur was covered with dense jungle, concrete fortifications, administration buildings and barracks. These not only provided the Japanese with cover and concealment, but also effectively hampered full utilization of

³⁰ *Litzenberg II.*



BLOCKHOUSE EXPLOSION on Namur as seen from neighboring Roi.

tanks and armored amphibians which had maneuvered at will on Roi.

With a coordinated attack northward scheduled for 1630, Lieutenant Colonel Brink concentrated on neutralizing three blockhouses forward of the 0-1 line which were proving particularly troublesome to the men on SYCAMORE Boulevard and might well hamper the general advance. Light tanks and armored amphibians rumbled to the front line and concentrated their fire on the concrete fortifications. Before jumpoff time those at Road Junction 58 and NUBBIN Lane had been neutralized, but the blockhouse at NUT Lane proved too formidable for the 37mm guns brought against it and continued to provide opposition until the next morning.

In Landing Team 3's zone a general reor-

ganization was underway. At 1531 Company L came ashore³¹ and was directed to assign an assault team to Company I, to relieve Company B as landing team reserve and to continue mopping up operations. Company B replaced Company K on the line, while the latter unit was ordered to consolidate PAULINE Point and support by fire from there the attack of Companies I and B.

At 1630 Colonel Walter W. Wensinger, 4th Division D-3, landed the advance division command post on Namur. At that same time Landing Team 3 began driving northward from 0-1.

³¹ "We were late solely because we had no means of getting ashore earlier other than swimming. Swimming was considered but rejected because of the probable damage to company weapons from the effects of the salt water." Ltr LtCol Houston Stiff to CMC, 26Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Stiff*.



WATER-FILLED CRATER where the blockhouse filled with explosives stood before the satchel charges were tossed inside. (Navy photo.)

The attacking Marines quickly found that in the two and one-half hours since they had first reached SYCAMORE Boulevard the Japanese had shaken off some of the dazing effects of the bombardment. There was still no organized resistance in the usual sense, but pockets of defenders poured forth machine-gun and rifle fire, backed up by mortars and rifle grenades. The debris and damaged buildings, as well as the dense jungle growth, made the going all the more difficult.

But while Landing Team 3 launched its attack at the prescribed hour, Landing Team 2 at this time was still engaged in reorganization. At 1600 Company C had been attached to Lieutenant Colonel Brink's command, relieving Company E which reverted to landing team reserve and mopping up behind the forward line. It was not until 1730, however, that this change was effected, and the composite landing team then began its attack. But due to the disrupted communications not all of Company E left the front-line positions. Thus when the forward movement began, the assaulting line from right to left included Company A, which had been dispatched to the right flank at 1530, Company C with intermingled portions of Company E, Company F, and the advance half of Company G. (The rear half of Company G, under the company executive officer, did not make contact with the forward echelon until darkness.)³²

The landing team's left flank, preceded by both the Headquarters Section and 1st Platoon of Company F (light tanks), pushed forward despite Japanese rifle and machine-gun fire and an almost impenetrable jungle. The dense undergrowth, shell holes, and fallen trees made progress particularly difficult for the tanks. Occasionally Japanese clambered up on the leading tanks, only to be swept away by 37mm

³² "... Contact never was established during the day because of a damaged radio and the apparent inability of runners to locate [the advance echelon of Company] G. . . . No orders for a concerted attack during the afternoon ever reached me. The situation for my portion of G during the rest of the daylight hours was one of no contact with 2/24, no visible elements of LT 3 on my left, visual contact with a unit of LT 1 on my right, and heavy fire from the front. . . ." *Ireland*.



COMMUNICATORS test line on Namur's beach.

canister fire from the covering armor in the rear. This shotgun type of fire was also used to cut away the thick foliage impeding the advance.

Despite the deliberate progress of the tanks, 20 minutes after the attack was launched Landing Team 2's left flank had outstripped Landing Team 3's right and proceeded nearly 300 yards forward to NARCISSUS Street. Contact was virtually impossible in the overgrown tangle of trees and vines, and both tanks and infantry were separated from time to time.

Leading a column of tanks in the vicinity of NASTURTIAM Lane-NARCISSUS Street, Captain James L. Denig, commander of Company B (tanks) became separated from both the infantry and his own elements. Suddenly his vehicle hit a log and turned into a cleared area, and Denig stopped to get his bearings. Instantly a group of Japanese climbed upon his vehicle and dropped a grenade into the open visual signal port,³³ killing Denig and his driver and wounding the other two crew members. At that moment a squad of infantry and another

³³ A visual signal port is a hole about three inches in diameter, located on top of the tank turret directly over the tank commander's lap. It is used to signal other tanks with flags when the tank radio is not functioning. In this case it was opened to permit engine fumes to escape.



PRIVATE RICHARD K. SORENSON spared his comrades' lives by falling on a Japanese grenade which was tossed into the shell crater they occupied. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.

tank burst upon the scene and promptly eliminated the Japanese.³⁴

Meanwhile, infantry under Captain Garretson which had followed the tank column, knifed on past NARCISSUS Street to within 35 yards of the northern beach but not in sufficient strength to maintain the salient. Moreover, these advanced troops were without contact and in danger of friendly flanking fire. They were ordered to withdraw approximately 100 yards south of NARCISSUS Street where Landing Team 2 established physical contact with Landing Team 3's right flank.³⁵ Garretson, however, maintained a bulge in the line throughout the night.

On Lieutenant Colonel Brink's right flank, Companies C and A encountered dense jungle

³⁴ *B/4thTkbN SAR*, 4-5.

³⁵ Visual contact was maintained between Landing Teams 2 and 3 throughout the advance on Namur. *Garretson*.

and stiff Japanese resistance in the form of heavy machine-gun fire. Despite this, the latter unit inched its advance onto NADINE Point. But even as the right flank was attacking, it received a counterattack. Thereupon, Company E was ordered forward to support Companies C and A. But by the time Captain Ross' organization arrived on the scene the counterattack had been broken,³⁶ whereupon the unit dug in for the night with C/24 and A/24.

While Combat Team 24 was pushing the attack on Namur, General Schmidt came ashore shortly after 1700. The Commanding General visited Colonel Hart's command post and then proceeded to the spot selected by Colonel Wensing for the division command post.³⁷ At 1800 the advance division command post became the command post itself, and as provided in the basic directives, General Schmidt assumed command of all troops on shore. He quickly ordered Landing Team 3/23 and the medium tanks (Company C) to proceed from Roi to Namur and assist Combat Team 24.³⁸ Only the tanks were utilized, however.

Landing Team 3 had slugged its way about 175 yards north of the 0-1 line when a platoon of medium tanks reported to Lieutenant Colonel Brunelli at 1830. One half-track, the armor and elements of Company I were then organized into a composite attack unit which immediately started up Namur's western beach. In the gathering dusk the advance encountered Japanese grenades and machine-gun fire, which were answered in greater measure with 75mm guns and automatic weapons. The tanks finally reached the Japanese dual 5-inch guns (previously knocked out) at NATALIE Point. But here the Marines were faced with the problem of no friendly contact and a shortage of ammunition and consequently retired to Landing Team 3's lines.³⁹

At 1930 Colonel Hart directed Combat Team 24 to dig in for the night and hold the ground gained. Landing Team 3 was in position about 175 yards beyond SYCAMORE Boulevard.

³⁶ *Ross*; Ltr Col Francis H. Brink to CMC, 3Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Brink*.

³⁷ *Schmidt*.

³⁸ Combat Team 25 was in division reserve at the time and was also available, but not used.

³⁹ *C/4thTkbN SAR*, 2-3.

The left flank of Lieutenant Colonel Brink's composite command was also about 175 yards forward of SYCAMORE, while the right flank was entrenched on NADINE Point. As noted earlier, there was a large bulge in the line maintained by Company F. With the fall of darkness, Company G's two echelons were finally reunited, as subsequently recalled by the company executive officer:

When darkness fell, [the rear echelon of Company] G advanced north through the undergrowth about 40 yards against considerably reduced fire and discovered the remaining portion of G under Captain Berkeley, [and] some elements of F under Captain Garretson. . . .⁴⁰

NAMUR SECURED

Between 1930 (D-plus 1) and dawn⁴¹ (D-plus 2) Japanese resistance was marked by the same lack of organization that had character-

ized it since W-Hour. It consisted principally of harassing fire to the Marines' front and rear, the latter coming from by-passed enemy who emerged from their holes under cover of darkness. Portions of Landing Team 3's front were hit by small groups of Japanese led by officers, but who seemed to lack coordination with one another and who apparently had no other plan beyond the desire to strike their foes. Equally as dangerous as the Japanese, and even more confusing to the front-line units, was the amount of rifle, machine-gun, and even mortar fire received from "friendly" forces in the rear. At one point the division commander personally had to order machine gunners near the beach to stop indiscriminate firing at treetops.⁴²

was used frequently during the first night on Namur. The eerie noise of the star shell as it flew through the air caused some apprehension [among] the troops [who did not know] what was causing the noise." *Zutty*.

⁴² Ltr Gen Harry Schmidt to CMC, 10Nov52.

⁴⁰ *Ireland*.

⁴¹ "The shore fire control of naval gunfire star shells



MEDIUM TANKS move forward on Namur.



CORPSMAN gives blood plasma to a wounded Marine at an impromptu aid station.

The medium tanks which General Schmidt had earlier directed to Combat Team 24's assistance were now faced with a problem which threatened to nullify the armor's usefulness. Inasmuch as they had originally been assigned to the Roi operation, plans called for their fuel and ammunition replacements to be landed on Roi's Beach Red 3. Now bivouacked just north of Beach Green 1 on Namur, the tanks were low on fuel and in some cases out of ammunition. Navy lighters were scheduled to transfer the vitally needed supplies to the tankmen in time to rearm and refuel prior to dawn but failed to appear. Consequently all 75mm shells were pooled and then redistributed to the four tanks with the most fuel, these having approximately one-quarter normal supply.⁴³

This initiative on the part of Company C

⁴³ *C/4thTkbN SAR, 3.* Fuel was not pooled because this would entail the use of pumps which were not available.

(tanks) was timely. At dawn Company I was hit by a Japanese assault of approximately company strength, and the four available tanks rushed to the infantry's support. To complicate the picture, contact between Companies I and B had been lost during the night, and the attack was spreading over this gap and spilling onto Company B's left flank. Lieutenant Colonel Brunelli ordered Company L from landing team reserve to plug the hole, while Company K was directed to proceed from PAULINE Point to Namur as landing team reserve. While these movements were in progress, the Marines backed up by their supporting tanks, were engaged in furious hand-to-hand combat with the Japanese and delivering a powerful counter-punch.

Despite the gap existing between Companies I and B, no major infiltration was effected. By the time Company L arrived on the scene, 35 minutes after the attack had begun, it was all over. So furiously had Companies I and B⁴⁴ fought that not only were the Japanese repulsed, but an additional 50 yards of ground had been gained.

To finish the job on Namur, Colonel Hart set 0900 as the jumpoff hour for a coordinated combat team attack. In the area of Landing Team 3, Companies K, I, and L (left to right) supported by two platoons of medium tanks would spearhead the advance, Company B constituting landing team reserve and Company M (less detachments) supporting the advance from PAULINE Point. In the combat team's right sector Lieutenant Colonel Dyess of Landing Team 1 assumed command of the composite Landing Team 2-Landing Team 1 force from Lieutenant Colonel Brink, who had been wounded in the blockhouse explosion the preceding day. The attacking units remained essentially the same, however, with Companies G and F on the left and Companies C and A on the center and right, Company E reverting to reserve. The infantry would be stiffened with half-tracks, Company B (light tanks) and one platoon of medium tanks. All of Landing

⁴⁴ "... the 3d Platoon, Company B, which was practically wiped out on D-plus 1 night ... had hundreds of dead Japanese piled in front of its positions on D-plus 2." Ltr LtCol Milton G. Cokin to CMC, 22Jan53.

Team 2 not in the attack was organized into a provisional unit for mopping up.

Landing Team 3 jumped off promptly at 0900 with the four operative medium tanks. The fight was a steady one with the enemy taking advantage of the thick and tangled foliage, damaged buildings, and debris. The medium tanks found ample targets in the concrete pill-boxes which were still in operation. A favorite method of dealing with them was to fire a few rounds of APC M-61 (armor piercing) shells which would crack the concrete, followed by several rounds of high explosive (HE). The result was generally a nicely blown hole in the structure. By 1100 Companies K and I had overrun NORA Point and established contact with the foremost units of the Dyess force. Company L moved forward, "hampered only by confusion incident to poor communications, problems of contact with adjacent elements, and considerable . . . fire from all directions . . ." ⁴⁵ With assistance from the medium tanks, the company secured NATALIE Point on the northern shore by 1215.

Delayed by the late arrival of the tanks, the right flank of Combat Team 24 started forward at 1005. The first mission was the elimination of the obnoxious blockhouse at NUT Lane which had been an irritant since the preceding day. This was accomplished by the coordinated efforts of tanks, half-tracks and infantry, and the attack rolled on. In desperation a large group of Japanese utilized an antitank ditch on the north shore as a personnel trench and from this fired rifles and machine guns at the steadily advancing Marines. To overcome this resistance, tanks of the 1st Platoon swung around to one end of the ditch and poured deadly canister and machine-gun fire down its length, piling dead Japanese three deep. ⁴⁶

Among those in the forefront of the advance was Lieutenant Colonel Dyess, who had been forward all morning in an effort to keep the northward drive rolling along. Now with the clearance of the antitank ditch, his force was poised for the final objective. As he mounted a parapet to direct a flanking attack on this last



LIEUTENANT COLONEL AQUILLA J. DYESS led the 24th Marines' attack on the right of Namur the morning of the second day. While thus engaged he was killed in action. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

enemy position, Colonel Dyess was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. ⁴⁷

At 1215 Combat Team 24's two advancing forces joined on NATALIE Point, ⁴⁸ and the battle was over except for the tedious business of mopping up by-passed enemy. An hour later Colonel Hart assigned defensive areas and set up a plan for beach defense. Namur was of-

⁴⁷ CinCPac Serial 2543, 26Jun44.

⁴⁸ ". . . 1/24 merely rounded the [NATALIE] Point, observed 3/24 advancing and firing; and in order to avoid 3/24's fire, backed up 15 yards under cover of the [NATALIE] Point and waited for 3/24. As 3/24 neared the point, men of 1/24 walked out 30 or 40 yards to meet them. Hence both units were on the [NATALIE] Point at the same time." Ltr LtCol George D. Webster to CMC, 2Mar53. ". . . Some elements of 1/24 (actually 2/24) may have arrived on NATALIE Point at about the same time as the leading platoon of Company L. . . . In any case, I joined the commander of Company F near the Point at about the time it was occupied." *Stiff*.

⁴⁵ *Stiff*.

⁴⁶ B/4thTkbN SAR, 6.



A FEW JAPANESE decided to surrender, as did the one above.

ficially declared secured at 1418, having been taken in less than a day and one-half's steady fighting.

During combat on Namur, casualties were cared for by Navy corpsmen as usual.

Due to previous Marine Corps experience of Japanese yelling "Corpsman!" and shooting anyone that got up and moved, a code name of "Sailor" was adopted for corpsmen. With every assault platoon, a corpsman went along, and wherever and whenever a man was hit, he went unhesitatingly to his assistance. Often this necessitated coming directly into an enemy line of fire. Many large shell holes became miniature aid stations with wounded men at the bottom, dirty, bloody, and in pain. Next to them, with his medical kit spread as carefully as possible amid the filth to avoid infection and sometimes with a plasma bottle attached to an M-1 bayoneted into the sand, worked the corpsman. Lastly these men had the unpleasant chore of carrying or attending to wounded as others carried them on litters, usually under enemy fire, and there

was no opportunity in cases such as this for moving by "leaps and bounds" diving into the nearest foxhole or running zigzag.⁴⁹

Although Combat Team 24 had more than its share of difficulties, Namur had been secured in good time. The cards had been stacked against the unit from the time its assigned amtracs were sent out on multiple missions the day preceding the attack on Namur. Thus LVT's were not available when required and most of the combat team's difficulties stemmed from that initial situation. The problems faced by Colonel Hart's organization were compounded by:

1. Launching the assault from the line of departure before the combat team commander and his unit were prepared.

⁴⁹ Memo from 1stLt John C. Chapin to Capt William G. Wendell, 8Jun45.

2. The failure of communications, both afloat and ashore.

3. The tangled and thick vegetation which impeded full utilization of armor.

4. The explosion of the blockhouse.

But on the credit side, the initiative demonstrated by junior officers and NCO's in forming isolated groups of men into combat units had produced eventual order, coordination, and success.

Colonel Hart voiced his opinion of the problems in his report to General Schmidt:

It is believed that had LVT(2)'s and/or LCVP's been available as had been originally planned, or had departure from the line of departure been delayed until 1200, it would have enabled the application of a maximum coordinated effort in Combat Team 24's attack, and that the final objective would have been secured [the first day]⁵⁰

⁵⁰ 24thMar SAR, 8.

This view was shared by Colonel Rogers, the division chief of staff:

One of the main things we learned from this operation was the value of the DUKW, which the Army had and we did not. If we had had the DUKW's to land ammunition and thereby save the tractors, I firmly believe the Namur attack would have been over in a few hours. The attack was seriously hampered by the failure of the tractors to get to the line of departure on time. I think the 24th Marines would have overrun Namur during the first hour or two if their assault troops had all landed as originally planned.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Namur had been overrun by the early afternoon of 2 February, and with completion of this assignment went the accomplishment of the major tasks facing the 4th Marine Division. But down in the southern part of the atoll, the 7th Infantry Division was still heavily involved in its mission of capturing Kwajalein.

⁵¹ Rogers.



LOOKING TOWARD ROI from the shattered administration building on Namur.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER VI

Kwajalein¹

THE FIRST DAY

It will be recalled that the mission of seizing the southern portion of Kwajalein Atoll was assigned the Army's 7th Infantry Division under Major General Charles H. Corlett. This task required a week to complete and included the assault on the main objective, Kwajalein (PORCELAIN) Island, and D-plus 1, as well as the capture of various small islands both before (as has been seen) and after that date.

As noted in Chapter II, Kwajalein Island is shaped roughly like a crescent. Division planners ruled out a broadside attack because of the danger of receiving enfilading fire from the island's tips and decided to land on the narrow western end and drive the length of the island, 5,000 yards to the northeastern beaches.

The controlling reasons for the selection of the landing beaches . . . was that the ones [eventually] selected were in the lee of the atoll from the prevailing

wind, and the long axis of the island provided an ideal situation for a very strong attack with two regiments abreast in column of battalions, the narrowing dimension of the island to the northeast contributing to the strength of the attack.²

The 32d (Colonel Marc Logie) and 184th (Colonel Curtis D. O'Sullivan) Regimental Combat Teams would spearhead the assault, landing in columns of battalions on Beaches Red 2 (right) and 1 (left) respectively at 0930, W-Hour for the soldiers. Once ashore, the boundary separating the two units more or less followed the center of the island's long axis from the landing beaches to the vicinity of NOB Pier. At that point the demarcation line veered to the left and thereby squeezed out the 184th, leaving the remaining northeastern end entirely within the province of the 32d Infantry. The 17th RCT constituted division reserve.

A devastating torrent of explosives covered Kwajalein the morning of D-plus 1 in preparation for the infantry's assault. From Naval Fire Support Units 2 (Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen) and 3 (Rear Admiral Robert M. Griffen) nearly 7,000 shells blanketed the objective.³

¹ Unless otherwise cited, this chapter represents a synthesis of RCT 32, Rpt of Opns, PORCELAIN (Kwajalein) Island, FLINTLOCK Operation, 31Jan-6Feb44 (7th InfDiv FLINTLOCK Rpt, Vol IX); RCT 184, Rpt of Opns, PORCELAIN (Kwajalein) Island, FLINTLOCK Operation, 31Jan-6Feb44 (7th InfDiv FLINTLOCK Rpt, Vol XI); S. L. A. Marshall, Kwajalein Notes, hereinafter cited as *Marshall Notes*. For an excellent and detailed history of the Kwajalein operation, see previously cited *Crowl and Love*, Chapters XIV, XV, XVI, XVII.

² Ltr MajGen Charles H. Corlett to CMC, 14Jan53.

³ *TF 51 Rpt*, Table 3, App 1, Encl E. A highlight of the naval bombardment was attained when RAdm Turner ordered *Mississippi* to close within 1,500 yards of the island and knock down a concrete seawall on the landing beaches. Historical Branch interview with Brig-Gen John C. McQueen, 5Feb53.



TROOPS OF THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION transfer from LCVP's to the LVT's which will take them into Kwajalein. (Army photo.)

Established on Enubuj (CARLSON), the 7th Division's artillery, reinforced by the 145th Field Artillery Battalion, rained 28,000 rounds onto neighboring Kwajalein.⁴ Six B-24's from the 392d Bombardment Squadron (based at Apamama) droned high over the shell trajectories and dropped fifteen 1,000- and 2,000-pound bombs on the island's fortifications.⁵ And from the six carriers of Task Force 58, 60 bombers and fighters made 96 sorties against the enemy.

At 0900 the control vessel signaled the assault waves to begin the 30-minute run to the beach. LVT Groups BAKER and CHARLIE of the Army's 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion,⁶ responded promptly, pre-

ceded by Company A, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion. Aircraft, artillery, and naval weapons combined in giving the beaches a final lashing before Landing Teams 32-1 and 184-3⁷ jumped ashore. Hopelessly inferior in firepower, the Japanese replied bravely with small arms and mortars. But this was a futile gesture at best and inflicted few casualties among the incoming troops.

At 0930 the tractors crunched ashore and the crouching infantry leaped from them, finding

ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE, DOG—of 34 LVT's each. Groups ABLE and DOG had participated in the D-Day landings, leaving Groups BAKER and CHARLIE fresh for the D-plus 1 assault.

⁷ Army documents consulted for this monograph use this form in referring to landing teams. The Marine style would be 3/184. Inasmuch as this deals with an Army unit and is taken from Army sources, Army style is used.

⁴ 7th InfDiv Southern Artillery Rpt, Kwajalein, 11.

⁵ *AAF in WWII*, 306.

⁶ This battalion was organized into four groups—

that the preliminary bombardment had neutralized what beach defenses the Japanese had constructed. A few diehard defenders utilized shell holes, undergrowth, and debris as cover for their sniping, but initial resistance was desultory. Within two hours after hitting the beach, BLT's 184-3 and 32-1 secured the beachhead line, a thoroughfare 250 yards inland designated WALLACE Road.⁸

With the beachhead line secured, the two as-

⁸ Kwajalein's road net played an important role in the operation inasmuch as it was used extensively to mark boundaries. The road net consisted of two thoroughfares extending along the long axis of the island, one on the lagoon shore (WILL Road) and the other on the ocean shore (WALLACE Road). These were connected by numerous cross-island lanes, the westernmost also bearing the name, WALLACE Road. It was this western cross-island road that was used to demark the beachhead line.

sault battalions effected a reorganization and then began moving forward over 500 yards of broken terrain toward the next objective, WILMA Road. About 1200 BLT 32-1 encountered WHISTLER Strong Point, the first of a series of fortified areas the Japanese had established on the ocean side of Kwajalein.⁹ But 20 minutes later it was reported unoccupied, and the battalion moved forward. By 1450 both landing teams had reached WILMA Road. (See Map 10, Map Section.)

Immediately beyond WILMA lay a plane

⁹ These strong points consisted of trenches, obstacles, gun positions, and pillboxes. They were designed for defense against amphibious assault from the ocean, but were so situated that they could offer resistance on the flanks. During the planning phase division staff officers had tagged the strong points with code names such as WHISTLER, WHEELER, CAT, CANARY, etc.



LANDING CRAFT churn their way toward Red Beaches 1 and 2 on Kwajalein. (Navy photo.)

dispersal area and Kwajalein's two 1,200-yard-long operational airstrips. One was a 50-yard-wide dispersal strip and the other a 100-yard-wide runway. The terrain was wooded on both the lagoon and ocean sides of the airdrome, as was a 100-yard-wide interval between the two strips. RCT 32's zone took in about three-quarters of the runway, while RCT 184 was responsible for the remainder of the runway and the dispersal strip.

Following an artillery preparation, BLT's 32-1 and 184-3 moved forward, but not for long. On the right, BLT 32-1 came up against CANARY Strong Point which proved more durable than its predecessors. A little later BLT 32-2 relieved the 1st Battalion, but could make no headway against CANARY.

In the division's left zone, BLT 184-3 was meeting stiff opposition from an aggregation of pillboxes and underground shelters. An exploding fuel dump added to this unit's woes. At 1700 the battalion dug in for the night, being abreast of BLT 32-2. This latter unit established nightly defensive positions an hour later, after unsuccessfully attempting to break through CANARY.

During the day the 7th Infantry Division had been able to get ashore a preponderance of men, guns, and supplies. As daylight faded there were on Kwajalein six infantry battalions, 44 medium tanks, 18 light tanks, five self-propelled 75mm guns, and two platoons of 4.2 inch chemical mortars. In the late afternoon General Corlett left *Rocky Mount* and moved to the advance division command post established on Enubuj.

The first night on Kwajalein was punctuated by a series of local counterattacks against the 7th Infantry Division's elements. Both the infantrymen and the Japanese fired at each other, and there was some infiltration by the latter, but no large-scale attacks were made or attempted.

THE SECOND DAY

At 0700 on D-plus 2 artillery and naval gunfire poured a 15-minute concentration on Kwajalein, and upon its completion the 7th Infantry Division once again took up the attack.



MAJOR GENERALS SMITH AND CORLETT watch the progress on Kwajalein from the *Appalachian*. (Navy photo.)

BLT 32-2 relieved BLT 184-3 just prior to the forward movement. The division's first objective of the day was CARL Road, which lay just ahead of the airdrome.

Opposition consisted of essentially the same fanatical, disorganized defense encountered the preceding day. Japanese opposition throughout the operation is best described by the division report:

There were no innovations in tactics displayed by the enemy. In general, the defense amounted to a retreat through a maze of previously prepared positions—pillboxes, trenches, air-raid shelters, blockhouses, log emplacements and building ruins. It was, in effect, a static defense with short periods of active operations as evidenced in nightly limited counterattacks by small units and attempts at infiltration.¹⁰

By 0926 BLT 32-2 cleared CANARY and at 1040 the battalion's advance elements crossed

¹⁰G-2 Rpt of Opns, 6 (7th InfDiv FLINTLOCK Rpt, Vol IV).



TROOPS OF THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION take a break while a Japanese warehouse burns. (Army photo.)

CARL Road. On the left, BLT 184-2 had kept pace and reached CARL Road 10 minutes earlier. With this objective attained, the air-drome was secured.

On the right the 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry, was directed to pass through BLT 32-2, relieving that unit and continuing the advance at 1245. Within its area lay CORN Strong Point, the most difficult obstacle yet encountered. Preparations to overcome this position delayed BLT 32-3's jumpoff until 1400, but BLT 184-2 on the left began its advance at the original time set. Leading the attack on CORN were two platoons of medium tanks, two light tanks, and three M-10 tank destroyers.

The position was overrun and BLT 32-3 penetrated to NORA Road.

The 3d Battalion, 184th Infantry, had also penetrated to NORA, but during the advance contact had been lost between the two assault battalions. Moreover, BLT 184-2's tanks had been withdrawn for the CORN attack. This unit's position on NORA now became untenable, and it was forced to withdraw to a series of Japanese trenches just forward of CARL Road. The rearward movement eventually required BLT 32-3 to follow suit. Contact was reestablished, and BLT 32-3 set up positions at CORN and dug in for the night.

During the night the 32d and 184th Regi-

mental Combat Teams received a message from General Corlett which cautioned them to be especially on the alert for a Japanese suicide counterattack. He also pointed out that the 4th Marine Division had completed its job at Roi-Namur, and he exhorted his troops to attack vigorously in the morning and finish the job by 1500.

No counterattack was forthcoming, however, the Japanese limiting themselves to mortar and artillery fire and attempting infiltration.

THE THIRD DAY

The initial objective for D-plus 3 was NATHAN Road, a cross-island track abreast of NOB Pier and lying roughly halfway between NORA Road and the northeastern extremity of the island. Jumpoff time was 0715, a ten-minute artillery and mortar preparation preceding it.

On the left the 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry, relieved BLT 184-2, while on the right BLT 32-3 continued as the leading unit.

BLT 32-3 moved forward some 400 yards without meeting serious opposition, then its left flank was stopped by the Admiralty area. This portion of the island contained Admiralty Headquarters, consisting of a number of reinforced concrete administration buildings, barracks, and fortifications. The battalion's right flank continued advancing smoothly, reaching NOEL Road by 1142. The left flank meanwhile, had sidestepped the Admiralty area, leaving it to be mopped up by rear elements, and was now some 200 yards north of it.

In the division's left zone, BLT 184-1 had jumped off on schedule, but without some of its attached tanks because of a misunderstanding. By 0806 the soldiers had covered 225 yards and



INFANTRYMAN leans against a concrete structure on Kwajalein and eats while he has the chance. (Army photo.)



A 37MM GUN is used against a Japanese position. (Army photo.)

were describing enemy opposition as "weak." A short time later, however, the battalion's assault elements bumped into totally unexpected Japanese opposition. In its line of advance on either side of WILL Road lay wrecked buildings, shelters, and pillboxes. It was immediately apparent that many of these had survived the bombardment and were occupied in some strength. The next four hours were filled with confusion which stalled BLT 184-1's left flank and eventually caused a change in the regimental attack plan.

At 1225 the 32d Infantry's assault elements were 300 yards forward of the neighboring 184th, contact was broken, and it was obvious some positive action was required. BLT 184-2 was thereupon directed to execute a pivot movement through the Admiralty area, reestablish contact with the 32d RCT, and resume the attack forward of the obstacles which had stopped BLT 184-1. The 2d Battalion moved out at 1330, but as it approached the Admiralty area at 1400 a series of fires prevented passage through it.

The Admiralty area was by this time an almost hopeless maze of rubble, in which demolished wooden buildings, deeply revetted air-raid shelters and the mounds of still operative blockhouses and pillboxes were practically indistinguishable. Gunfire had torn and shredded the once thickly built-up area almost beyond recognition, and the litter of wreckage was a stumbling mass of splintered coral sand, blasted concrete and the ever-present drying palm fronds. Added to the continuous cloud of gunfire and rising dust was the smoke of fire which broke out here and there. . . . [None of the fires] reached large dimensions; but the choking smoke . . . was a continual obstacle to vision, control, and movement throughout this area.¹¹

Faced with these difficulties, the battalion did not pass through the Admiralty area, but split and spilled around it. Contact within the unit was lost and confusion was the natural result.¹² By 1440, however, the battalion reported itself at WILL Road and advancing northward. But sunset found BLT 184-2 short of NATHAN Road and NOB Pier and it dug in for the night.

On the division's right, BLT 32-3 had advanced rapidly during the day, clearing NAP Strong Point in the process. Advance elements had reached NATHAN Road, but the unit established positions for the night somewhat short of the objective.

The advance during the third day had been loose. Japanese infiltration was much greater than the two preceding days, and many more of the enemy were by-passed. This situation was pointed up during the night when the Nipponese boldly operated as far as 1,000 yards to the rear, and small-arms fire rattled on all sides of the dug-in 7th Division infantrymen. Three enemy attacks were mounted against BLT 184-2's lines during the night, but were beaten off.

THE FOURTH DAY

The 32d Infantry was directed to take over the entire line on the morning of D-plus 4 and drive to the northeastern tip of Kwajalein. This mission was assigned BLT 32-1, the plan

¹¹ Ltr LtCol Jackson C. Gillis to CMC, 2Feb53.

¹² The best account of this action is given in *Marshall Notes*, 60-64, 70-74. Col Marshall points out that the official records of the movement are at variance with what participants said occurred. And even the participants do not always agree. Obviously it was a most confused situation in which imponderables played a part.



TANKS AND INFANTRY move along together toward Kwajalein's northeastern tip. (Army photo.)

being that it would relieve BLT 32-3 and BLT 184-2 on line and jumpoff at 0715. But the by-passed Japanese complicated this scheme. Upon moving forward to effect a relief, BLT 32-1 found that it had to fight its way to the front lines and did not arrive at the jumpoff point until 1000. An hour later the battalion had "a closed line across the island to NOB Pier,"¹³ and units in the rear were busily mopping up the by-passed enemy.

Some 90 prisoners were collected by RCT 184 during the day, among them being Petty Officer Fujita Minoru, who had been on Rear Admiral Akiyama's staff and reported Akiyama's death in the Admiralty area two days earlier.¹⁴

Upon establishing the line at NOB Pier, BLT

32-1 was relieved by BLT 32-2. At 1345 the latter unit began a methodical advance to the northeastern tip of Kwajalein, following the usual procedures in cleaning out dugouts, pillboxes, and air-raid shelters. The infantrymen reported the job completed at 1920. Three hours earlier General Corlett had radioed Admiral Turner that all organized resistance had ceased and mopping up operations were in progress.

Thus ended the fight for Kwajalein Island. The 7th Infantry Division had its share of confusion and difficulties. It had tended to bypass too many Japanese during its advance. On the credit side it had effected a relatively smooth landing and achieved tactical surprise by going ashore on the western beaches.

With Kwajalein secured, the main objectives of the campaign were attained. But there were a great many lesser objectives to be taken before the atoll itself could be considered secure. Even now these were under attack.

¹³ Ltr LtCol Ernest H. Bearss to CMC, 5Feb53.

¹⁴ G-2 Periodic Rpt 5, 4Feb44, G-2 Rpt of Opns (7th InfDiv FLINTLOCK Rpt, Vol IV). Details concerning the Japanese on Kwajalein from 31Jan-4Feb44 are virtually nonexistent. The only information found dealing with Akiyama's death is given above.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER VII

Interval

COMPLETING THE JOB

Following the successful assault on Roi and Namur, the Northern Landing Force undertook the remainder of its assigned mission in Kwajalein Atoll: seizure of the islands within 13 miles west and south of the main objectives. In addition, the aftermath of combat presented the normal problems of clearing the captured islands, organizing a defense, and reorganizing the attack force.

The most pressing and distasteful job was the burial of several thousand dead Japanese. Many of these had been killed in the preliminary bombardment, and lying about in the hot sun over a period of days had not helped their condition. Bodies had to be located and removed from drainage culverts and piles of debris. Inasmuch as time was of the essence in this matter, all hands turned to and participated in the burial of enemy dead: assault troops, reserve elements of the 4th Marine Division; the Seacoast Artillery Group, 15th Defense Battalion; naval personnel and natives all worked on the oppressive task.¹ And this

¹ CT 24 Rpt, Medical Report, 7, says: "... It became necessary for officers, doctors, corpsmen, bandmen and assault troops, that had just completed two days arduous fighting, to work night and day collecting and disposing of some 1,200 Japanese dead. . . . The personnel who performed this work did not have gloves or equipment for this sort of task." On the

was "further complicated by the fact that the elevation of the island prohibited deep trenches from being dug and left very little cover over the bodies."²

With the cessation of organized combat, many of the combat teams' attached elements reverted to parent control. Thus the 20th Marines (Engineers) began functioning as a regiment and promptly set to work clearing Roi's airfield, repairing existing roads and constructing new ones.³ On D-plus 5, the 109th Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) took over the airfield mission and five days later the first American plane landed there—a disabled bomber returning from a raid on Wotje.⁴

other hand, a participant relates, "... A 'Burial Unit' was formed consisting partially of naval personnel and partially of personnel of the Seacoast Artillery Group, 15th Defense Bn. This unit was equipped with rubber gloves, aprons, stretchers and other special gear . . . and did an outstanding job of clearing Roi-Namur of enemy dead." Ltr Col Peter J. Negri to CMC, 22Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Negri*. Moreover, another participant narrates, "I do remember that troops that came ashore in later waves, such as 4th Special Weapons Bn Headquarters personnel, who saw very little action in this operation, were fully utilized in burial details." Ltr LtCol Alvin S. Sanders to CMC, 9Feb53.

² Ltr LtCol Melvin D. Henderson to CMC, 15Jan53.

³ FLINTLOCK Operation, Report on Operations of 20th Marines, 16Mar44, 2.

⁴ Planes from *Saratoga* were flown in to the airfield the next day.

The 4th Marine Division had been unable to embark adequate transportation for the Roi-Namur operation, as noted in Chapter II, and the trucks of the 15th Defense Battalion were now constantly in use. Nor was the lack of wheeled vehicles entirely the cause of the acute transportation problem.

It may be interesting to note that the real shortage was not in vehicles but rather in tire-patches. The preparatory bombardment . . . resulted in a well-distributed coating of shell and bomb fragments and assorted junk all over both islands [Roi and Namur]. Hardly a square foot of airstrip or roadway existed but what it had its share of puncture-producing debris. The 15th Defense Battalion's transportation was operating simply because the battalion's Motor Transport officer . . . had somehow, before leaving Pearl Harbor, accumulated a great deal more tire-patching material than the TBA provided.⁵

On D-plus 3, the day after Namur was declared secure, the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines and the 2d Battalion, 24th Marines were embarked to relieve congestion on Roi-Namur. The following day the Division Scout Company was assigned to the Eniwetok force now forming, and the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion and the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion were loaded for the South Pacific. Four days later the 14th Marines (less 1st Battalion), the 23d Marines and 2/24, all under General Underhill's command, departed the Kwajalein area for Maui. The remainder of the division (less Combat Team 25 [reinforced] and Company A, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion) followed in various echelons on 12, 14 and 15 February 1944.⁶

The 15th Defense Battalion had begun landing survey teams on Roi as soon as sufficient room permitted, and while fighting was still in progress. By the time Roi-Namur was secured "all antiaircraft units of the battalion were in position and ready in all respects to engage air and surface targets."⁷

During the early morning hours of 12 February, the Japanese retaliated to the Marshalls invasion with a bombing attack on Roi by some 12 to 14 seaplanes.⁸ The raiders effected sur-



COLONEL L. R. JONES, commanding the 23d Marines, raises the flag on battered Roi.

prise by dropping large amounts of "window"⁹ on the way to the target and thus fouled the defense battalion's radar scopes.¹⁰ Droning in between 14,000 and 21,000 feet at 0249 hours, the planes made a sighting run over Roi and then followed with a bomb run.¹¹ Some of the explosives struck an ammunition dump, while others landed elsewhere on Roi's bare surface. "This explosion was seen as far away as Kwajalein Island, some 40 or more miles distant."¹²

Tracer ammunition lit up the sky as far as we could see, and for a full half hour red-hot fragments rained from the sky like so many hailstones, burning and piercing the flesh when they hit. . . . A jeep ex-

[the planes] had come from Saipan and probably been staged through Truk and perhaps Ponape or Kusaie." Ltr Adm Raymond A. Spruance to CMC 18Feb53.

⁹ Strips of metal foil dispersed by aircraft to create a great many false targets for radar sets by causing them to register spurious readings.

¹⁰ *Wendt*; Ltr LtCol Arthur E. Buck, Jr., to CMC 23Jan53, hereinafter cited as *Buck II*.

¹¹ Ltr Col Otto Lessing to CMC, 25Feb53.

¹² *Negri*.

⁶ Ltr Col Peter J. Negri to CMC, 5Feb53.

⁷ 4th MarDiv War Diary, 25Mar44, 2-4.

⁸ *Negri*.

⁹ "My recollection is that at the time we believed

ploded in our faces a few yards away. Yet half an hour after the first bomb hit, several hospitals and first-aid stations were functioning with all the efficiency of urban medical centers.¹³

For almost an hour colorful bursts of small-arms ammunition were punctuated by large explosions as unprotected ammunition and gasoline dumps blew up. Several badly dazed and wounded men made their way across the sandspit and the causeway to our location [on Namur] and on to medical aid at the pier. From our vantage point it appeared that Roi was completely

afire. Daylight showed the destruction to be almost complete. Little of anything appeared still serviceable.¹⁴

The devastating raid produced the greatest number of casualties that any United States land target had suffered since December 1941.¹⁵ Thirty men were killed, some 300 more were wounded and evacuated to ships in the lagoon, and an additional 100 received treatment for wounds ashore and returned to duty. Damages

¹³ Combat Correspondent Bernard Redmond, as quoted in Carl W. Proehl (ed), *The Fourth Marine Division in World War II*, Washington, 1946. Redmond was with the 20th Marines.

¹⁴ *Buck II*.

¹⁵ Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II*, Combat Forces Press, Washington, 231, hereinafter cited as *Sherrod*.



ROOTING INDIVIDUAL JAPANESE out of hiding places was the major task in mopping up.

amounted to an estimated 85 percent of supplies (including all provisions except for a seven-day supply of K-rations) and 33 percent of construction equipment. In addition, 75 percent of all tentage and miscellaneous buildings on Roi were flattened and rendered unfit for further use. Two LCT's beached for unloading were burned out, as was the 20th Marines' command post, with the loss of regimental records and journals.¹⁶ The Japanese had struck a heavy blow, but they made no attempt to follow it up, which was probably fortunate for them. On Admiral Conolly's recommendation, three Marine night fighters landed at Roi the next night prepared for any subsequent nocturnal raids.

While the bulk of the 4th Marine Division was reorganizing, clearing Roi-Namur and preparing to depart for Hawaii, Colonel Cumming's Combat Team 25 (reinforced) and Company A, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion searched the remaining islands in the northern portion of Kwajalein Atoll. This movement had begun on the morning of D-plus 2 when General Schmidt ordered Colonel Cumming to proceed with the seizure of those islands scheduled for the later phases of the over-all operation. Landing Team 2 under Lieutenant Colonel Hudson was picked to make the initial movement, its landings to be preceded by 14th Marines' artillery preparations. But after the first two landings were effected without meeting opposition, the 75mm pack howitzers remained silent. By utilizing LVT's, Hudson's unit secured eight islands during the day.

I remember distinctly the unusual sensation of navigating LVT's between the islands by means of a small pocket compass held as far as possible above the metal of the LVT. At times, due to the low freeboard¹⁷ of the LVT, we were out of sight of all land.¹⁸

The Marines encountered no resistance and picked up 47 natives and three Japanese, the natives being established in a camp on Ennubirr (ALLEN) Island.¹⁹

¹⁶ CTF 53 Rpt *FLINTLOCK*, 8, 22-23; 20thMar SAR, 3; Report of Island Commander to Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, 4Apr44, 4.

¹⁷ Freeboard is the height of a vessel's side from the water line to the main deck or gunwale.

¹⁸ Ltr Col Lewis C. Hudson, Jr., to CMC, 12Feb53.

¹⁹ "[The natives] were looked after by a detachment



COMMUNICATORS raised their wires from the ground to makeshift telephone poles when the shooting quieted down.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Donnell's Landing Team 1 was assigned the task of securing three islands: Boggerlapp (HUBERT), Boggerik (HOMER), and HOLLIS. This was accomplished in two days, no Japanese being met. On the afternoon of D-plus 4 Lieutenant Colonel Chambers' Landing Team 3/25 took over the mission, augmented by Battery C, 14th

of Regimental Weapons Company under the command of Maj James T. Kisen. During the 30 days together, the natives and the men of R/W 25 became fast friends. . . . Upon leaving, the native chief made a most touching speech and presented the Marines with presents." Ltr Maj Thomas H. Rogers, Jr., to CMC, 13Feb53.

Marines, 34 LVT's and a miniature fleet of two LST's, two LCI's, six LSM's, and the destroyer, *Hopewell*. By the afternoon of D-plus 7 this force had secured 39 islands, met some 250 natives and found no Japanese.²⁰

In addition to completing the Northern Landing Force's mission, Combat Team 25 was ticketed as a garrison force for Kwajalein Atoll. On D-plus 8 the unit, together with Company A, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, was temporarily detached from the 4th Marine Division, and Colonel Cumming reported to Rear Admiral Alva D. Bernhard, atoll commander. Landing Team 1 constituted the defense force for Roi-Namur, Landing Team 2 for Kwajalein Island, and Landing Team 3 a mobile defense group stationed on the western islands.

The combat team retained these dispositions until February 29 when it was relieved by the 22d Marines.²¹ It then departed the area and rejoined its parent division in the Hawaiians.

²⁰ Rpt on the 25th Marines (reinforced) in the FLINTLOCK Operation, 3-4.

²¹ Earlier activities of the 22d Marines will be taken up in Chapter VIII.

ALL ISLANDS SECURED

On D-plus 2, the same date that Combat Team 25 began the seizure of minor islands in the northern zone, the Army's 7th Reconnaissance Troop initiated similar operations in the southern sector.

Between 0800 and 0900 this unit returned to Gehh (CHAUNCEY), the island it had hit by mistake in the dark early hours of D-Day. Light resistance was encountered, and with the assistance of *Overton's* guns, the Reconnaissance Troop overran the Japanese positions. The infantrymen counted 135 enemy dead that day at a cost of 14 wounded soldiers.²²

North of Kwajalein lay Ebeye (BURTON) Island, 2,000 yards long and containing machine shops and warehouses before the preliminary bombardment. This became the target of Colonel Zimmerman's 17th Regimental Combat Team, an unopposed landing being effected the morning of D-plus 3 by BLT 17-1.

As the infantrymen pushed northward on the island, enemy resistance was encountered and

²² Gritta.



NAMUR immediately after the 24th Marines secured the island. In the background is Ennugarret (ABRAHAM).



JAMES V. FORRESTAL (center), Under Secretary of the Navy, visited Roi-Namur a few days after the battle ended. Here he is accompanied by (left to right) Admirals Spruance and Conolly, Generals Schmidt and Smith.

it steadily increased. Many of the island's defense installations had been destroyed during the preliminary bombardment, but the Japanese took full advantage of the remaining pillboxes, dugouts, and air-raid shelters to put up a disorganized fanatical fight. By nightfall BLT 17-1 had cleared two-thirds of Ebeye.

The morning of the second day, a Japanese prisoner pointed out the location of an ammunition dump and a requested air strike scored a direct hit on this choice target. The dump's elimination apparently took the heart out of the remaining defenders, for not a resisting shot was fired after it exploded. The Nipponese then surrendered or committed suicide, a majority of them choosing the latter course.

The 3d Battalion, 17th Infantry, relieved BLT 17-1 at 1130, and 40 minutes later Ebeye was declared secured.

While his main effort was being made on Ebeye, Colonel Zimmerman used the remaining troops available to him to secure four other nearby islands, resistance being encountered on one of them and that only light.

By D-plus 5 the 17th Regimental Combat Team and the 7th Reconnaissance Troop had secured all islands but one in the Southern Landing Force's zone. In addition to those already noted, 12 islands or islets were secured, only two of these offering any degree of resistance. The 7th Reconnaissance Troop neutralized an enemy force of about 100 men on Bigej (**BENNETT**) and Landing Team 17-2 subdued 102 Japanese on Eller (**CLIFTON**).²³

On the morning of D-plus 6 Landing Team 17-2 took without opposition Ennugenliggerlap

²³ 7th Div Rpt, 9, 11-12.



DYESS FIELD on Roi after the Seabees completed their work there.

(COHEN), thus completing the mission of the Southern Landing Force.

The 7th Infantry Division was directed to embark for the Hawaiian Islands as soon as its mission was completed. At 0800 on 6 February, Regimental Combat Teams 184 and 32 began loading ship, followed two hours later by RCT 17. But transportation was not immediately available for the entire Southern Landing Force. The morning of 8 February (D-plus 8), General Corlett and the bulk of his command departed the Kwajalein area, followed a few days later by the Division Artillery Group, one company of RCT 17 and detachments of the tank LVT battalion which had been left behind, except for those earmarked for the next operation. Company A, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion, the 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and 30 DUKW's were all assigned to Tactical Group-1 to assist in the seizure of Eniwetok.

SUMMATION

The Kwajalein operation clearly showed that heavy casualties are not a requisite for seizure

of an enemy-held atoll. As noted earlier, the Tarawa operation loomed large in the minds of the men planning the Kwajalein landings, and it was their intent to avoid a repetition of the costly assault on Betio. This was accomplished. Marines at Tarawa incurred 3,301 casualties in combating a Japanese force of 4,690.²⁴ At Kwajalein, the Northern Landing Force overran 3,563 Japanese and the Southern Landing Force defeated 4,823 of the enemy.²⁵ The 4th Marine Division's total casualties for the operation amounted to 313 killed in action or died of wounds, and 502 wounded in action.²⁶ The 7th Infantry Division lost 173 killed in action or died of wounds and 793 wounded in action.²⁷

²⁴ Capt James R. Stockman, *The Battle for Tarawa*, historical monograph prepared by Historical Section, HQMC, 1947, Appendices B and C.

²⁵ VAC G-2 Rpt, 19Feb44, 12.

²⁶ Marine casualty figures furnished by Personnel Accounting Section, Records Branch, Personnel Department, HQMC. Figures certified and released 26Aug52.

²⁷ 7th InfDiv G-1 Rpt, 18-19 (7th InfDiv FLINT-LOCK Rpt, Vol III).

This is no reflection on the 2d Marine Division's action at Betio. There it was conclusively demonstrated that much more artillery, air and naval assistance was required to seize an atoll without prohibitive losses. Such support was overwhelmingly provided at Kwajalein. Actually, only one more atoll operation remained in the war in the Pacific, and that was Eniwetok.

All elements of the Armed Forces participated as a team in the Kwajalein assault. Marines, Navy ships and aviation, Army air and ground units, Coast Guard, all worked together in the seizure of the first prewar enemy-held territory.

An important aspect from the Marine point of view was that the Roi-Namur operation was the initial one for the 4th Marine Division. One more Marine combat force was blooded and therefore better able to participate in subsequent amphibious assaults, as it conclusively demonstrated at Saipan,²⁸ Tinian,²⁹ and Iwo Jima.³⁰ As a direct result of the difficult lessons learned at Roi-Namur, the LVT units were

able to effect a smooth landing in their next operation, Saipan.³¹

Kwajalein was another steppingstone on the road across the Central Pacific, with Japan as the final goal. Kwajalein's seizure, together with that of Eniwetok a few weeks later, cleared the path for attacks on Truk, the capture of the Marianas,³² and the other Central Pacific operations that followed.

In addition to providing aerial and naval bases for subsequent offensive operations, the

²⁸ Maj Carl W. Hoffman, *Saipan: The Beginning of the End*, historical monograph prepared by Historical Division, HQMC, 1950.

²⁹ Maj Carl W. Hoffman, *The Seizure of Tinian*, historical monograph prepared by Historical Division, HQMC, 1951.

³⁰ LtCol W. S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima, Amphibious Epic*, historical monograph prepared by Historical Branch, G-3, HQMC, 1954.

³¹ *Croizat*.

³² See monographs cited in preceding footnotes; also Maj O. R. Lodge, *The Recapture of Guam*, historical monograph prepared by Historical Branch, G-3, HQMC, 1954.



MEMBERS OF THE 4TH MARINE AIR WING on Roi devised a system of windmills to wash their laundry.

captured Marshall Islands also served as a springboard for neutralization of the by-passed atolls. From Kwajalein and Majuro the 4th Marine Air Wing pounded the Japanese fortresses of Mille, Maloelap, Wotje, and Jaluit, making it unnecessary for ground forces to assault and occupy those heavily held atolls.

What was involved in the Central Pacific was later explained by Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill:

If you will examine an air map of the Central Pacific, you will note that the successive objectives of attack, namely Kwajalein and Eniwetok, Saipan and Iwo Jima are all approximately 500 miles away from the last objective seized. At that time, none of our fighters was capable of operating 500 miles from base. Therefore, the job of fighter protection and ground supported troops devolved completely upon our carrier task forces. . . . The question naturally arises, therefore, why did we not utilize shorter sea hops in order to have better land based air support. . . . The only islands we wanted were ones which had sufficient land mass to provide a runway into the direction of the prevailing wind, which was northeast, and

also to provide a harbor. Such islands and atolls were few and far between. Practically all that there were had been already occupied by the Japanese. For the same reason, therefore, we could not do in the Central Pacific as General MacArthur had done in the Southwest Pacific—make unopposed landings. Instead, we were forced to go to the atolls or islands already held by the Japanese and which, of course, were heavily defended.²³

Although the Marines had to go to defended islands and atolls, there were varying degrees of defense at various objectives. Thus, Admiral Nimitz' decision to make a bold stroke into the heart of the Marshalls, by-passing the more heavily defended "anchored aircraft carriers," both increased the tempo of the war in the Central Pacific and obviously kept the casualty rate low. So quickly and successfully was the Kwajalein mission accomplished that the Eniwetok landings, tentatively planned for May, were shoved forward three months, and the first troops stormed ashore on 17 February.

²³ Hill.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER VIII

Eniwetok¹

THE OBJECTIVE

In the northwest corner of the Marshall Islands, 326 nautical miles from Roi-Namur, lies Eniwetok Atoll² (coded DOWNSIDE), some 30 islands arranged in an irregular circumference of 70 miles. Many of the coral bits of land are covered with underbrush, while the larger ones grow stunted coconut trees. At the outbreak of the war less than 100 natives were to be found there, and the agricultural output consisted of a few figs and coconuts.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, this chapter is derived from the following sources: JICPOA Bulletin 3-44, 20Jan44; JICPOA Bulletin 88-44, 3Jun44; JICPOA Bulletin 89-44, 12Jun44; Task Group 51.11 Report of Eniwetok Operations, 7Mar44; Tactical Group-1, War Diary, 5Nov43-29Feb44; Tactical Group-1, Operation Order 2-44, 10Feb44; Tactical Group-1 Special Report Concerning FLINTLOCK and CATCHPOLE Operations, 1Mar44, hereinafter cited as TG-1 Spl Rpt; Tactical Group-1 Report of Attack on Eniwetok Atoll, 27Feb44; Tactical Group-1 Journal, 17Feb-22Mar44; 22d Marines, reinf, War Diary, 1Jan-29Feb44; 22d Marines, reinf, Report on DOWNSIDE Operation, 9Mar44, hereinafter cited as 22dMar SAR; Battalion Landing Team 1, 22d Marines, Report on FLINTLOCK II Operation, undated, hereinafter cited as BLT 1 Rpt.

² When he discovered the atoll in 1794, Capt Thomas Butler named it Brown's Range, and the Japanese Navy continued calling it Brown throughout World War II. *Morison*, 282.

The lagoon measures some 21 miles in length, northwest-southeast, and about 17 miles across, northeast-southwest. Wide Passage and Deep Entrance on the south and southeast sides respectively are the only navigable breaks in the rim of coral surrounding the atoll. Ships of all types may anchor in the sheltered waters, as did major units of the Japanese Fleet shortly before the invasion.

The principal islands include:

Engebi (FRAGILE) roughly shaped in the form of an equilateral triangle, each side measuring slightly over a mile in length. The northern end of this northernmost island was cleared, while mangrove and coconut palms covered the remaining portions. Here was found the atoll's only airstrip, concrete-surfaced and extending 4,025 feet.

Japtan (LADYSLIPPER) bounds the right of Deep Entrance. Measuring 800 yards (east-west) by 750 yards (north-south), this coral-sand island's northwestern area was covered by coconut palms in even rows, while dense underbrush grew elsewhere.

Parry (HEARTSTRINGS) lies immediately south of Japtan and bounds Deep Entrance's left. Shaped like an inverted tear drop, the island is two miles long, tapering from a 600-yard width in the north to a point in the south. In early 1944 it was covered with coconut palms.

Eniwetok (PRIVILEGE), the atoll's southernmost island, is formed like a blackjack and flanks the right of Wide Passage. Its length extends 4,700 yards and its width varies between 750 yards in the south to 170 yards in the north. Except for a few clearings and some fringes of mangrove, Eniwetok was covered with evenly spaced coconut palms.

THE JAPANESE

Prior to the arrival of the Japanese 1st Amphibious Brigade on 4 January 1944, the defense of Eniwetok Atoll was entrusted to the Eniwetok Detachment of the 61st Keibitai (Guard Unit), based at Kwajalein. The detachment never totaled more than 61 men, 45 of whom were stationed on Engebi where the atoll defenses were concentrated. These consisted of a battery of two 120mm guns, two twin-mount M93 13mm AA machine guns, two M96 light machine guns and a number of rifles, pistols and hand grenades. This token defense force reflected the tardy Japanese military interest in the northwestern Marshalls. In November and December 1942, some 800 construction workers of the 4th Shisetsubu (4th Fleet Construction Section) landed at Engebi and began work on an airstrip, which was completed the following July. The 61st Keibitai detachment then moved into the island in October 1943.

Engebi's airstrip began operating in November, but since it was used only for staging planes between Truk and points east, no flying personnel were stationed there. The maintenance force consisted of 38 petty officers and men under a warrant officer. As American air operations increased in the eastern Marshalls, however, and the threat of amphibious assault in that area became greater, Japanese air was evacuated from the forward areas to Eniwetok Atoll's air base. On 11 January 1944 an additional 110 aviation officers and men were billeted on Engebi "owing to present operations in the Roi, Wotje, Mille, and Taroa areas."³ With the fall of Kwajalein Atoll, steps were taken to evacuate all air personnel to Truk by flying boat, but for most of them this began too late.

³ JICPOA Bulletin 89-44, 3.

An estimated 150 grounded pilots and crewmen were still on Engebi and Parry when American assault forces sailed into the lagoon 17 February 1944.

The 1st Amphibious Brigade was formed from the 3d Independent Garrison Unit in Manchuria in November 1943 under Major General Yoshima Nishida. Japanese Army planners originally intended it as a mobile striking force within the Marshalls, initially designating it the 1st Mobile Shipborne Brigade and ticketing it for centrally located Kwajalein. When it arrived at Truk on 26 December, however, the increasing threat of American attack on the Marshalls made necessary the reinforcement of certain points. The brigade was therefore ordered to garrison duty on various atolls, as noted in Chapter II.

General Nishida's command arrived at Engebi on 4 January and four days later those elements earmarked for Wotje, Maloelap, and Kwajalein departed. Of the 3,940 men within the brigade, 2,586 were left to defend Eniwetok Atoll, and these were now distributed among Engebi, Parry, and Eniwetok. Although they did not know it, the defenders had about six weeks in which to transform a virtually undefended atoll into a stronghold.

Command of the Engebi garrison devolved upon Colonel Toshio Yano of the 3d Battalion. His total military force numbered 736 men, including 44 of the 61st Keibitai detachment, and was augmented by aviation personnel, civilian employees, and laborers.⁴ In addition to his organic small arms, Yano had available two flame throwers, two 75mm mountain guns, three 20mm guns, two 120mm naval guns, two twin-mount 13mm AA machine guns, three light tanks and a variety of machine guns, mortars, and grenade dischargers. Organization and construction of defensive positions were begun immediately, and on 10 February the island commander issued an outline of his defensive plans in which he correctly estimated the events of a week later:

The enemy will bomb this island either with carrier or land-based planes and will bombard us from all sides with battleships and heavy cruisers. Directly

⁴ Enemy strength on Engebi, estimated from the number buried, was set at 1,200.

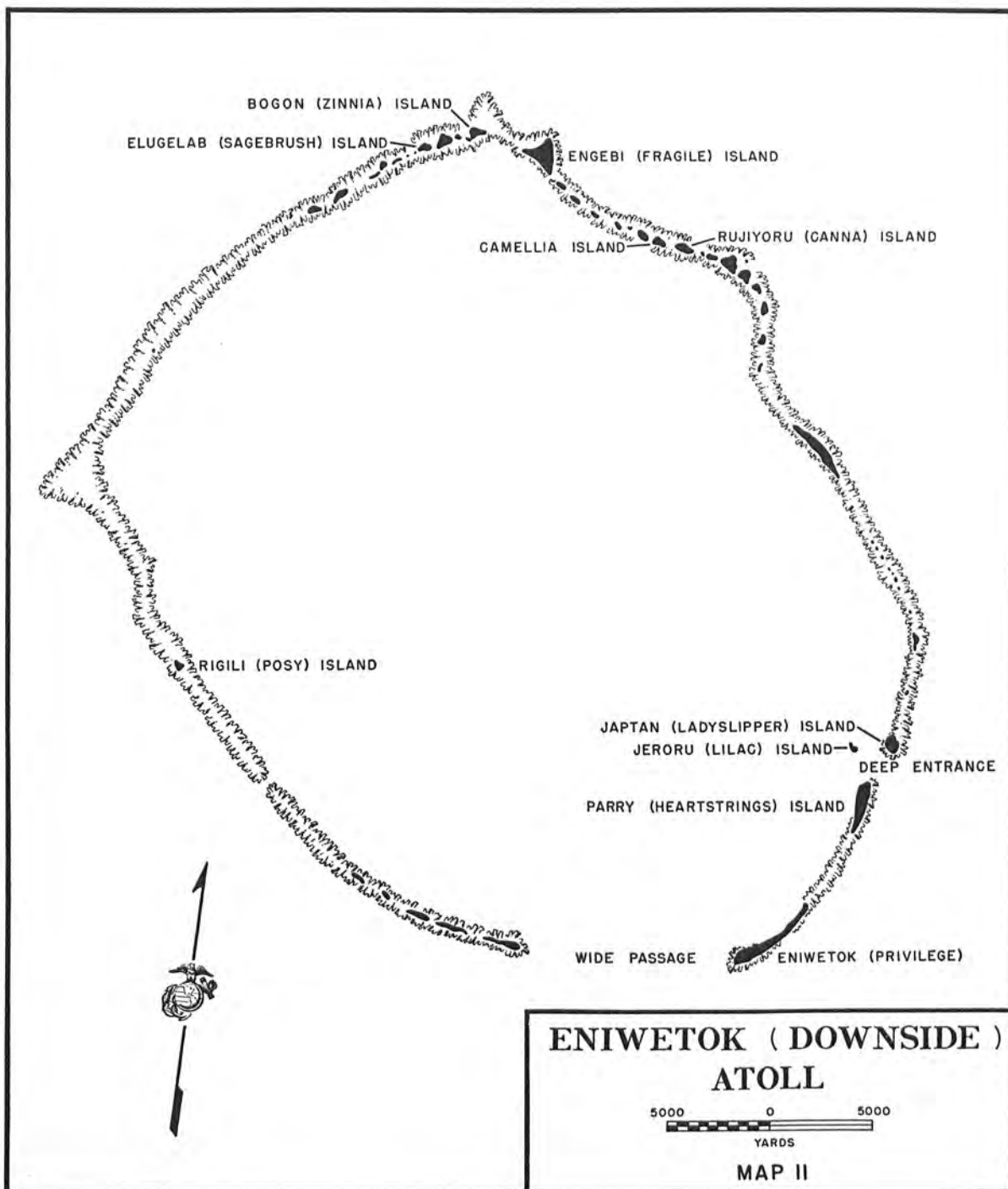
following these bombardments, an amphibious force landing will be carried out.

It will be extremely difficult for the enemy to land here from the open sea because of the high waves and rugged reefs.

Whether or not they are able to carry out their plan to land on the islands to the east and west, it is expected that they will force their way through the

north and south passages, or make a forced passage of either the east or west pass in order to enter the atoll and carry out landing operations from the lagoon. While making assaults on outlying islands, they will approach this island from all directions.

If any of the above happens, and if sea and air control are in the hands of the enemy, this defense garrison must put up a defense on its own.



In view of these things, it is essential that this force make complete use of every available man and all fortified positions, carrying out each duty to the utmost. Plans must be followed to lure the enemy to the water's edge and then annihilate him with withering fire power and continuous attacks.⁵

In an operational order issued 13 February, Colonel Yano instructed his forces to give "particular attention" to the construction of positions facing the lagoon. He directed that Company 8 (reinforced) occupy the eastern corner of the island; the Battalion Artillery Company (reinforced) station itself in the western corner; the Battalion Mortar Company occupy the central area with main fire directed toward the lagoon; the Machine Cannon Platoon occupy positions on the shore southeast of the main positions, and all other units take positions in the "main strength area," just inland of the lagoon beaches.

The island defenses were principally trenches and dugouts, protected by coconut log barricades, usually covered with light wood or sheet metal. In addition, a series of "spider traps" were installed. These consisted of oil-drum tunnels and each hole was covered with an innocuous piece of metal, a palm frond or coral rubble. No blockhouses such as those found at Tarawa and Kwajalein Atoll were constructed. In the limited time available to him, Yano had concrete pillboxes set up, but these were not reinforced and in comparison with those on other atolls, definitely weak. Despite these limitations, Admiral Hill described Engebi as the most heavily defended of the three islands attacked in Eniwetok Atoll.

Lieutenant Colonel Masahiro Hashida, commanding the 1st Battalion, took charge of the Eniwetok Island Garrison Force. Its strength was set originally at 779 men, subsequently reinforced by an additional 129 from brigade reserve.⁶ Armament was essentially the same as that allocated Engebi. In his defense plan, Hashida concentrated his force on the lagoon beaches and exhorted them to destroy the enemy at the water's edge. Beginning about midway of the island and extending southward, the following forces were established:

Right flank rear guard force: Infantry platoon, mortars, observation forces.

Right water's edge force: One mountain gun, one infantry platoon (less two squads).

Middle water's edge force: One mountain gun, one rapid fire gun, one infantry platoon (less one squad).

Left water's edge force: Two infantry squads, one mountain gun, one rapid fire gun.

Support force: One infantry platoon and one squad, three engineer platoons, tanks.

Defense works resembled those on Engebi, so effectively camouflaged with natural foliage they were unidentifiable from the air. In addition, new concrete pillboxes were rushed to completion on the island's southwestern tip and some land mines laid.

General Nishida established brigade headquarters and reserve on Parry, and this, together with a garrison force of 305 men, gave the island a total of 1,115 defending troops.⁷ Aviation personnel and civilian surveyors added slightly more than 100 men to this force. The armament available consisted of the same types as Engebi's and Eniwetok's, but in greater quantities, with the exception of tanks and mountain guns.

The defense plan for Parry was embodied in an order issued 5 February 1944. As a general policy Nishida directed that "each unit will split up the enemy's infantry attack landing craft at the water's edge, and annihilate the enemy forces piecemeal. . . . If the enemy does land, we shall annihilate him by original creative night attacks." The battle for Parry was visualized in three stages, the "outcome of the battle and the fate of the Brigade" being decided in the second. In the third stage "the Brigade investigates and analyzes the over-all situation and decides to die gloriously."⁸ Approximately one-half of the total troops were assigned to three strong points on the lagoon beaches, the remainder making up the island reserve force.

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⁵ JICPOA Bulletin 89-44, 12 Jun 44.

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⁸ JICPOA Bulletin 89-44, 31, 32.

the same as those on Eniwetok, though not as well constructed. They were so well camouflaged, however, that not only were they virtually invisible from the air, but later attacking ground troops had difficulty spotting them. On the whole, they consisted of roofed over foxholes and trenches which protected the occupants from all gunfire and bombing, short of direct hits. An extensive mine field was laid on the northern tip of the island, and smaller ones set up in other areas. Some were buried just under the ground's surface, while others were concealed by lantanna and palm fronds.

PLANNING FOR ENIWETOK

The decision to seize Eniwetok was made during the planning phase for Kwajalein, Admiral Nimitz regarding it as a preliminary to a landing on Truk or other islands in the Carolines. Originally the CATCHPOLE plan called for the 2d Marine Division to seize Eniwetok Atoll on 19 March 1944, and the 27th Infantry Division to assault Kusaie ten days later.⁹ As far along as January this concept was in force, the only change being that of revising the target date to 1 May in order that the naval units might participate in the proposed assault on Kavieng in April.¹⁰ During January both the 2d Marine Division and the 27th Infantry Division (less 106th RCT) were undergoing intensive training for the operation.¹¹

But there appeared to be some general reflection along the lines of seizing Eniwetok immediately after the Kwajalein operation. On 14 January 1944 Admiral Spruance expressed such a desire to Admiral Nimitz. The Fifth Fleet Commander said he would like to proceed against Eniwetok then rather than waiting until the fleet returned from the Kavieng assault.¹² And during the FLINTLOCK planning at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Turner's staff consid-

ered capture of Eniwetok as a part of that operation, staff studies being prepared "should success at Kwajalein prove rapid enough to justify the extension of the operation westward."¹³

Nor were these thoughts limited to the Navy. En route to Kwajalein Major General Holland Smith's staff drew up a tentative study dealing with the rapid seizure of Eniwetok. Dated 26 January 1944 and embodied in a memorandum to the corps chief of staff, the paper first reviewed the existent concept of two divisions striking on or about 1 May 1944. It then pointed out what could be gained by a quick attack:

The advantage of seizing DOWNSIDE as a part of the FLINTLOCK operation are numerous and obvious. The task would be greatly facilitated if the operation could be executed before the Japanese have had an opportunity to strengthen his defenses. It would result in the savings of lives, equipment, money and effort. Furthermore, it would advance the progress of the war, and would serve to keep the enemy under continuing pressure.¹⁴

On 2 February conditions appeared propitious for pushing on to Eniwetok. It was apparent that Kwajalein Atoll could be secured without the assistance of the Expeditionary Reserve, Tactical Group-1. Moreover, carrier plane photos of Eniwetok, made on 30 January, coupled with the fortunate capture by the 7th Reconnaissance Troop of secret navigational charts of the atoll, provided enough information to make definite plans for landing attacks.¹⁵ Rear Admiral Turner thereupon recommended to Vice Admiral Spruance that the assault on Eniwetok be undertaken in the immediate future. Two days later Admiral Nimitz radioed Spruance asking his recommendations concerning the capture of Eniwetok, as well as a carrier strike on Truk. The Fifth Fleet commander promptly recommended approval.

Admiral Nimitz arrived at Kwajalein on 5 February, and during his 42-hour visit on the atoll approved final plans for the Eniwetok and Truk operations.

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¹⁰ Canceled by JCS on 12Mar44.

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¹⁵ *Turner II*.



ADMIRAL HILL AND GENERAL WATSON directed the seizure of Eniwetok Atoll.

As soon as it was evident that Eniwetok would follow Kwajalein, Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, who had directed the successful occupation of Majuro Atoll, was instructed to report to Admiral Turner.¹⁶ He did so on 3 February, and the next day the two admirals conferred with Major General Holland Smith and Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson on plans for the project (coded CATCHPOLE). Initially the target date for D-Day was set at 12 February, but was later changed to 17 February in order to permit Task Force 58 to replenish fuel and ammunition for the Truk strike.

Admiral Hill was given over-all amphibious command, his force being designated Task Group 51.11.¹⁷ Watson's recently created Tac-

¹⁶ "I had no forewarning of the possibilities of my being put in command of the Eniwetok operations. The first intimation was a dispatch directing me to proceed from Majuro by air to Kwajalein and report to Admiral Turner." Ltr VAdm Harry W. Hill to CMC, 24Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Hill II*.

¹⁷ "Owing to the fact that Task Forces 52 and 53 were not dissolved until 11 Feb, and because some departing groups still retained designations in those forces, no force numbers were available for assigning to Hill's command. Consequently, he was assigned a group number as a part of TF 51, which remained in existence and under my command until sunset 24 Feb. . . ." *Turner II*.

tical Group-1 would provide the assault troops. But the problem of garrison troops was another matter, as Admiral Turner later recalled:

. . . No garrison elements for Eniwetok were carried along from Hawaii when the Expeditionary Force began departing . . . none were available, nor was there enough shipping to lift any. When the decision was made to capture Eniwetok without waiting for additional forces, we had to rob both Kwajalein Island and Roi-Namur of considerable proportions of their garrisons and carry them forward in order to start the more urgent development and defense of the new base.¹⁸

Organized under V Amphibious Corps General Order No. 55-43 on 16 November 1943, Tactical Group-1 was originally composed of Tactical Group Headquarters and the 22d Marines (Colonel John T. Walker), reinforced by 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion, 2d Separate Tank Company, 2d Separate Engineer Company, 2d Separate Motor Transport Company, 2d Separate Medical Company, and Shore Party and JASCO elements.

The tactical group was not an administrative unit except where tactical matters were concerned,¹⁹ and it contained a streamlined type of staff, partly as an experiment and partly due to the lack of suitable staff personnel.²⁰

The 22d RCT had been formed in early 1942 at Linda Vista, near San Diego, California, and had spent some 18 months on garrison duty in Samoa before receiving orders to proceed to the Hawaiian Islands. It was preceded by General Watson, who had commanded the 3d Marine Brigade in Samoa until its deactivation in early November 1943. Between its arrival in the Hawaiian Islands and its departure for Kwajalein in late January, the 22d Marines reinforced, camped at Maui and engaged in amphibious exercises, these being marred by a training accident on 6 December in which 21 men were killed and 27 wounded. On 23 December, the 106th Infantry Regiment (less 2d

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ltr LtGen Thomas E. Watson to CMC, 1Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Watson*.

²⁰ "Events proved that this type of staff was inadequate to handle anything but a quick 'Flash' type of operation of a few days duration. . . . The streamlined staff idea died a rapid and just death. . . ." Ltr Col W. M. Greene, Jr., to CMC, 4Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Greene II*.

Battalion), reinforced, was detached from the Army's 27th Infantry Division and placed under General Watson's group. The 106th RCT had been earmarked for Nauru during the Gilberts Operation, but upon the cancellation of that island objective the regiment had sat out the campaign.

During the amphibious training phase for Kwajalein, attention was centered on the assault units rather than on the elements of Tactical Group-1, since the latter was scheduled for corps reserve. Watson's command trained with what it had, but it had precious little, as the general caustically pointed out in a later report:

In the actual operation (Eniwetok), most of the troops were landed in amtracs for their first time. The artillery battalion landed for its first time in DUKW's. We were sent to attack a coral atoll. We rehearsed on the large island of Maui on terrain and approaches totally unlike those of the target. Troops did not land in rehearsal supported by naval gunfire, air and artillery fires to accustom them to actual attack conditions. The artillery had no practice in landing in DUKW's and firing under situations experienced at Eniwetok. The rehearsal at Maui permitted no appreciable advance inland, no combat firing, no infantry-tank team movement. . . . In the attack on Eniwetok, the infantry, amtracs, amtanks, tanks, aircraft, supporting naval ships and most of the staffs concerned had never worked together before.²¹

But if amphibious training was lacking, small unit ground training was not, as Colonel Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Tactical Group-1's operations officer, later pointed out:

Although it is only too true that both regiments [22d Marines and 106th Infantry] had received very little amphibious training prior to participation in the Eniwetok operation, it is also a fact that the 22d Marines was at its peak in small unit training—training which was anchored firmly around a basic fire team organization. This was accomplished by tough, vigorous jungle training given the unit . . . during its stay in Western Samoa. Colonel Floyd Moore [then R-3] was largely responsible for the planning and supervision of this training. And it was this excellence in the fire teams which really paid off at Eniwetok. . . . This regiment was one of the best trained and spirited units I observed. . . . It was this period of isolation in Samoa and opportunity to train which made the 22d Marines far superior to the 106th Infantry in the close tough fighting on the beaches and in the bush of Eniwetok Atoll.²²

²¹ *TG-1 Spl Rpt*, 7.

²² *Greene II*.



COLONEL JOHN T. WALKER, commanding the 22d Marines, reinforced.

Tactical Group-1, constituting the reserve group for the Kwajalein operation, sailed from the Hawaiian Islands on 22 January with the other elements of the Joint Expeditionary Force. Between 31 January and 3 February, while the 4th Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division were seizing their objectives, Tactical Group-1 cruised eastward of Kwajalein Atoll anchoring in the lagoon at the latter date.

To augment Watson's striking force for Eniwetok, he was allotted V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company, Company D (Scout) of the 4th Tank Battalion, 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion less one LVT group (102 LVT's), Company A of the 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion (17 LVTA's), and a Provisional DUKW Battery (30 DUKW's and 4 LVT's). The assault elements counted some 5,820 Marines and 4,556 soldiers, giving a total troop strength of 10,376. In addition, initial occupation forces included the Marine 10th Defense Battalion, 3d Army Defense Battalion, and 47th Army Engineer Battalion.

Admiral Hill, accompanied by General Watson, carried his flag on board an attack transport, *Cambria*, which had been specially fitted out as an amphibious troop command flagship.²³ To lift the troops to their objective there were five other attack transports (APA), one transport (AP), two attack cargo ships (AKA), one cargo ship (AK), two destroyer transports (APD), two submarine chasers (SC), nine landing ships, tank (LST), and six landing craft, infantry (LCI). Ten destroyers made up the transport screen. Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf commanded the Fire Support Group, consisting of the battleships *Colorado*, *Tennessee*, and *Pennsylvania*, three heavy cruisers, and seven destroyers. Three escort carriers and four destroyers composed the Escort Carrier Group, under Rear Admiral V. H. Ragsdale, while Carrier Task Group Four, under Rear Admiral Ginder, consisted of one heavy carrier, two light carriers, two heavy cruisers, one light antiaircraft cruiser, and eight destroyers. In addition, there was a Minesweeping Group with two high-speed mine sweepers, three mine sweepers, and two motor mine sweepers; a Service Group with two tugs and two oilers, and an Ocean Tug Group containing one destroyer and two tugs.

It has been previously noted that Japanese defense forces in Eniwetok Atoll at this time amounted to nearly 3,500 troops. But intelligence derived from prisoners and documents taken at Kwajalein, as well as aerial photographs of Eniwetok, led American staff planners to estimate that Eniwetok Atoll was defended by some 800 Japanese: 500 from the 61st Naval Guard Force and a detachment of 300 of the 4th Civil Engineers. It was conceded, however, that "some portion of the 1st Mobile Shipborne Force, of 2,000 to 3,000 Army troops, may be in this area." It was assumed that the majority of the defenders were stationed on Engebi, about 100 to 150 on Parry, and a small detachment on Eniwetok. There was no evidence of any enemy on any other islands within the atoll.

²³ "Although it did not have the extensive facilities of the AGC, it served the purpose adequately, not only in the Majuro and Eniwetok operations, but also in the Saipan and Tinian operations which followed." *Hill II*.

In considering the Japanese dispositions, General Watson decided to strike first at Engebi. His plan for the seizure of the atoll included four phases, the first involving occupation of nearby islands or islets by artillery as was done at Kwajalein Atoll.

Phase I: On D-Day, Company D (Scout) of the 4th Tank Battalion secure ZINNIA Island to the west of Engebi; simultaneously, V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company secure five islands to the southeast of Engebi and cover the landings of the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion and the 104th Field Artillery Battalion on CAMELLIA and CANNA respectively.

Phase II: On D-plus 1, 22d Marines, reinforced by the 2d Separate Tank Company (medium) and one platoon of the 106th Infantry's Cannon Company (two 105mm self-propelled guns), seize Engebi. Support fires provided by the two artillery battalions from CAMELLIA and CANNA.

Phase III: On D-plus X, 106th Infantry, reinforced by 2d Separate Tank Company (medium), seize Eniwetok and two hours later be prepared to seize Parry. One battalion, 22d Marines, would be assigned the 106th Infantry for the latter landing, inasmuch as BLT 106-2 was not present.

Phase IV: Complete seizure of all islands within the atoll.

An important aspect of the plan for Eniwetok, from the Marine viewpoint, was a new development in the troop command picture. Admiral Hill's plan provided that the Expeditionary Troops Commander (General Watson) be specifically placed in command of landings and garrison forces when ashore. At Roi-Namur, General Schmidt had received this command only after he stated he was ready to assume it. "In other words, [this command] formerly required positive action on the Ground Force Commander's part. Now it is established before the operation begins."²⁴

²⁴ Memo from BrigGen O. T. Pfeiffer to BrigGen G. C. Thomas, 23Feb44.



TRUK HARBOR as it appeared to planes from the *Intrepid* on the first carrier strike at that Japanese stronghold. (Navy photo.)

Planning also included a massive carrier strike on Truk concurrently with the invasion of Eniwetok. Truk lies 670 nautical miles from the latter atoll and was still regarded by many Americans as "Japan's Pearl Harbor" and the "Gibraltar of the Pacific." The Japanese Combined Fleet under Admiral Mineichi Koga, IJN, had been based there since mid-1942, as was headquarters, Sixth Fleet (submarines), and Admiral Spruance hoped that by striking a blow at the base, a major naval battle could be joined. Also, a strike on Truk was the necessary preliminary to a continuing advance westward through the Central Pacific. Thus, this planned attack (coded HAILSTONE) by Rear Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58 was closely connected with Hill and Watson's Eniwetok assault.²⁵

²⁵ Morison, 315-317.

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

Reconnaissance flights over Eniwetok had been underway irregularly since the preceding December, but the first concentrated preliminary strikes were performed by Rear Admiral Ginder's Task Group 58.4 while the amphibious assault force still lay off Kwajalein.

Planes from *Saratoga*, *Langley*, *Princeton*, *Sangamon*, *Suwanee*, and *Chenango* plastered every structure above ground that they could spot. Fourteen enemy planes were destroyed on the ground at Engebi, and aerial photographs of targets were rushed back to *Cambria*. Admiral Hill later reported that these strikes destroyed all buildings of consequence, rendered the airfield at Engebi temporarily useless, and demolished at least one of the two coastal defense guns on the northeast corner of that island.

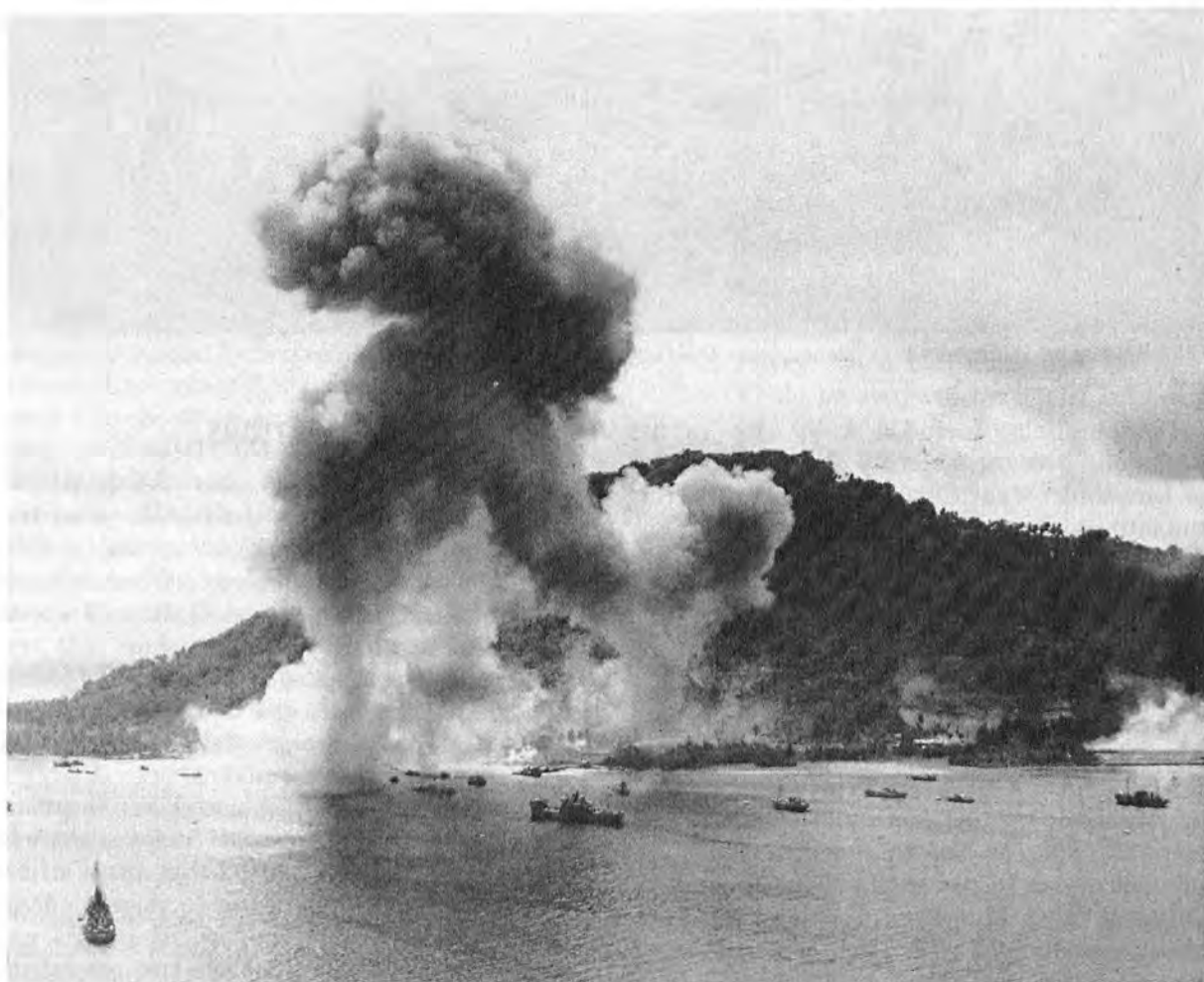
On 3 February 1944 a Marine scouting plane from Bougainville flew over Truk, spotting an imposing array of vessels at anchor. This aggregation was duly reported, but Admiral Koga knew the plane had flown over and realized that an air attack would probably follow. He thereupon ordered the *Yamato* and *Nagato* plus elements of the 2d Fleet to Palau on 4 February. A week later the Combined Fleet, with Admiral Koga in *Musashi*, sailed for Japan, leaving two cruisers, some destroyers, and a great many cargo and transport vessels in Truk lagoon.²⁶

Admiral Spruance in *New Jersey* and Admiral Mitscher in *Yorktown* sortied from

²⁶ Nakajima.

Majuro with Task Force 58 (less TG 58.4) during the early morning hours of 12 February, bound for Truk.²⁷ Included in the armada were Carrier Group 1 (Rear Admiral John W. Reeves), Carrier Group 2 (Rear Admiral A. E. Montgomery), Carrier Group 3 (Rear Admiral F. C. Sherman), and Task Force 17, Patrol Submarines (Vice Admiral C. A. Lockwood). The list of ships counted five heavy carriers, four light carriers, six battleships (including *New Jersey*), five heavy cruisers, five

²⁷ Although TF 58 began operations against Truk the same day that the assault was made on Eniwetok Atoll, the Truk strike is narrated as a preliminary operation here because, among other things, it covered the Eniwetok operation.



JAPANESE NAVY YARD at Dublon Island, Truk Atoll, attacked by Admiral Mitscher's carrier-based planes. (Navy photo.)

light cruisers, 28 destroyers, and ten submarines.²⁸ At dawn on 17 February a total of 70 planes took off from five of Admiral Mitscher's carriers. As they appeared over Truk they were engaged by 80 Japanese planes which rose to contest the intrusion. Some 60 of these Nipponese craft were shot down with a loss of four American planes, while another 40 enemy planes were destroyed on the ground by strafing. A fragmentation and incendiary bomb run followed. Of 365 planes on Truk when the attacking force arrived, less than 100 remained unscathed, and not one rose into the skies the next day.

At 0443, 18 February, fighters, dive bombers, and torpedo bombers began their attacks on Japanese shipping in Truk lagoon. By the end of the day two cruisers (one *Naka* class and the *Kashima*), four destroyers, nine auxiliary craft, and 24 cargo and transport vessels had been sunk.²⁹ But the Japanese got in one blow. During the night of 17 February a group of "Kate" torpedo bombers sought out Mitscher's force and sent a torpedo into *Intrepid*, putting that carrier out of operation for several months. While the carriers were engaged in aerial assaults on Truk, Admiral Spruance conducted an around-the-atoll search for any fleeing enemy shipping. A cruiser and two destroyers were encountered and only one destroyer escaped. Spruance and Mitscher rendezvoused on 18 February and retired toward Kwajalein.³⁰ The strike had not produced the hoped-for fleet action, but it had materially damaged Japanese naval forces and, most important, had torn the mask of dark mystery from Truk, revealing it as virtually an empty shell.

LOADING OUT

On 3 February General Watson issued verbal instructions to his subordinates concerning the Eniwetok operation, and his written operation

²⁸ Morison, 352-353.

²⁹ Nakajima.

³⁰ "I returned to Kwajalein in the New Jersey. . . . Adm Mitscher took Task Force 58 for a carrier strike on the Marianas. This strike included our first photographs of Saipan and Tinian, which islands were later taken in June and July, respectively." Ltr Adm Raymond A. Spruance to CMC, 11Mar53.

order was issued one week later. V Amphibious Corps formally released Tactical Group-1 as Landing Force Reserve for the Kwajalein operation on 6 February, and assigned it duty under Admiral Hill's Task Group 51.11.

Only two weeks separated the decision to take Eniwetok and the departure for that objective, and Tactical Group-1 utilized the time to prepare feverishly for its new assignment. Perhaps no major amphibious operation in the Pacific was handled in such an impromptu manner. When General Watson's command had departed Pearl Harbor as floating reserve for the Kwajalein operation, it had no inkling that it would be assigned the Eniwetok mission. Furthermore, both regiments within the Tactical Group were as yet untried in combat.

Preparations for departure included reloading the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion on LST 246, and the 2d Separate Tank Company on LSD 1. By 15 February Admiral Hill's task group was ready to sail for Eniwetok, and at 0700 that day the Southern Group, composed of LST's, LCI's, and other slow-moving craft, departed Kwajalein lagoon. Seven hours later the Northern Group, consisting of transports, battleships, and carriers, was under way.

CANNA, CAMELLIA, AND ZINNIA

In the early morning hours of 17 February, Warrant Officer Shionoya, IJA, was interrupted in his labors on Parry Island's defenses by an air alarm and naval bombardment. He later recorded in his diary:

I was amazed at the severity of the bombardment. The bombardment was most severe from 0500 to 0600. . . . Everyone was looking on fully prepared for battle. We all passed the night [sic] with the idea that they were finally going to land that very night [sic]. Planes circled the sky all day, and the bombardment also lasted all day. There was one man killed and four wounded. . . . There were some who were buried by the shells from the ships. . . . How many times shall we bury ourselves in the sand . . .³¹

While Warrant Officer Shionoya and his comrades buried themselves in the sand, *Colorado* and *Louisville* shelled Engebi, *Portland*

³¹ Diary of Warrant Officer Shionoya, JICPOA Item 7005, hereinafter cited as *Shionoya*.

and *Trathen* poured fire onto Parry and Japtan, and *Indianapolis* and *Hoel* bombarded Eniwetok. Not a return shot was fired. Between 0700 and 0900 naval gunfire was lifted only to permit the planes from Task Group 58.4 to make their bomb and strafing runs on the islands under attack. During this period mine sweepers moved into Wide Passage, where 28 moored mines were found, swept, and destroyed. This was the first Japanese mine field encountered by United States naval forces in the war.³² As soon as the mine sweepers had completed their work the shallow draft vessels of the Southern Group entered Eniwetok lagoon. At 0915 the Northern Group started into the lagoon via Deep Entrance. Moving in column, the fast mine sweepers led the way followed by destroyers, battleships, and transports.³³ Flanking 40mm fire raked Japtan and Parry, but still the enemy did not reply.

A naval officer who was present subsequently described the maneuver:

In my study of naval history I do not recall any other instance where a naval force of this size and composition has steamed up to an enemy-held harbor, formed column and entered in much the same manner as it would enter its home port. . . . To see the force enter this lagoon in column through a narrow entrance and between the shores of islands on either flank, and steam something over 20 miles through the enemy lagoon was one of the most thrilling episodes which I witnessed during the entire war.³⁴

On Parry Island Major General Nishida reacted to the invasion by radioing a futile plea to his superiors in Tokyo: "Enemy fleet entering the lagoon in large numbers. Request reinforcements."³⁵

By 1034 Admiral Hill's task group completed entrance into Eniwetok lagoon, and 45 minutes later 14-inch shells from *Tennessee* and *Pennsylvania* exploded with destructive fury on Engebi. While the larger ships were thus engaged, the heavy cruiser *Portland* and the de-

stroyers *Heermann* and *McCord* worked over CAMELLIA and Rujiyuru (CANNA) Islands³⁶ in preparation for landings by the V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company. At 1150 in the lagoon the Marines transferred from APD *Kane* to LST 272, clambered into six LVT-2's of the Army's 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion and roared toward the two islands. Two LCI gunboats provided support, their rockets and 40mm guns producing geysers of sand and water. But there were no Japanese on either island. Captain James L. Jones, the company commander, reported CAMELLIA secured and uninhabited at 1355. Five minutes later Rujiyuru was reported in Marine hands. Five natives found on the latter island estimated Japanese strength at 1,000 on Engebi, Eniwetok, and Parry, respectively, with an additional 1,000 laborers on Engebi. Later on D-Day, Jones' command occupied five other islands in the chain southeast of Engebi, finding all of them devoid of enemy.

At 1344 General Watson directed his artillery to land in DUKW's according to schedule, the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion proceeding to CAMELLIA and the 104th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm) going to Rujiyuru. But progress of the former unit did not please Brigadier General Watson³⁷ who thereupon relieved the Marine artillery commander,³⁸ Major Alfred M. Mahoney assuming command of the howitzers.

Both artillery battalions, with five units of fire, were ashore at 1602 and ready for registration 30 minutes later. This was begun promptly, aerial artillery spotters having been on station for 45 minutes. By 1902 registration on Engebi was complete and 50 minutes

³⁶ As has been done previously, the native name for an island is followed by the code name in parentheses. Where a code name is used alone, no record can be found of a native name.

³⁷ *Watson*.

³⁸ Col Walker quickly installed the relieved officer as artillery officer on the regimental staff, although no such billet was authorized. He was subsequently wounded in action on Engebi, awarded the Silver Star for his actions there, and resumed command of his battalion as soon as that unit reverted to control of the 22d Marines at the end of the operation.

³² *Hill II*.

³³ ". . . Deep Entrance had been chosen for use by the larger ships because due to the high currents through this passage it was not expected that it would be practicable to plant mines there, which assumption proved to be correct." *Ibid*.

³⁴ Ltr Capt Claude V. Rickets, USN, to CMC, 9Mar53.

³⁵ *Ibid*.



ENGEBI AS IT APPEARED three weeks before the 22d Marines stormed ashore. In the left center of the photograph is the small pier separating Beaches White 1 and Blue 3. In the background is the western end of the airstrip. (Navy photo.)

later night-long harassing fires against the next day's objective were begun by the artillerymen. During registration and under the protection of naval gunfire, underwater demolition teams moved to within 100 yards of Engebi's shore in amphibian tractors and then swam 50 yards closer, reconnoitering the beaches and their approaches. No obstacles or mines were located.

One task remained before the day's work was ended. At 1848 Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion, embarked in rubber boats from APD *Schley* with orders to land on Bogon (ZIN-NIA), the island lying directly west of Engebi, and prevent any attempted Japanese exodus in that direction. The darkness, heavy sea, and wind combined to split the company, one portion returning to the *Schley* and the remainder

landing three islands away on Elugelab (SAGEBRUSH). Working their way across the reefs, the latter group eventually secured its original objective at 0327 without meeting opposition.

Thus Phase I was accomplished on schedule without meeting any enemy or incurring any casualties. All hands could now turn their attention to the seizure of Engebi on D-plus 1, Phase II in the over-all plan.

FRAGILE IS SHATTERED

The 22d Marines' plan for Engebi (FRAGILE) designated Battalion Landing Team 1 (Lieutenant Colonel Walfried H. Fromhold) and Battalion Landing Team 2 (Lieutenant Colonel Donn C. Hart) assault elements, Battalion Landing Team 3 (Major Clair W. Shisler) constituting regimental reserve. Landing

beaches were located on the approximate center of the lagoon side of the island, with a short finger pier separating them and demarking the initial BLT boundaries. (See Map 12, Map Section.) Once ashore, the line between the 1st and 2d Landing Teams extended along WHOOPIE Trail to ENERVATE Trail, thence along the latter to its terminal point and from there to the island's northern tip. Fromhold's command would land on Beach White 1 and handle the regiment's right zone, while the left, Hart's unit, would land on Beach Blue 3. Reinforcing elements to be landed under 22d RCT control were the 2d Separate Tank Company and one platoon (two 105mm self-propelled guns) from the 106th Infantry's Cannon Company. During the afternoon of D-Day the troops transferred from their transports to the LST's where LVT's awaited them, and readied themselves for W-Hour, set for 0845.



LANDING TEAMS 1 AND 2 churn their way toward Engebi's shore. (Navy photo.)



ENGEBI as it appeared after the aerial and naval bombardment. (Coast Guard photo.)

At 0655 on D-plus 1 (18 February) the guns of *Colorado* and *Louisville* heralded the opening attack on Colonel Yano's Engebi defenses. Minutes later *Pennsylvania* and *Tennessee*—1,000 yards offshore—joined in with a full-throated roar, and four destroyers, *McCord*, *Heermann*, *Phelps*, and *Hall*, got into the act.³⁹ From nearby Rujiyoru and CAMELLIA the 75mm and 105mm howitzers stepped up their fire, which had been harassing the defending Nipponese all night. Shortly before 0800 planes from *Sangamon* and *Suwanee* appeared on the scene, and the bombardment was halted abruptly to permit the aviators to get in their wallop. The naval guns and artillery resumed their discordant chant at 0811 and continued without cessation until one minute before the first wave of LVT's stormed ashore.

Reveille at 0400 had roused the assault troops on board the LST's, and by 0805 the loaded amtracs were in the rendezvous area. Ten minutes later the first wave crossed the line of departure and churned its way toward the

beaches.⁴⁰ Preceding the LVT's were six LCI(G)'s, three on each flank, and these poured forth a torrent of rocket and 40mm fire. The gunfire hit the beach as planned, but because of an error in estimating the range, the rockets landed in the water, thereby providing no assistance whatsoever to the assault troops. The LVT(A)'s were the next in formation, five echeloned on each flank immediately behind the LCI's and seven in a V-shape between the leading elements of the assault landing teams. Thus, the amphibian tanks⁴¹ did not go before the troop-carrying tractors, but were a part of the same wave. Smoke and dust from the bombardment drifted out over the water, obscuring

³⁹ Gen Watson ordered his aide and a radio team into an LCVP which was dispatched to the flank of one assault battalion. This group's mission was to locate enemy guns by drawing fire. Later it was directed to report the progress of fighting ashore. In the attacks on Eniwetok and Parry Islands, Watson sent ashore OP teams under the command of various staff officers. The OP team leaders were instructed to report directly to the general on the progress of the respective operations. *Greene II*.

⁴¹ The term, "amphibian tank," is used here because that is the Army designation and the LVT's were a part of an Army unit.

³⁹ Action Report of Bombardment of Eniwetok Atoll by Task Unit 51.17.2, 4, hereinafter cited as *TU 51.17.2 AR*.



LANDING TEAM 1 encountered this emplaced Japanese tank on Engebi. (Navy photo.)

vision, and the amphibian vehicles tended to separate.⁴² On the left, amtracs bearing elements of Company F (assault) and Company G (support) went 200–250 yards to the left of their assigned beach (Blue 3) and landed the troops at the western end of the airstrip. In the zone of Landing Team 1, the LVT's hit the correct beach, but the amtracs bearing the right platoon of Company A (assault) broke down, thus delaying this unit's arrival.⁴³

Two minutes before W-Hour the first wave ground ashore on the sandy beach, but here the LVT's themselves contributed to a certain amount of congestion.

After the troops were landed, the first wave of LVT's remained in the vicinity of the beach, and thus added to the congestion there. According to plans and orders issued, they were to proceed inland to WHISKEY Road, and support the advance of the infantry. Their failure to proceed inland, as directed, was attributed to fallen coconut trees and debris blocking their passage. However, it is felt that with more determination the prescribed position could have been reached and the mission could have been accomplished. They

⁴² "This situation was investigated and the fault was determined to exist in the fact that the wave guides (Navy) had not led their waves close enough to their beaches before turning them loose on their own." Comments LtCol John P. Lanigan on prelim script, hereinafter cited as *Lanigan*.

⁴³ Notes of LtCol W. F. Frombold, undated, hereinafter cited as *Frombold*.

would then have been in a position to render excellent support with their machine guns and facilitated the seizure of SKUNK Point" [a strong point on the southern tip of Engebi].

Once the troops were ashore, the Japanese reacted by firing rifles, machine guns, and mortars at the Marines. But the stunned defenders did not put up an organized defense, their fire being anything but intense.

In Landing Team 1's area, Companies A and B moved forward on the right and left, respectively. Moments later Company C landed in support, wheeling to the right in order to overrun SKUNK Point. Company A's 3d Platoon landed somewhat later than its parent unit because of the LVT breakdown (noted earlier). Its mission was to echelon itself to the right rear of Company A and close the gap between that organization and Company C on the right.

Over on the regiment's left, Landing Team 2 was advancing with Companies E and F on the right and left respectively, the latter company covering a front slightly larger than that planned because of the shift to the left during landing. Company G, landing in support, wheeled left to assault WEASEL Point, a strong point on the island's northwestern tip.

Shortly after 0900 the medium tanks of the 2d Separate Tank Company began landing and moved in support of BLT 2/22 on the airstrip. But this was not accomplished without incident. One LCM operator inadvertently lowered his ramp prematurely, and the craft flooded and capsized. The tank on board had buttoned up before this occurred and only one of its crew escaped.⁴⁵

Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold's battalion continued to advance on the right, but as it did so the flanks of Companies A and C were stretched to the breaking point in an effort to maintain physical contact. Sometime after 0900 this tenuous contact was broken and a gap created with an utterly unforeseen result. As noted earlier, Company A's 3d Platoon was to retain

⁴⁴ Ltr MajGen John T. Walker to LtCol Harry W. Edwards, 9Apr53. The LVT unit, on the other hand, reported that it "initially supported the advance of the infantry inland." Special Action Report, Eniwetok Operation, 708th Amphibian Tank Bn, 19Mar44.

⁴⁵ USS *Ashland*, Action Report for Eniwetok Atoll, 3May44, 6, hereinafter cited as *Ashland Rpt*.

contact between Companies A and C. When the break finally came this platoon remained with Company C, rather than with its parent unit.⁴⁶ Thus Company A was now working its way forward with only two platoons and its right flank exposed.

As Company C began exerting its inexorable pressure on SKUNK Point, many of the defending Japanese sought to escape by running up the southeastern beach. Because of the gap existing between Companies A and C, the fleeing enemy were thus in a position to fire on the former unit's right flank and rear—and this they did. At 0955 Company A had to turn and fight off a heavy attack on the southeastern beach. At the same time Company C threw in one platoon to plug the gap between its left flank

⁴⁶ Memo LtCol Glen E. Martin to LtCol Harry W. Edwards, 12Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Martin*.

and that beach, thus bottling the remaining Nipponese in their strong point.

Faced by a maze of trenches and interconnected spider holes, the men of the 22d RCT quickly improvised an effective means of rooting out the Nipponese:

Due to the many exits from the defenses and spider-type trenches, it was found expedient to toss smoke grenades into these prior to exploding main demolition charges. Thus, the exits were exposed by escaping smoke. These exits were then covered by fire or flame thrower when the main charge was exploded.⁴⁷

As soon as the Regimental Weapons Company's half-tracks were ashore, two were assigned each assault landing team. But the shell holes and debris made movement difficult for the vehicles, particularly in the forward areas. Although they executed a few fire missions, half-tracks were used principally to haul

⁴⁷ *Fromhold*.



MARINES work their way forward by fire and movement.

water and ammunition to the front and remove wounded to the rear. Experience typical of the difficulties encountered by these troops is related in a report of the 2d Heavy Platoon (half-track) which was attached to Landing Team 2 (Beach Blue 3):

The platoon landed in the 8th wave on Beach White 1, which was not the beach planned on. . . . We turned left down the beach in an effort to reach BLT 2 on Beach Blue 3. We were held up at the pier by debris. . . . Finally we decided to force our way across the debris; in doing this the radiator of No. 1 half-track was punctured, thereby partially disabling the vehicle. While still on the beach the radios in No. 1 and No. 2 TCS jeeps went out also. . . . Eventually we reached a position on the right boundary of BLT 2, when we received orders to move out behind BLT 1. . . .⁴⁸

At about 1100 Company A was reinforced by two 105mm self-propelled guns,⁴⁹ but 15 minutes later these were diverted to Company C, still busily hammering away at SKUNK Point. By this time Companies A and B had entered the wooded area which stretched about halfway between the landing beaches and the final objective, NEWT Point. Dense vegetation and trees knocked down by the naval bombardment impeded progress. In addition, a great many Japanese had taken refuge in the area and were now putting up a fanatical last-ditch fight.

Landing Team 3, which was now ashore, was directed to send Company I to BLT 1/22, and that company moved in behind Company A.

Contrasted with the difficulties Landing Team 1 was meeting, Lieutenant Colonel Hart's organization on the left was pushing forward rapidly over the airstrip and open terrain. Companies E and F, working with Marine medium tanks, had encountered four Japanese tanks, dug in, which were being utilized as pill-boxes. These "fortifications" were knocked

out⁵⁰ and the advance continued. Enemy defenses which could not be easily overrun were by-passed on the premise that mopping up details could handle them.⁵¹

Colonel Walker was ashore by 1030. An hour later he was informed that Company G was still at work on WEASEL Point, Company F was attacking NEWT Point and Company E was well forward on line with F/22. Despite the differences in distance of advance, contact between the two battalions was still intact.

Meanwhile, Company I had taken over from Company A in the assault, the latter unit reverting to landing team reserve. While Companies B and I worked their way through the woods toward the airstrip, Company A busied itself with Japanese defensive positions on the southeastern beach.

At 1310 Colonel Walker notified General Watson that WEASEL Point and that portion of NEWT Point in Landing Team 2's zone were secure; that the island was in possession of the 22d Marines except for a pocket of enemy stretching across Landing Team 1's line of advance and lying between that unit and the airstrip. At 1400 the Tactical Group commander came ashore and 50 minutes later Engebi was officially listed as secure.

At 1456 Company C announced that SKUNK Point was overrun and at 1600 Companies B and I debouched from the wooded area onto the airstrip. At this point, I/22 reverted to control of Landing Team 3 and once again Company A moved in as the right flank assault unit. At 1830 Companies A and B reported secure that portion of NEWT Point falling within their zone.

An hour earlier Landing Team 3 and the 2d Separate Tank Company had been reembarked for action with the 106th Infantry Regiment in its D-plus 2 assault on Eniwetok.

The 22d RCT's first night on Engebi was "uncomfortable," one participant recalls.⁵² Many Japanese had been by-passed during the rapid movement across the island, and complete mopping up was not conducted simultane-

⁴⁸ Combat Report of 2d Heavy Platoon for Engebi and Parry Islands, 15Mar44.

⁴⁹ "From personal experience, the 105mm self-propelled guns proved to be more of a hazard than a help. They made a very inviting target for Japanese mortar and small-arms fire, and consequently were not a very comforting thing to have around. After experiencing one of these barrages directed at the 105's, most of the Marines in my particular sector didn't like to see a 105 approach." Comments Maj Thomas D. Scott on prelim script, hereinafter cited as *Scott*.

⁵⁰ Ltr Maj Robert S. Reinhardt, Jr., to CMO 18Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Reinhardt*.

⁵¹ *Lanigan*.

⁵² *Ibid*.



MARINE TANKS work their way across Engebi's airstrip and onto NEWT Point. (Navy photo.)

ously with the initial attack. Moreover, little attention had been paid to collecting both United States and Japanese weapons which were left lying about the battlefield. Thus individual Nipponese were able to supply themselves with sufficient arms and ammunition to make isolated attacks on the Marines throughout the night.⁵³ Nor should it be forgotten that this was the first night in combat for these particular troops, and a certain amount of firing on their part was to be expected.

At 0800 on 19 February 1944 (D-plus 2), Colonel Walker raised the American flag on Engebi, as "To the Colors" was blown on a captured bugle. Mopping up continued throughout the day with demolition teams and flame throwers of the 2d Separate Engineer Company in the forefront.

⁵³ *Fromhold.*

While attention was focused on Engebi during D-plus 1, the V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company and Company D (Scout) were not idle. The Reconnaissance Company surveyed two islets southeast of Engebi and found no signs of enemy or natives. But as it landed on Muzinbaarikku (ARBUTUS) Island, next to Engebi, it was met by grazing machine-gun fire. The Marines returned this fire and threw 60mm mortar shells toward the northern point of the island. Later it developed that the island contained enemy positions but no enemy, the fire coming from the vicinity of SKUNK Point on Engebi, where C/22 was heavily engaged.

As noted earlier, the Scout Company secured several islands southwest of Engebi in the early morning hours of D-plus 1. During the remainder of the day these Marines occupied five other islands in the chain, using rubber boats

and finding only one Japanese soldier, whom they took prisoner.

General Watson noted that on Engebi the enemy had conducted only a passive defense and that operations were proceeding according to plan. From captured documents it was determined that elements of the 1st Mobile Seaborne Infantry Brigade were on the atoll, and estimated enemy strength for Parry and Eniwetok was revised upwards to 400-550 and 700-800 respectively. The stage was now set for Phase III, the seizure of Eniwetok, to begin on schedule on the morning of D-plus 2.⁵⁴

PRIVILEGE IS TAKEN

During the afternoon of D-plus 1 the 106th Regimental Combat Team (less BLT 106-2⁵⁵) was released from its status of floating reserve for Engebi, and at 1500 Colonel Ayers issued Field Order #4 for the seizure of Eniwetok Island (PRIVILEGE). Plans still optimistically called for Ayers' command to seize Parry (HEARTSTRINGS) as soon as Eniwetok was secured, and landing team assignments were made accordingly.

As previously described, Eniwetok is shaped like a blackjack. The selected landing beaches were situated on the lagoon side of the island on the northern portion of the blackjack's head, and designated Yellow 1 and Yellow 2, from left to right. The two assault units would land abreast, BLT 106-1⁵⁶ on Beach Yellow 2 and BLT 106-3 on Beach Yellow 1. (See Map 13, Map Section.) This latter unit was instructed to send a rifle company across the island, form a defensive line facing northeast and prevent the Japanese from moving southwest. The remainder of the landing team would serve in regimental reserve. BLT 106-1 would secure the southwestern end of the island, utilizing not more than one rifle company, then pass through BLT 106-3's rifle company and

secure the northeastern portion of Eniwetok. The 104th Field Artillery Battalion would move into the southern end of the objective as soon as it was secured. Upon occupation of the target, RCT 106 would be prepared to move into LVT's for the planned assault on Parry Island. During the attack on Eniwetok, LT 3/22 would constitute a floating reserve.⁵⁷ One platoon of the 2d Separate Tank Company (medium) was attached to BLT 106-3, while the remainder of the Marine tanks were attached to BLT 106-1.⁵⁸

The problem of getting the 2d Separate Tank Company refueled, rearmed, and transferred from the northern portion of Eniwetok Atoll to the southern area was one faced by the vessel which transported the tanks and LCM's from Kwajalein. Moving *Ashland* during darkness was considered hazardous, so at 0247 on D-plus 2 (19 February) 12 LCM's loaded with tanks and their crews, and accompanied by *SC 1066* departed on a dark 25-mile voyage across the choppy waters of the lagoon. "The results were satisfactory, all boats arrived as planned, but considerable risk of breakdown was present. The commanding officer recommended this course of action, but would hesitate to do so again."⁵⁹

Eniwetok was subjected to harassing naval gunfire from D-Day until the morning of the landing, D-plus 2. Because there were few above-ground defenses and naval gunfire's flat trajectory is not especially damaging to underground fortifications, the total bombardment, in both quantity and quality, did not equal that for Engebi and Parry. Some 204.6 tons of projectiles, none larger than 8-inch, were poured

⁵⁴ TG-1 Unit Report 2, 18Feb44, 1-3.

⁵⁵ It is well to recall that BLT 106-2 was involved in the Majuro occupation and did not participate in the Eniwetok operation in any way. The basic infantry organization of RCT 106 was the 1st and 3d Battalion Landing Teams.

⁵⁶ As noted previously in this monograph, when taken from Army reports, Army terms and designations will be used in referring to Army actions.

⁵⁷ "Effective combat units are achieved by effective unit training, and can never be replaced by assorted combinations of component units, however highly trained. The make-up of the landing force on Eniwetok Island illustrates my point. A two battalion regiment is difficult to fight, and when the reserve normal to a regiment is made up of a totally strange battalion from a different service . . . unit integrity is being sorely violated." Ltr Col Joseph C. Anderson, USA, to CMC, 27Feb53, hereinafter cited as *Anderson II*.

⁵⁸ RCT 106, reinf, (less BLT 106-2) Unit Operations Report (DOWNSIDE), 15Apr44, hereinafter cited as *RCT 106 Rpt.*

⁵⁹ *Ashland Rpt*, 3, 6.

on Eniwetok by *Tennessee*, *Portland*, *Indianapolis*, *Trathen*, *Phelps*, *Hailey*, *Hoel*, and *Haggard*. In contrast Engebi received 1,179.7 tons and 944.4 tons were scheduled for Parry. Further, there was no preliminary artillery bombardment as had been placed on Engebi and would be laid on Parry because there were no nearby islands on which the guns could be positioned. The concept of a light naval bombardment (in comparison with the other islands) was based on the belief that Eniwetok was lightly held and that the 106th RCT would have little trouble taking it.

With Y-Hour set for 0900, *Portland*, *Indianapolis*, and two destroyers stepped up their harassing fire to preliminary bombardment strength at 0710. An hour later this was checked to permit an air strike and then resumed at 0826. Fearing that the tank-loaded LCM's would not arrive on schedule, Admiral Hill reset Y-Hour to 0915 and later moved it to 0922. The armor arrived on time, however,

and the soldiers were ordered into the beach, the first wave crossing the line of departure shortly after 0900.

The assault troops had been awakened at 0430 and departed their LST's for the rendezvous area three hours later. Now as their LVT's lurched toward the shore, they were preceded by the usual groupings of LVT(A)'s and rocket-carrying LCI's. At 0918 the first soldiers touched ground and began moving inland against light opposition, preceded by the amphibian tanks.

BLT 106-3 (Lieutenant Colonel Harold I. Mizony) landed on Beach Yellow 1 with Companies L and K abreast Company I in reserve. Company L, in the left, was to pivot on its left flank, face north and extend toward the ocean beaches. Company K was to drive straight across the island to the ocean shore and then mop up in L/106's rear. On Beach Yellow 2, BLT 106-1 (Lieutenant Colonel Winslow Cornett) scheduled a similar maneuver. Company



ASSAULT FORCES of RCT 106 on their way into Yellow Beaches 1 and 2 on Eniwetok Island. (Navy photo.)



LANDING TEAM 3/22 prepares to assault a coconut log emplacement on Eniwetok Island.

B, on the left, was to cross the island, while Company A pivoted on its right flank and moved southward between the lagoon beach and a north-south trail.

But these plans went awry. Before the LVT(A)'s could go the prescribed 100 yards inland, they encountered a steep bluff some nine feet high which blocked their progress. As they ground to a halt, the troop-carrying amphibians followed suit, and the end result was congestion on the beaches that kept succeeding waves afloat beyond their scheduled landing time. A network of insidious spider traps, backed up by machine-gun and mortar fire, helped keep the advance at a standstill.

General Watson reacted to this stalemate by sending a message to Colonel Ayers at 1004, "Push your attack." Six minutes later the

beachmaster notified Admiral Hill that he was holding up all waves because of the congested beaches "due to slowness of movement of troops inland." At 1023 General Watson prodded the attacking troops once more. He ordered Colonel Ayers to "move troops forward and inland, clear beaches. Advance."

By 1100 the 3d Battalion had pushed inland about 100 yards, Companies L and K abreast, the former's left flank on the lagoon beach and K/106's right flank in the air about two-thirds of the way across the island. An hour later the landing team had pushed northward a short distance, the right flank resting about 70 yards from the ocean beach.⁶⁰

In the 1st Battalion area the cross-island attack was somewhat more successful, but the

⁶⁰ *RCT 106 Rpt.*

southward advance was slow, the soldiers fighting dense undergrowth and undulating ground as well as the ever-present spider trap defenses. Elements of Company B managed to reach the ocean shore by 1145, but this was an isolated group which had lost contact with the remainder of the unit. Company A was moving slowly, attempting to execute its pivot maneuver to the right. Scheduled to land behind Company B, Company C approached Beach Yellow 2, which was badly congested, in the fifth and sixth waves. Four LCVP's were somehow diverted some distance south of the prescribed beach and landed against stiff opposition. But Company A came to the rescue by advancing along the beach.⁶¹

By 1200 contact was established between Lieutenant Colonel Cornett's units, and his command faced south, in the shape of a huge "S". The farthest advance was made by Company A, its right flank extending to the lagoon beach. Company C was in the center, forming the bend in the line. Company B extended to the left with its left flank on the ocean beach. Although a line had been established, opposition in the rear from by-passed Japanese was far from eliminated as the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines would soon discover.

By landing on Beach Yellow 2 and advancing to the south, BLT 106-1 was in a position to take the bulk of the Japanese defenses from the rear. Enemy reaction took the form of a strong counterblow in an attempt to ward off the inevitable. No sooner had contact been effected within the battalion and the "S"-line formed, than some 400 Nipponese hit it furiously. Company B's line was broken momentarily, but quickly reformed and by 1245 the soldiers had thrown back the Japanese. Despite this blow to the enemy, however, progress did not improve, and Cornett's command inched its way forward, assisted by Marine medium tanks and 105mm self-propelled guns of the Cannon Company.

At 1230 Colonel Ayers visited the 3d Battalion's command post and directed that unit to push forward and secure the northern end of Eniwetok. Reinforcing elements included one

platoon from the 2d Separate Tank Company (medium) and one platoon of self-propelled 105mm guns. Company I replaced Company K on line, the latter organization taking over the mop-up mission in the rear. Shortly thereafter the battalion stretched across the island from beach to beach and began advancing slowly.

Eniwetok was proving a much tougher nut to crack than had been originally expected, and Colonel Ayers ordered the reserve (3d Battalion, 22d Marines) to land, but refused Major Shisler's request to take his half-tracks ashore. At 1330 the Marines began debarking from LCVP's on Beach Yellow 1 and moved to an assembly area north of the pier, fighting Japanese on the way.⁶² Shisler was directed to take over BLT 106-1's left flank, relieving Companies B and C. Company B would revert to landing team reserve and Company C would move into Company A's area, beefing up the force there. A general attack to the south was scheduled for 1515.

The boundary between 3/22 and 106-1 lay just southeast of the trail that ran the length of Eniwetok Island. Thus the Marines assumed responsibility for approximately two-thirds of the entire southern zone. And as they began moving forward to relieve BLT 106-1's left flank, once again they were forced to fight by-passed Japanese.

The attack to the south began promptly at 1515. BLT 106-1 moved forward with Companies A and C on the right and left respectively, Company B in reserve. Landing Team 3/22 advanced with Company L on the right, Company K on the left and Company I in reserve. Some 300 yards were covered before stiff opposition was encountered in the form of mutually supporting coconut log emplacements.

Most of these positions could not be discerned until the troops were within 25 or 30 yards of them. Because of the close proximity of the troops to the positions, the dense jungle with consequent lack of proper observation, it was determined that naval gunfire was

⁶¹ *Crowl and Love, XIX-42.*

⁶² Historical Branch interview with Col. Clair W. Shisler, 24Apr53, hereinafter cited as *Shisler*.

not practicable. Mortar fire had very little effect on the positions. . . .⁶³

Once again Major Shisler requested permission to bring his half-tracks ashore and once again Colonel Ayers refused. The Marine commander then requested tank support, but this was not forthcoming. Nor were all the assault weapons available, only one bazooka being on hand.⁶⁴ Infantrymen and a platoon from the 2d Separate Engineer Company attacked the positions with flame throwers and satchel charges, and the Marines continued to advance slowly through the dense undergrowth.

As the afternoon wore on BLT 106-3 pushed slowly northward through the same sort of undergrowth which proved a serious obstacle as well as providing concealment to the enemy. Shortly after 1800 Lieutenant Colonel Mizony reported his lines about 500 yards north of the pier at Beach Yellow 1. He informed his superior that he doubted if he could reach the end of the island by dark, but was in a position to set up a defensive line for the night.

Meanwhile, at 1635 General Watson had radioed Colonel Ayers: "Absolutely necessary that you land your artillery prior to darkness today so that it may register on HEART-STRINGS early tomorrow morning. . . ." Sixty-five minutes later Tactical Group-1 was notified that one battery of the 104th Field Artillery Battalion was on Beach Yellow 1.

At 1850 Colonel Ayers dispatched a message to the units under his command: "You will continue to advance until you reach the end of the island. Call for illumination when necessary." BLT 106-3, operating in the northern portion of Eniwetok, attempted to do this, picking up about 200 yards during the entire night. Although searchlight and star shell illumination were utilized, the battalion took a dim view of such nocturnal operations:

⁶³ Document dated 10Apr44, submitted by Capt Buenos A. W. Young, believed to be Eniwetok Action Rpt of 3d Bn, 22d Marines, hereinafter cited as *BLT 3/22 SAR*.

⁶⁴ Some Army troops from Kwajalein had come on board 3/22's troop ship while it lay off that island and passed the word that bazookas were ineffective. The men of the 3d Bn had not experienced combat and they accepted this statement from men whom they regarded as combat veterans. Thus when 3/22 was engaged in Eniwetok Island it suddenly found itself lacking these important weapons. *Shisler*.

Movement at night proved to be both difficult and costly. It was impossible to see the camouflaged holes, contact was poor, and the troops as a whole did not seem to have the confidence in themselves that was so apparent throughout the day. . . .⁶⁵

When the RCT commander's message reached the battalions in the south, they were some 600 yards short of their objective. And in contrast to BLT 106-3 in the north, they were attacking a heavily fortified area. At dusk a few tanks finally arrived at Major Shisler's command post, but when he informed the tank commander of the plan to push on during darkness, the armor's leader pronounced it "impossible" and withdrew.⁶⁶ Moreover, the expected illumination did not materialize.⁶⁷

Since no tank support was received and no illumination given prior to the time when the night attack was scheduled, the commanding officer of LT 3/22 informed his unit commanders no attack would be made. Orders were issued for the units of LT 3/22 to hold their present positions for the night.⁶⁸

Groups of Japanese, usually numbering six to ten individuals, attacked the Marine lines during the night, but no large coordinated attack was forthcoming. Many of the enemy who did attack were armed with crude spears, knives and rifles. All their attempts to break through were frustrated.⁶⁹

Dawn brought a surprise to Major Shisler's command. On the landing team's right flank, where BLT 106-1 was supposed to be, there was only one soldier from that unit.⁷⁰ During the night the Army organization, with the exception of the lone infantryman, had withdrawn some 300 yards to the rear without notifying the adjoining Marines.⁷¹ Thus a sizeable gap in the lines existed through most of the night. Major Shisler quickly ordered elements of Company I forward to plug the hole, while a

⁶⁵ *RCT 106 Rpt*. BLT 106-3 S-3 Summary.

⁶⁶ *Shisler*.

⁶⁷ Illumination was provided BLT 106-3 in the north, but available information indicates that this was not the case in the south.

⁶⁸ Maj William E. Sperling, III, an undated paper titled "BLT 3/22 on Eniwetok Island," hereinafter cited as *Sperling*.

⁶⁹ Ltr LtCol Earl J. Cook to CMC, 23Feb53.

⁷⁰ *Shisler*.

⁷¹ Ltr LtCol Robert A. McCabe to CMC, 12Mar53, hereinafter cited as *McCabe*.

coordinated attack which had been planned for dawn had to await BLT 106-1's return to its original positions.

At about 0830 on the morning of D-plus 3 (20 February) between 40 and 50 Japanese suddenly attacked the Marines' battalion command post. Surprise was on the side of the enemy and an estimated eight Marines were killed (including the battalion operations officer) and an equal number wounded⁷² before Master Sergeant John J. Nagazyna organized a force which eliminated the attackers.⁷³

Meanwhile, both LT 3/22 and BLT 106-1 had begun attacking to the south, and enemy opposition was much the same as that encountered on the preceding day. At 1000 it appeared that Major Shisler's repeated requests for tank

support had borne fruit. Four light tanks belonging to the 106th RCT rumbled up into the Marine area at that time, but these rumbled away before actually engaging in combat.⁷⁴

Shortly after the four tanks disappeared, however, the Marines managed to persuade two Army self-propelled 105mm gun crews to assist them with their weapons. These guns "did render excellent assistance and worked in fine

⁷² BLT 3/22's SAR cites numerous instances where tank support was promised by RCT 106 but was not delivered. Moreover, Shisler relates that it was particularly "disheartening" to him that he was not allowed his half-tracks, nor was he given tank support. 22dMar SAR, 3, states: "During the attack on PRIVILEGE, BLT #3 was unassisted by tanks though two full tank companies were ashore and being used by the regiment. This left a feeling of desire on the part of the higher echelon of command to save their other troops at the expense of BLT #3." Inasmuch as one of the tank companies was a Marine unit, disappointment was intensified.

⁷² Accounts vary as to the exact number of casualties suffered by 3/22 in this action. The number given here is an estimate based on available information.

⁷³ Ltr Capt Buenos A. W. Young to CMC, 9Mar53.



MARINES advance toward the southwestern tip of Eniwetok.

cooperation with the infantry units of LT 3/22 in the reduction of numerous enemy strong points."⁷⁵

At 1445 Marine and Army elements reached the tip of Eniwetok, and 15 minutes later General Watson was notified that the southern end of the island was secure. As is always the case, mopping-up operations continued.

During the morning, the remainder of the 104th Field Artillery Battalion landed with the mission of supporting the attack on Parry Island, tentatively scheduled for 21 February but later firmed for the 22d. Permission was granted for the artillerymen to support the advance of BLT 106-3 up the northeastern neck of Eniwetok, and this was initiated at 1155.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony's command began its D-plus 3 daylight advance to the north shortly after 0800. Company L continued as the left flank unit, while Company K replaced Company I on the battalion right. Marine medium tanks continued to give close support, and engineers carrying pole charges, flame throwers and shaped charges materially assisted

in the reduction of enemy strong points. By nightfall the landing team was 1,000 yards from the northern tip of Eniwetok. The attack was resumed the next morning and continued in the usual manner. At 1430 on D-plus 4 (21 February) Mizony informed Ayers that the northern end of the island was secure. With Admiral Hill and General Watson on hand, the Stars and Stripes were raised on Eniwetok Island at 1721.

Altogether, it took three days to overrun Eniwetok, and the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines bore the brunt of the operation during a sustained 24-hour advance. Its area included the most heavily defended portion of the island. But it was clear that the commanding general was not pleased with the performance of the 106th RCT:

... In the assault against PRIVILEGE Island by the 106th Infantry ... the assault troops did not move forward rapidly from the beaches (thereby causing a serious congestion), did not operate in close cooperation with tanks and failed to realize the capabilities of and to use to the fullest extent naval gunfire and close support aviation.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ *Sperling*.

⁷⁶ *TG-1 Spt Rpt 7*; "It would be wrong and even un-



UNOPPOSED LANDINGS were made on a number of small islands in Eniwetok Atoll. Here a group of Marines goes ashore on one of them. (Navy photo.)

Although Eniwetok Island was secured, the battle for Eniwetok Atoll was not yet complete and movements were under way to bring this to an expeditious end.

SIDESHOW

While primary attention was focused on the assault of Eniwetok Island, other units were actively engaged in other portions of the atoll.

The chain of islands making up the eastern rim of Eniwetok Atoll had been assigned to Captain Jones' V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company. On the morning of D-plus 2 this unit continued with its mission.

Operating from the APD *Kane*, the Marines secured ten islands and islets during the day without meeting any natives or enemy. At 1600 General Watson ordered the company to occupy Japtan (LADYSLIPPER) before dark, and two hours later the unit was ashore. A Japanese flag flying from a mast in the center of the island indicated the presence of the enemy, but it turned out that the invaders were the only human beings there.

Inasmuch as Japtan bounds Deep Entrance and lies immediately north of Parry, Watson selected it as a position for the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion to support the Parry operation.⁷⁷ The Reconnaissance Company selected landing beaches for the DUKW-borne artillery, and at 1000 the next day (20 February) guided the howitzer battalion ashore.

In the midst of these multiple activities, a survey of Jeroru Island (LILAC) was overlooked. This minute bit of coral lies just inside the lagoon between Japtan and Parry. On 21 February a reconnaissance patrol reported it unoccupied. The Corps Reconnaissance Company thereupon reembarked in *Kane*, awaiting the attack on Parry the following day.

The western chain of islands in the atoll was the responsibility of Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion under Captain Edward L.

fair to ignore the brave and competent performance of many fine and highly trained individuals and small units who collectively made up the 106th Infantry" *Anderson II*.

⁷⁷ As has already been noted, the 104th Field Artillery Battalion would support the Parry assault from the island of Eniwetok.

Katzenbach, Jr. As noted earlier, the northern portion of these small islands was secured by the evening of D-plus 1. The next morning the Marines began their landings on the southern group, starting with Rigili (POSY). Here enemy fire was received, and a brisk five-minute fire fight followed. When it was over nine Japanese lay dead. The remaining seven islands in the chain were secured during the day without meeting any natives or Nipponese. At the close of the day the scouts reembarked on *Schley* and stood by for the Parry attack.

Thus, when both Eniwetok Island and the islet of Jeroru were reported secured on the afternoon of 21 February (D-plus 4), there remained only one island to be taken in the entire atoll—Parry.

BREAKING HEARTSTRINGS

The first few hours on Eniwetok Island clearly indicated the original invasion schedule could not be maintained, but for a time General Watson still hoped that the island would be secured at the end of the day. By 2100, however, he was convinced that "the capture of PRIVILEGE Island would not be completed before the evening of 20 February at the earliest." Therefore, he decided to take the victors of Engebi (Colonel Walker's 22d Marines) off their island and turn the Parry (HEART-STRINGS) mission over to them, with a target date of 21 February.⁷⁸ Walker was ordered to begin reembarkation immediately and arrive in the transport area by 1600 the following day.

At 0800 D-plus 3 (20 February) LT 1/22 was afloat in the transport area. Four hours later responsibility for Engebi was assumed by the 3d Army Defense Battalion, reinforced by Companies A and D, 111th Infantry Regiment.⁷⁹ And later that afternoon Landing

⁷⁸ "When it became apparent that this operation [Eniwetok Island] would require two or three days, it became necessary to revise the entire operations for the assault on Parry Island The change in plans was effected very expeditiously and efficiently by Gen Watson and Col Walker, together with members of my staff." *Hill II*.

⁷⁹ These were forward elements of the 111th Infantry Regiment. That organization later relieved RCT 106 in its duties as garrison for Eniwetok Atoll.



PARRY ISLAND (looking south) under bombardment the day before the 22d Marines landed there. (Navy photo.)

Team 2, 22d Marines, arrived in the transport area.

Following a conference of unit commanders at 1400 on 20 February, General Watson issued Tactical Group-1 Operation Order 3-44. This postponed the attack on Parry until 0845 (later changed to 0900), 22 February. It also provided for the relief and reembarkation of the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines, and the 2d Separate Tank Company the morning of 21 February in order that these organizations might participate in the Parry assault. Further, additional forces were assigned the regimental combat team to bolster its striking power.

In the midst of this planning a shift was made in landing beach designations, which was to play an important part in the operation. As originally established, a small 20-yard-long pier on the northern lagoon shore of Parry separated Beach Green 2 and Beach Green 3, the latter being south of the marker. On Beach Green 3's southern flank was a larger 30-yard-long pier,

designated VALENTINE Pier. During the planning it was decided that too much territory was involved in this scheme, and the beach designations were shifted northward about 300 yards, Beach Green 3's southern flank then resting just south of the smaller of the two piers. "This information apparently was not known in time by all naval forces,"⁸⁰ and the effect of this will be subsequently seen. (See Map 14, Map Section.)

On 21 February Colonel Walker issued his Operation Order 10-44. The landings would be executed from the lagoon on the northern portion of Parry on Beach Green 2 (north) and Beach Green 3 (south). The northern one-third of the island constituted the first objective. Separating this area from the southern two-thirds was an 0-1 line running east-west. The attack south of the 0-1 line would be made on order by two battalions abreast, the battalion

⁸⁰ *Fromhold*; Historical Branch interview with Col Floyd R. Moore, 1Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Moore*.

boundary running north-south in the center of the island.

LT 1/22 would land on Beach Green 3 at Z-Hour, drive straight across the island and secure that area falling within its zone. It would then be prepared to attack south, being responsible for the eastern sector.

LT 2/22 would land on Beach Green 2 at Z-Hour, secure the portion of island in its zone, thoroughly mop up the northern one-third of Parry and then revert to regimental reserve.

LT 3/22 would land on Beach Green 3 on order and take over the western area in the drive to the south.

The 2d Separate Tank Company (medium) would land in the 4th wave, attack enemy defenses in the northern portion of Parry and prepare to support the attack to the south.

Major James L. Rogers' 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion would once again take the troops ashore and support the landing in the same formation as was used at both Engebi and Eniwetok Islands.

Other organizations which would be prepared to land on order included Company C, 766th Light Tank Battalion (RCT 106), V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company, Company D (Scout) of the 4th Tank Battalion, and a Provisional Landing Force consisting of five provisional companies organized within the 10th Defense Battalion (Marine).⁸¹ Ticketed for Group reserve was BLT 106-3, which would be reembarked from Eniwetok the morning of 22 February.

One aspect of preparing for the Parry assault was the diligent search among the ships for hand grenades, demolition charges, and small arms.⁸² These were now in short supply, as

⁸¹ 10th Defense Battalion (Marine) Operation Order 4-44, 21Feb44. This provisional group was not landed. The battalion operations officer later recalled, "enthusiasm ran high among the troops and there was much grumbling when, on the morning of the scheduled landing, the men were ordered to secure." Ltr Col Paul A. Fitzgerald to CMC, 12Mar53.

⁸² "One of the basic reasons for shortage of grenades, equipment and workable weapons was because of the fact that casualties [on Engebi and Eniwetok] were not stripped of their equipment, weapons and ammunition prior to evacuation. A great proportion of this equipment, etc., was later found to be in the hands of ships' companies and was recovered. . . ." *Lanigan*.

were artillery shells. Some grenades and demolitions were found, but it was necessary to fly in an additional 775 grenades and 1,500 demolition caps from Kwajalein. A number of BAR's and rifles were acquired from RCT 106 to make up deficiencies in RCT 22, and artillerymen were directed to reduce planned harassing fires.

At 2100 on D-plus 4 Colonel Walker reported to General Watson that his men were transferred to the LVT-bearing LST's and "all preparations for the attack on HEART-STRINGS Island on 22 February [are] complete."

While the Marines prepared for their landings on Parry, Warrant Officer Shionoya and his comrades on that island were impatiently awaiting the assault.⁸³ On the morning that the 22d Marines went into Engebi, the Japanese warrant officer wrote:

We thought they would land this morning, but there was only a continuation of their bombardment and no landing. As this was contrary to our expectations, we were rather disappointed.

The next morning preparations were underway for the landing on Eniwetok. To the defenders of Parry it seemed that they would be the target that day, and once more Shionoya recorded his reactions:

When I looked out to sea there were four transports and three destroyers lined up. That surely made me angry. At 0540 the enemy was in the midst of preparations for landing. Each unit got orders to prepare for battle and fell to its respective position. . . .⁸⁴

On the basis of resistance encountered on Eniwetok Island, Admiral Hill decided to intensify the naval bombardment of Parry. On D-plus 3 (20 February), *Tennessee* and *Pennsylvania* lay a mere 850 yards off the island and "conducted a close, destructive enfilade bombardment."⁸⁵ The next day *Pennsylvania* delivered plunging main battery fire from 0740 to 1630, and both battleships repeated this from 1730 to 1900. That night the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion on Japtan Island and the 104th Field Artillery Battalion on Eniwetok

⁸³ Whether Shionoya survived until the day Parry was assaulted is a moot question. The final entry in his diary is dated 19Feb44.

⁸⁴ *Shionoya*.

⁸⁵ *TU 51.17.2 AR*, 4.

placed harassing fire on Parry, as did four destroyers.

At 0600 on D-plus 5 (22 February) the two artillery battalions stepped up their harassing fire to preparatory strength, the Marine cannoners augmenting their howitzer fire with bullets from sixteen .50 caliber machine guns.⁸⁶ At 0700 the Navy joined in with a full scale bombardment from *Tennessee*, *Pennsylvania*, *Louisville*, *Indianapolis*, and *Hailey*. At 0845 the first wave of Marines left the line of departure and headed for Beaches Green 2 and 3, accompanied by LVT(A)'s and preceded by LCI's. A string of buoys had been set up from the line of departure to within 500 yards of the beach to indicate the division between landing teams during the approach.⁸⁷ But the smoke and dust generated by the bombardment of Parry rolled out over the choppy water, curtailing vision and making the buoys little help. Moreover, as the LVT's butted their way toward shore, they were guided toward the original landing beaches rather than toward the ones newly established 300 yards northward.⁸⁸

The LCI(G)'s supporting the right flank approached shore and began firing their 40mm batteries, when suddenly all three craft were struck by 5-inch fire from *Hailey*, apparently because they were further south than had been expected. The acting-gunboats lost 13 men killed and 46 wounded, as well as receiving extensive damage, but nevertheless they fired their rockets before retiring from the scene.⁸⁹

On the 22d RCT's right flank, the first wave of LT 1/22 hit the beach at 0900 just south of VALENTINE Pier, some 300 yards south of its scheduled landing position; the second wave followed at 0908, landing 200 yards north of

the pier, and the third wave came in three minutes later, debarking in the gap between the first and second waves.⁹⁰ Units were intermingled on the beach, and as at Namur junior officers and noncommissioned officers used their initiative.

During hand-to-hand encounters in the shell holes which pockmarked the beach, officers and non-coms rose splendidly to the task of reorganizing confused men who were separated from their units and leaders.⁹¹

The Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold were meeting stiff resistance from intense Japanese machine-gun and mortar fire, and casualties on the beach were described as "fairly heavy."

It is well to note here that when landing on an enemy-held island, it is often difficult, if not virtually impossible, to determine whether the landing has been made on the correct beaches. Unless something is obviously wrong, it is generally assumed that the landing has been correctly performed. This was the case of both assault landing teams at Parry. Initially they were under the impression that they had landed some 300 yards north of where they actually were.⁹²

In the combat teams' northern zone, Landing Team 2/22 hit the beach on schedule and in contact with the unit on its right. Thus, it too was some 300 yards south of its landing beach and accordingly had a greater area of responsibility than originally planned. Initially, resistance was light, but some men on the left flank were killed by an enemy mine field.⁹³ Lieutenant Colonel Hart's battalion began pushing across the island with Companies G, F, and E from left to right. The landing team moved roughly as a line, the left flank attempting to move along the northwestern and northern shore line, while the right flank remained in contact with Landing Team 1/22 to the south. As had been the case on Engebi, there was no organized Japanese resistance, only fanatical

⁸⁶ The artillerymen had 20 units of fire for these weapons. Ltr LtCol Alfred M. Mahoney to CMC, 25Mar53, hereinafter cited as *Mahoney*.

⁸⁷ Whether these buoys marked the old or new beach designations is not known.

⁸⁸ A possible factor in the confusion regarding the landing beaches was that the smaller, or northern pier, was destroyed by naval gunfire. Thus the only pier visible was VALENTINE Pier. *Martin*.

⁸⁹ At about the same time a spotter plane carrying the Marine artillery aerial observer flew too low and into the artillery barrage. It burst into flames and crashed.

⁹⁰ The components of each wave are unknown to the author. Inasmuch as the landing units were intermingled and based on available records, it is assumed for the purpose of this narrative that LT 1/22's line included Companies A, C, and B, from right to left.

⁹¹ *Fromhold*.

⁹² *Ibid*.

⁹³ *Reinhardt*.

defenders in isolated groups who had to be rooted from their spider traps and individual strong points.

The intensive fires placed on Landing Team 1/22 were not limited to the Marines ashore. Thirty minutes after the first wave of Marines touched the beach, Japanese mortar and machine gun fire grew so severe that both the *Pennsylvania* and the control vessel (*SC 1066*) had to shift position, the latter not regaining her original station until 1500.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, assault elements of Companies B and C had knifed their way across to the ocean (eastern) beach of Parry within an hour after the landing,⁹⁵ but not in sufficient force adequately to clear the intervening ground. The bulk of Landing Team 1/22 was continuing to fight its way across, ably assisted by tanks of the 2d Separate Tank Company which had landed in the fourth wave. A short distance off the beach, three Japanese tanks had been emplaced to resist invasion, and these vehicles had remained in position until the Marine medium tanks came ashore. For reasons best known to the enemy, his light armor thereupon emerged from the emplacements and attempted to give battle to the Marine tanks, with disastrous results to the Japanese and no damage to the Marine armor.⁹⁶

As enemy resistance increased, particularly from what were believed to be several 75mm guns on the right flank, Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold requested naval gunfire. As noted earlier, the landing team commander was under the impression he was considerably north of his actual position, and what occurred was subsequently recalled by him:

[Naval gunfire] was requested on the basis that troops had landed where planned, as the much bombarded pier and building foundations indicated. This request was denied by higher channels who, through air spot, had knowledge that the troops had been outside the planned area and would be endangered by this fire. However, a direct request from a naval liaison team spotter did get through. Five salvos were furnished as requested. . . . The Naval gunfire struck some

⁹⁴ Transport Division 30, Action Report—Amphibious Phase of Eniwetok and Parry Islands, Eniwetok Atoll, 6Mar44, 5.

⁹⁵ Ltr LtCol Charles F. Widdecke to CMC, 10Mar53.

⁹⁶ Scott.



TANKS AND INFANTRY worked together to secure Parry in one day.

of our medium tanks . . . [and] also partially landed among our own troops. . . . Less than 10 of our troops were lost by this fire, whereas the Japs suffered heavily both in men and field pieces. . . .⁹⁷

Captain Harry Calcutt, the tank commander, made his own caustic comments regarding the naval salvos:

Five-inch guns will penetrate the two-inch armor of medium tanks and generally raise hell with them. We would appreciate it if they would call their gunfire somewhere else, especially when we are forced to hold the tanks static in the gunfire in order to cover the infantry in the same area in an attempt to silence what we thought to be enemy opposition.⁹⁸

The naval gunfire apparently broke the back of enemy resistance, for after it had ended the landing team, assisted by the tanks, moved forward with relative ease and rapidity. As the Marines reached the opposite shore shortly after 1100, between 150 and 200 heavily armed Japanese were seen moving along in column. Evidently they were caught by surprise and were able to put up only token resistance before being eliminated.

In the northern portion of Parry, Lieutenant Colonel Hart's Landing Team 2 had pushed to

⁹⁷ Fromhold.

⁹⁸ 2d Separate Tank Company, Report on DOWNSIDE Operation, 26Feb44.

HEARTS CIRCLE, a cleared mound in the center of the unit's zone. Here Company H⁹⁹ placed all of its machine guns on line to provide overhead fire for the advancing troops. While this was in progress a hidden ammunition dump exploded under the machine gunners, wounding six men and eliminating a section of guns.¹⁰⁰ But this did not hamper the landing team's progress.

Landing Team 3/22, regimental reserve, was originally scheduled to land on Beach Green 3, but as it was dispatched from the line of departure at 0945, its destination was changed to Beach Green 2. Because Landing Team 2 had gone ashore south of its prescribed beach, the reserve battalion now landed north of all assault units at 1000, receiving "heavy machine-gun, rifle and mortar fire."¹⁰¹ Moreover, a portion of the unit landed in a mine field and incurred several casualties.

Company I, reinforced by a platoon from Company K, neutralized the enemy positions on the beach, and Major Shisler directed his command south to ADONIS Road, where Company I relieved Company A at 1100. The latter unit thereupon reverted to reserve for Landing Team 1/22.

The 22d Marines' command post was estab-

lished just off Green Beach 2 at 1145, Colonel Walker having gone ashore an hour earlier. At noon General Watson ordered V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company ashore to reinforce LT 2/22, and 45 minutes later directed Company D (Scout) to land and assist LT 1/22.

Landing Team 2/22 continued to press its attack northward and eastward, assisted by RCT 106's light tanks which had landed at 1100. Captain Jones' Reconnaissance Company was evenly divided between Companies E and F, providing about 55 additional men to each rifle company, and with this added strength the 2d Battalion pushed on across the island.¹⁰² The northern portion of Parry was reported secure at 1400, but mopping up continued to engage the unit's attention until reembarkation.

Shortly after 1300, Landing Teams 1/22 and 3/22 were poised on the 0-1 line, ready to advance southward. This boundary was the line secured across the island by Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold's organization. Originally, of course, it had been drawn on the maps considerably north of its present position, but now it lay just south of VALENTINE Pier.

Landing Team 1 occupied the eastern half (left sector) of the jumpoff line, Companies B and C on the left and right, respectively. Both

⁹⁹ *Lanigan.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *BLT 3/22 SAR*, 4.

¹⁰² "We needed some extra zip to complete the job." *Lanigan.*



MARINES FOUGHT THEIR WAY through shattered coconut groves which the Japanese had filled with spider traps and log emplacements.

front-line units were reinforced by one platoon each from Company A, the remainder of that organization acting as battalion reserve. Responsibility for the western half (right sector) of the island lay with Landing Team 3/22, which would move forward in column of companies, Company I leading the attack, Company L mopping up, and Company K in reserve.¹⁰³

Following a 15-minute artillery preparation, the two landing teams began their southward movement at 1330, the 2d Separate Tank Company moving in support shortly thereafter. It was the same story as before, the enemy putting up a static defense from spider traps and other subsurface positions. Landing Team 1/22 was reinforced by Company D (Scout) of the 4th Tank Battalion at 1422, the scouts joining with Company A (less two platoons) in the mission of mopping up and landing team reserve.

We were closely supported by medium tanks which, while moving very slowly, fired their machine guns at random and occasionally let go with their 75's. When the tanks had exhausted their ammunition the advance would halt, the tanks would leave to resupply, a 60mm mortar barrage would be brought down close to the front, a 75mm pack howitzer barrage would be laid down beyond the mortar barrage, half-tracks¹⁰⁴ and DUKW's would bring forward more supplies for the infantry.¹⁰⁵

The advancing Marines had covered some 350 yards when Company I encountered an enemy strong point consisting of underground barracks and extensive tunnels.¹⁰⁶ All tanks in both landing team areas were quickly dispatched to Company I's assistance, and after a short, fierce fight the enemy positions were overrun.

Artillery was active all during the afternoon, combining with naval gunfire in shelling the southern portion of the island and softening

¹⁰³ *Shister.*

¹⁰⁴ "The battalion commanders' lack of mobile logistic support prompted them to use the attached half-track platoons to haul supplies and wounded. Also, as I recall, the tank company commander made repeated recommendations against the use of half-tracks in any zone which he was to work." Ltr LtCol Cecil D. Ferguson to CMC, 9Mar53.

¹⁰⁵ *Scott.*

¹⁰⁶ *Moore; McCabe.*



A 7,000-FOOT BOMBER STRIP was created on Eniwetok Island. (Air Force photo.)

the way for the advancing troops.¹⁰⁷ Additional support was provided by RCT 106's light tanks which moved southward after they were no longer needed by Landing Team 2 in the north.

After Company I's successful reduction of the Japanese strong point, the attack progressed with increasing velocity. Principal resistance came from Japanese in the heavy brush on Landing Team 1's left flank. By nightfall the two landing teams were some 450 yards from the southernmost tip of Parry (SLUMBER Point). Here the intervening ground narrowed to such an extent that there was danger of troops firing into each other if the advance were pushed, so the landing teams were directed to dig in for the night.

With a small area remaining to be covered, Colonel Walker considered Parry in his hands. Its possession meant the successful completion of the Eniwetok operation, and a general feeling of pleasure and satisfaction was reflected in the various radio messages that followed.

Colonel Walker started the ball rolling. He radioed General Watson: "I present you with Parry at 1930. Request this unit be relieved

¹⁰⁷ "... [Army] artillery was firing directly at the troops who were advancing southward on Parry. This firing was handled most capably by a young Army captain who was liaison officer with the 22d Marines. . . ." Ltr BrigGen M. F. Schneider to CMC, 9Mar53.



ENGEBI'S AIRSTRIP was improved by the Seabees and taken over by the 4th Marine Air Wing.

for reembarkation in the morning." To which General Watson replied, "Well done, Johnny. My sincere congratulations to the 22d Marines and their supporting units. You have done a magnificent job."

The last congratulatory message of the night was sent to all units from General Watson at 2000: "With the capture of Parry at 1930 today, Eniwetok Atoll is now in our possession. My sincere congratulations to the officers and men of this group whose aggressive spirit and combat efficiency made the capture of this atoll possible. Well done."

CATCHPOLE CONCLUDED

The night of 22-23 February on Parry Island could hardly be described as "quiet" in the accepted sense of the word. Under the circumstances, however, it was a quiet night. There were no organized attacks against the Americans, but Japanese as individuals and in small groups emerged from camouflaged holes bypassed during the day and used rifles and grenades against the invaders. This was futile business at best. Naval vessels in the lagoon fired 5-inch star shells over the island all night, marking the first time in the Pacific

that continuous illumination was provided.¹⁰⁸

Enemy activity . . . during the night was light, and our casualties were few. The relatively peaceful night can be attributed to several things. Great care had been taken during the day to thoroughly mop up and remove ordnance and munitions from the areas covered by the assault units. Thus, any surviving enemy troops did not have loose weapons readily available to them. The star shells fired by the naval guns were invaluable. . . . The battalion night S. O. P. proved sound, and the troops followed it well—demonstrating the fact that they were seasoned troops.¹⁰⁹

On the morning of D-plus 6 (23 February) elements of Landing Teams 1 and 3, Company D (Scout), and tanks of the 2d Separate Tank Company jumped off from the defense line of the night before. Enemy opposition was light between the jumpoff and SLUMBER Point, the Marines declaring the area secure shortly after 0900. But mopping-up operations continued.

¹⁰⁸ "Based on our experience at Tarawa and the known tactics of the Japs in regard to night infiltration and counterattack, we decided . . . that we would utilize 5-inch star shells from our Force to keep the island . . . under continuous illumination. . . . This was the first time that such a procedure had been developed, and as I watched the demand for them grow during succeeding operations . . . I always looked back on this with a great deal of satisfaction. . . ." *Hill II*.

¹⁰⁹ *BLT 1 Rpt.*

At 1045 the American flag was raised over Parry, indicating that the atoll, as well as the island, was in American hands.

The next few days were filled with the arrival, departure, and shifting of troops, debarkation and reembarkation, unloading and loading. The 10th Defense Battalion (Marine) had been released from its reserve status 22 February, and the next day began unloading at Eniwetok, assuming responsibility for that island on 25 February.

BLT 106-3, which had remained in floating reserve for Parry, was landed on the island 23 February and began policing and mopping up. Colonel Walker reembarked his Landing Team 2 and the 2d Separate Tank Company that day, followed by the remainder of the exhausted RCT 22 on 24 February. The next day the 22d Marines, reinforced, departed Eniwetok for Kwajalein, where it relieved the 25th Marines.¹¹⁰ Various attached units were ordered to Hawaii at the same time. Of the assault force that had arrived at Eniwetok on 17 February, only RCT 106 (less BLT 106-2) remained. On 2 March it left the operational control of Tactical Group-1 and became a part of the Eniwetok Atoll garrison force.

General Watson departed Eniwetok by air on 3 March, arriving at Pearl Harbor the following day. And on 22 March Tactical Group-1 was disbanded.¹¹¹

The combat elements assigned to Tactical Group-1 had been floating reserve for the Kwajalein operation, and on extremely short notice had gone in to take Eniwetok Atoll. They had entered Eniwetok's lagoon as men untried in combat,¹¹² but they performed like veterans in seizing their objectives. As added evidence for

this view, the 22d Marines and virtually all the attached units were awarded the Navy Unit Commendation.

Marine and Army troops went into Eniwetok outnumbering the defenders roughly three-to-one. At the end of five days of intensive combat some 3,400 Japanese were buried and the Americans held the atoll. Statistically, the Marines lost 254 dead and 555 wounded. RCT 106 (less BLT 106-2) casualties numbered 94 dead and 311 wounded.¹¹³ The figures by themselves are not representative. RCT 22 took both Engebi and Parry. RCT 106 (less BLT 106-2) assaulted only Eniwetok, and then it was reinforced by a tank company and a landing team from RCT 22. Thus, any comparison between Marine and Army casualty figures for the over-all operation must take into account the amount of combat experienced by the respective units as well as the number of troops involved.

After training in the Samoan area for some 18 months, the 22d Marines, reinforced, had at last experienced combat and was now a blooded regiment, as it capably demonstrated later at Guam and Okinawa.

In deciding to proceed ahead of schedule with the Eniwetok operation, Navy and Marine commanders had greatly advanced the war effort. Now the 2d Marine Division and the remainder of the 27th Infantry Division were free for other operations and would not be held down by the Marshalls. Eniwetok was secure in February instead of May. Admiral Nimitz was able to move up the target date for the Marianas by at least 20 weeks.¹¹⁴ And Truk was revealed as being incapable of operations against U. S. forces.

¹¹⁰ As noted in Chapter VII. Activities of RCT 22 after effecting this relief will be treated in Chapter IX.

¹¹¹ V Amphibious Corps General Order 51-44, 22Mar44.

¹¹² With the exception of the 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Company, VAC Reconnaissance Company, and Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion.

¹¹³ Marine casualty figures from Personnel Accounting Section, Records Branch, Personnel Department, HQMC, 1Aug52. RCT 106 casualty figures from *RCT 106 Rpt*, 15Apr44.

¹¹⁴ *Isely and Crowl*, 303.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

CHAPTER IX

Mopping Up the Marshalls¹

FLINTLOCK, JR. BEGINS

The 22d Marines arrived at Kwajalein Atoll on 26 February 1944 and began the relief of Colonel Cumming's 25th Marines, that 4th Marine Division unit having remained as a temporary garrison force. By 5 March Colonel Walker's command was disposed as follows: 1st Battalion, Bigej Island; 2d Battalion, Roi-Namur; 3d Battalion on Edgigen, and the remainder of the regiment on Ennubirr and Obella Islands, with the regimental command post on Ennubirr. The 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion relieved 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, on Edgigen,² but Company A, 10th Amphibian

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, this chapter is a synthesis of the following sources: 22d Marines Report of Operations into Lesser Marshalls, 6Apr44; Maj Paul H. Bird, "Atoll Hopping—The Lesser Marshalls," an undated report dealing with the 22d Marines in the Lesser Marshalls hereinafter cited as *Atoll Hopping*; Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Wotho, Ujae and Lae Atolls, 28Mar44; Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Ailinglapalap and Namu, 2Apr44; Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Ebon and Namorik Atolls and Kili Island, undated; Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Ailuk Atoll, Mejit Island, Jemo Island and Likiep Atoll, 12Apr44; Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Bikini, Ailinginae, Rongelap, Rongerik, Utirik, Bikar and Taka Atolls, 14Apr44; *Campaign*; *Sherrod*.

² "This consisted of a relief in place to continue the defense. . . . During this relief the pack howitzers of [1/14] were left in place and exchanged for those of

Tractor Battalion, was directed to remain at Kwajalein and work with the 22d Marines.

But if the tired victors of Eniwetok thought that they would merely occupy Kwajalein Atoll, this illusion was quickly dispelled. On 1 March Rear Admiral Alva D. Bernhard, Atoll Commander, received orders to neutralize and control the Lesser Marshalls, consisting of those atolls and islands thought to be undefended or lightly held. Specifically, the admiral was directed to:

1. Destroy Japanese installations or materials which might be of benefit to their submarines, aircraft or surface forces.
2. Make prisoner Japanese or suspicious natives.
3. Instruct the natives in the war situation and their changed sovereignty.
4. Assist them in any way practicable economically, and establish relations of friendliness and good will.

Admiral Bernhard and Colonel Walker set up a joint staff to direct the Lesser Marshalls campaign, which was dubbed **FLINTLOCK, JR.** Five areas of operations were established:

1. West Group (Wotho, Ujae, and Lae Atolls).
2. South Group (Namu, Ailinglapalap,

the 2d SepPkHowBn. Such procedure is often recommended but seldom accomplished." *Mahoney*.

Namorik, Ebon Atolls, and Kili Island.)

3. North Group (Bikini, Rongelap, Ailinginae, and Rongerik Atolls).

4. Northeast Group (Bikar, Utirik, Taka, Ailuk, Likiep Atolls, Jemo and Mejit Islands).

5. Separate (Lib Island).

Each atoll and island was reconnoitered by low-level PBV flights prior to moving troops to the objective, and aerial photographs were delivered to the various naval and troop commanders. The naval force for each operation usually consisted of one LST transporting six to nine LVT's, two LCI's, one destroyer or destroyer escort, and one mine sweeper. Three

SBD's from VMSB-151³ were called on to furnish air support.

Inasmuch as native reaction was considered important in the scheduled operations, a flag-raising ceremony was evolved to be carried out whenever this formality took place. One civil affairs report best describes it:

After the proclamation explanation and posting formality, the American flag was raised . . . one platoon at present arms, staff officers at hand salute, natives in a group in the center. A Marine photographer made a picture record of each raising. The ceremony appealed to the natives, and was an aid in inculcating

³The squadron at this time was divided into two echelons, one based at Roi, the other at Engebi. The air support mentioned was to be provided from Roi.



THE AMERICAN FLAG was raised on a great many islands of the Lesser Marshalls in the six weeks following the Eniwetok operation.

the idea that they now were under American protection and no longer subject to Japanese rule.⁴

It was further planned that each force of Marines would be augmented by civil affairs officers, medical personnel to examine the natives, interpreters and native scouts from Kwajalein.

On 7 March the first reconnaissance group departed Kwajalein Atoll with the West Group as its objective. The Marines included two reinforced companies from 1st Battalion, under Major Crawford B. Lawton, battalion executive officer.⁵ The next morning this force lay off Wotho Atoll where it was learned that the only Japanese at hand numbered 12, the stranded crew of a crashed bomber. On the morning of 9 March 180 Marines landed on Wotho Island without opposition. During the night the 12 Nipponese had fled to a nearby island where they committed suicide when later they were pursued by 1st Platoon, Company C. On Wotho the proclamations were read, the flag raised and the expeditionary group departed, but not before one Marine had been killed by the accidental explosion of a hand grenade.

At Ujae Atoll the following day, Major Lawton learned that only six Japanese were there, the crew of a weather station. Once again 180 Marines landed, and once again the enemy reacted by committing suicide—with one exception. One of the six, not so fervent as his comrades, made a halfhearted attempt at suicide and then permitted himself to be taken prisoner.

Lae Atoll was secured next. No Japanese were found, but the naval officer in charge of the task force noted that "the natives were not as friendly as at the other atolls." This unfriendly attitude was apparently due to an unfortunate event which occurred a few days prior to the Marines' arrival. A hand grenade box containing one grenade floated ashore. The bomb had exploded, killing a child. When the armed troops landed on Lae the natives connected them with the hand grenade and decided that the Marines were in some measure respon-

sible for the child's death.⁶ The reconnaissance force returned to Kwajalein, arriving there the evening of 14 March, mission successfully completed.

During the absence of the 1st Battalion group there had been a change in regimental command. On 10 March Colonel Walker was detached to V Amphibious Corps and was succeeded in command by Colonel Merlin F. Schneider, regimental executive officer.

One other reconnaissance took place during the 22d Marines' first two weeks at Kwajalein Atoll. On 11 March a reinforced platoon from the 1st Battalion landed on Lib Island, listed as a separate operation on the schedule. No trace of Japanese was found, natives were assembled and questioned, proclamations read, and at 1130 that day the American flag was raised. The platoon returned to its home base the same day.⁷

SECURE IN THE SOUTH

On 19 March, after a false start the preceding day,⁸ two landing forces, each containing about 325 Marines, departed Kwajalein Atoll to clear the South Group. Both forces were taken from the 3d Battalion with Major Shisler and his executive officer, Major William E. Sperling III, the respective commanders. It was planned that the two forces would part company after securing Ailinglapalap Atoll, which objective was reached the morning of 20 March. Native scouts reported some 40 armed Japanese on Ailinglapalap Island, and that afternoon Major Sperling's force landed, followed the next morning by Major Shisler's group.

Company I, reinforced by both a heavy machine-gun platoon and an 81mm mortar platoon, made contact with the enemy the morning of 21 March. The Japanese defense line was entrenched across a narrow portion of the island, and the 81mm mortars began pounding it, the Marines overrunning it in the early afternoon.

⁴ LtCol Crawford B. Lawton, comments on preliminary script.

⁵ Report of Reconnaissance Unit, Landing on Lib Island, 11Mar44, 1-2.

⁶ The force originally included an LCT loaded with medium tanks. Upon departing the lagoon on 18Mar44, however, the craft began shipping water and all vessels returned to the lagoon. There it was decided to dispense with the LCT and the tanks.

⁷ Report of Reconnaissance of Wotho, Ujae and Lae Atolls, Chief of Civil Affairs Section, 15Mar44, 1-2.

⁸ Atoll Commander, Report of Occupation of Wotho, Ujae and Lae Atolls, 28Mar44.



SEVENTH AIR FORCE B-24 banks toward Wotje during the bombing of the by-passed atolls. (Air Force photo.)

Two Marines were wounded and 39 Nipponese killed,⁹ two surviving enemy escaping to other islands in the atoll where they were eventually picked up.

Having overcome this resistance, Major Shisler's force reembarked the afternoon of 21 March and steamed toward Ebon Atoll, the southernmost of the Marshalls. Major Sperling's unit remained to bury the enemy dead, scout the other islands in the atoll¹⁰ and proceed with proclamations and flag-raising formalities.

Ailinglapalap Atoll is the residence of the clan which controls the Ralik (western) chain of islands in the Marshalls, and the civil affairs officers took pains to make clear the new order of things. Chief Jemata, the head of the clan, assured the Marines that his people would adhere to the proclamation notices, and that he looked upon all Americans as friends—as no doubt he had previously looked upon all Japanese.

⁹ Included in the enemy armament were several 1903 Springfield rifles, a Browning light machine gun, and two cases of United States hand grenades. *McCabe*.

¹⁰ Seven Japanese civilians were found and taken back to Kwajalein.

Major Sperling's group next proceeded to Namu Atoll where native scouts were dispatched to reconnoiter the islands. The scouts duly reported that the Japanese on the atoll consisted of one policeman and one school-teacher together with his wife and three children. The next day (24 March) the Marine commander sent a surrender note to the Nipponese who quickly gathered on the beach waving white flags. Major Sperling noted that the number of Japanese present was correct "with addition of one child." The seven interned civilians were taken on board ship, and the troops departed, arriving at Kwajalein the next afternoon.

Meanwhile, Major Shisler's command arrived at Ebon Atoll on the morning of 23 March. Native scouts landed, followed shortly by Marines. Only friendly natives were found during the day, but the next morning contact was made with the enemy on Ebon Island. A 20-minute fire fight ensued in which two Marines were killed and 17 armed Japanese wiped out.¹¹

¹¹ The Japanese force consisted of one woman, 11 male civilians, and five soldiers.



GRAPHIC EVIDENCE of the aerial pounding given the by-passed Japanese strongholds in the Marshalls. Six months intervened between these photographs of Emidj Island, Jaluit Atoll. (Air Force photo.)

Six civilians were picked up at Ebon for internment, and the troops thereupon proceeded to Namorik Atoll and Kili Island. No Japanese were found at either objective. Consequently, the usual formalities were expeditiously accomplished, and the Marines returned to Kwajalein Atoll, arriving there 28 March.

MEJIT, AILUK AND LIKIEP

Two days after Major Shisler's return to Kwajalein, a reinforced company from his 3d Battalion, under Major Earl J. Cook, moved toward the Northeast Group. The entire group was not assigned this force, however. Its objectives were Ailuk, Likiep and Taka Atolls, Jemo and Mejit Islands. Aerial reconnaissance indicated that Jemo and Taka were uninhabited, and inasmuch as native scouts confirmed this, it was decided to by-pass them.

Ailuk was reconnoitered by the Marines on 31 March and 1 April and the usual formalities followed. No Japanese were found, but an

important question was settled as far as the natives were concerned.

On Ailuk the question was raised [by Typhoon, the native chief] as to whether the people could now pray again, and considerable pleasure was expressed when they were assured that they could.¹²

The reconnaissance force stood off Mejit Island on the morning of 2 April, and six LVT's carried the troops ashore. Six Japanese assigned to a naval weather station there were killed resisting the landing.

During reembarkation, however, trouble developed. The LST ramp chains parted, leaving three LVT's still in the water with no way to be loaded on board. Rather than risk the vehicles falling into enemy hands, the naval commander ordered them stripped of equipment and then sunk by gunfire.

On Likiep Atoll, which was reconnoitered on 3 April, no Japanese were located, but the

¹² Reconnaissance of Ailuk and Likiep Atolls and Mejit Island, Report of Civil Affairs Section, 7Apr44.

Marines met a plantation owner, Carl F. Hahn, who said he had been an American citizen since 1900. Hahn, a native German, told the Marines he was shipwrecked in the Marshalls in 1891, had married a native woman and had lived there ever since.¹³

With its mission completed, Major Cook's reconnaissance force returned to Roi-Namur, arriving there at 0800 on 5 April.

FINALE IN THE NORTH

While elements of the 3d Battalion were reconnoitering to the south and north, a reinforced company of the 2d Battalion was equally active. On 27 March this unit, under Major Robert P. Felker, 2d Battalion executive officer, stood out to sea with the mission of raising the flag in the North Group and a portion of the Northeast Group. Aerial reconnaissance and native reports indicated that Ailinginae, Rongerik, and Bikar Atolls were uninhabited.

¹³ How Hahn could have established American citizenship in 1900 is not disclosed.

These were ignored, therefore, Major Felker concerning himself with only Bikini, Rongelap, and Utirik Atolls.¹⁴

From the morning of 28 March until the evening of 30 March the Marines scouted Bikini Atoll. Only five Japanese were found, but they committed suicide instead of resisting or surrendering. The proclamations were read, the flag was raised, and the miniature task force steamed toward Rongelap Atoll. Here the reconnaissance elements paused until 3 April, fruitlessly searching for a reported group of six Japanese soldiers.

Utirik Atoll was reached the morning of 5 April, but the naval commander decided the pass was dangerous and the lagoon "exceptionally full" of coral heads. He thereupon ruled that his vessels could not enter the lagoon. This made it necessary for the Marines to make a seven-mile run in amphibian tractors in order

¹⁴ Likiep Atoll was originally included in this list, but Adm Bernhard canceled it for Felker's group and turned it over to Maj Cook's force.



MARINE SBD'S such as this one over Majuro helped keep the Japanese "anchored aircraft carriers" ineffective until the war ended.



TWO COMMANDERS of the 4th Marine Air Wing during the tour of duty in the Marshalls were Generals Cushman (left) and Woods.

to land on Utirik Island. Fourteen armed Japanese resisted the invasion, but they were quickly overrun. A motor generator set was blown up, the flag raised, and the troops departed, reaching Kwajalein the next afternoon.

Major Felker's group arrived not a moment too soon, for the 22d Marines were loading transports. "The force [Felker's] . . . tied up alongside APA's and transferred troops just in time to sail with the regiment . . . to another staging area for preparations for further operations against the enemy."¹⁵

Between 7 March and 6 April 1944, elements of the 22d Marines, reinforced, had established American sovereignty over 12 atolls and three islands of the Lesser Marshalls, a water area of some 60,000 square miles. Thus the American forces fixed grip on what had been Japanese territory only three months earlier. And definitely on the profit side was the experience gained by junior officers in exercising command during actual landing operations.

¹⁵ *Atoll Hopping*, 10.

As noted in Chapter VIII, Tactical Group-1 was disbanded on 22 March. On that same date the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was organized and the 22d Marines assigned to it. A week later Colonel Schneider was alerted for a move to Guadalcanal, and on 6 April the 22d Marines, together with attached units,¹⁶ departed for the new base.

LAST STAGE

During the month of April, Marine and Army forces reconnoitered three other atolls, the last to be secured in the Marshalls before the end of the war.

On 17 April a force of 199 Marines from the 1st Defense Battalion, VAC, embarked from Majuro on two LCI(L)'s with the mission of reconnoitering Erikub and Aur Atolls. Erikub lies a mere five miles from Wotje, and Aur only ten miles from Maloelap. Despite the proximity of the small atolls to the two formidable Japanese bases, no enemy was found on either. The Marines thereupon returned to Majuro only four days after departing it.¹⁷

The seizure of Ujelang Atoll, westernmost of the Marshalls, was virtually a repetition of the 22d Marines' landings in the smaller eastern atolls. A reinforced company from 3d Battalion, 111th Infantry, proceeded from Kwajalein 20 April and stood off the tiny atoll the next afternoon. For two days the infantrymen reconnoitered the various islands at Ujelang, killing 18 Japanese in the process. The American flag was raised and the soldiers reembarked, arriving at their home base on 24 April.¹⁸

¹⁶ Included here is the amphibian tractor company. During the period just covered, the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was at Maui and another LVT company there was designated Company A, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. The LVT company then working with the 22d Marines was thereupon redesignated as a unit within the 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, then forming, and it sailed to Guadalcanal with the 22d Marines.

¹⁷ War Diary for April 1944, 1st Defense Bn, VAC. Troops from this organization also conducted reconnaissance of Arno Atoll which had been reconnoitered shortly after the occupation of Majuro. No enemy was found on Arno.

¹⁸ Company I, 111th Infantry, Report of Operations, Occupation of Ujelang Atoll, 27Apr44.

Remaining in enemy hands were Kusaie Island in the western Marshalls, and Wotje, Maloelap, Mille, and Jaluit Atolls in the east, and the Japanese garrisons of these were left to winter on the vine.¹⁹ (See Map 15, Map Section.) To apply the heat necessary to keep them withered, the 4th Marine Base Defense Air Wing²⁰ (4th MBDaw) staged into the Marshalls. In mid-February 17 planes of MAG-31 arrived at Dyess Field²¹ on Roi,

¹⁹ The remainder of this narrative is taken principally from *Campaign; Sherrod*.

²⁰ The "Base Defense" portion of the Wing's designation was dropped 10Nov44.

²¹ Named in honor of LtCol Aquilla J. Dyess, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on Namur, as previously noted in Chapter V.

joining the ground echelon which had arrived a few days earlier. At the newly acquired fleet base of Majuro the Seabees completed an airstrip on 19 February, and the planes of MAG-13 flew in during the next seven days. Aviation elements also followed on the heels of Marine landing forces at Eniwetok Atoll. On 19 February a ground echelon of MAG-22 arrived at Engebi, planes setting down there 10 days later.

The 4th Marine Base Defense Air Wing's campaign against Mille, Maloelap, Jaluit, and Wotje, a campaign that was to continue until Japan's surrender, began on 4 March 1944 when VMSB-331 of MAG-13 conducted a bombing mission against Jaluit. Five days later Brigadier General Lewie G. Merritt, commander of



JAPANESE SURRENDER OF MILLE ATOLL, 22 August 1945. Captain Masanori Shiga, IJN (left) and Captain H. B. Grow, USN (right). (Navy photo.)

the 4th MBDAW,²² established his headquarters at Kwajalein.

Navy carrier planes had flown 1,671 sorties against Wotje, Jaluit, Mille, and Maloelap before the Marine pilots got in on the act. Since the preceding November, Navy and Army planes, principally the bombers of the Seventh Air Force, had struck at the four atolls. The Army planes continued attacking the by-passed targets until the Seventh Air Force moved to Saipan in June 1944, and Navy land-based planes struck at the atolls throughout the remainder of the year.

But the bulk of the dull job of pounding the enemy bases in the Marshalls until the end of the war fell to the Marine pilots.²³ For awhile the Japanese attempted to repair airstrips,

²² Succeeding commanders of the 4th MBDAW while in the Marshalls were BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman, MajGen Louis E. Woods, and BrigGen Lawson H. M. Sanderson.

²³ One pilot subsequently recalled that as he was returning from a mission he spotted two LCI(L)'s which had reconnoitered Aur Atoll and were on the way back to Majuro. Somehow the two vessels made an incorrect turn and were inadvertently heading for

just as they continued constructing realistic dummy gun positions. But a shortage of food and supplies, plus the progressive deterioration of morale, eventually put a stop to their efforts. As long as their antiaircraft guns were operational, the Nipponese continued to handle them against attacking planes, sometimes with telling effect.

But strength and time were on the side of the American forces. The Japanese on the by-passed atolls could only sit out the war, concentrating on a struggle for survival. Wotje, Maloelap, Mille, and Jaluit had been considered by the enemy as "unsinkable aircraft carriers," key links in the chain of defenses protecting Japan's eastern perimeter. Strong reinforcements had been rushed to them in order to contain or delay the inexorable American advance across the Pacific. But with war's end, the tattered, starving garrisons could only surrender.

Mille. The pilot flew low over the craft, sending them a message in Morse by means of a flashing light. He thus notified them of their error and in all probability saved the lives of the men on board. Capt Ernesto H. Giusti, comments on preliminary script.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

APPENDIX I

Bibliography

This bibliography cites only those sources which were particularly important and helpful in compiling the monograph. Literally hundreds of records were consulted. Some duplicated others, and some merely confirmed information already available. Preliminary drafts of the monograph were sent to participants in the operations in order to solicit their comments, corrections, and elaborations. A great many individuals contributed invaluable material, which has been cited in the course of the narrative. Lack of space prevents a separate listing of them here. Letters and interviews are on file in the offices of Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, and are available to bona fide students within the limitations of security and restrictions imposed by originators.

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- 1st Battalion, 22d Marines. Report on FLINTLOCK II Operation, undated. A report on Landing Team 1's activities at Eniwetok Atoll and signed by W. H. Fromhold. Includes a history of operations, operation overlay, unit journal and message abstract and comments and recommendations.
- 2d Battalion, 22d Marines. Record of Events. A day-by-day report from 19Jul42 through 6Feb45.
- 106th Infantry Regiment. Unit Operation Report (DOWNSIDE), 15Apr44. A detailed report of the organization's participation in the Eniwetok operation. Includes operation plans and orders, maps, unit journal, casualty report and a report by BLT 106-3. Carries endorsements by VAC and the 27th Infantry Division.
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- ations and recommendations for future operations. Signed by Maj J. L. Rogers.
- 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion. Special Action Report, Kwajalein operation, 12Mar44. A day-by-day account of the organization's participation in the FLINTLOCK Operation, 31Jan44-6Feb44.
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THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

APPENDIX II

Chronology

1943			
11 May	TRIDENT Conference in Washington; CCS decides to seize the Marshalls and to move against Japanese outer defenses.	1 September	JCS dispatches directive to Adm Nimitz, allocating troops and naval forces for the Marshalls.
Mid-June	JCS directs Adm Nimitz to submit plan for occupation of the Marshalls.	16 September	7th Inf Div arrives at Oahu, T. H. to begin preparations for the Marshalls.
1 July	Adm Nimitz submits concept for operations.	20 September	4th MarDiv assigned to VAC.
20 July	JCS directs Adm Nimitz to organize and train forces for operations in the Marshalls on 1 January 1944.	12 October	Adm Nimitz issues OP Plan 16-43, first formal operation plan for the Marshalls.
15 August	4th Marine Division organized.	15 November	MajGen Smith issues OP Plan 2-43, first over-all troop directive for the Marshalls.
20 August	Adm Nimitz submits outline plan for occupation of Kwajalein, Wotje and Maloelap.	16 November	TG-1 organized under VAC GenOrd No. 55-43.
17-24 August	At the QUADRANT Conference at Quebec, routes of advance on Japan laid out and operations in the Marshalls agreed to.	20 November	2d MarDiv assaults Tarawa.
24 August	Fifth Amph Force set up, RAdm Turner commanding.	4 December	First aerial photo coverage of Kwajalein Atoll effected.
		5 December	VAdm Yamada assumes command of Japanese aviation in the Marshalls.
		14 December	Adm Nimitz revises OP Plan 16-43; target date postponed.
		20 December	Adm Nimitz issues final JCS Study, FLINTLOCK II in which all changes have been ratified.

1944

3 January	RAdm Turner issues OP Plan A6-43, listing components and setting forth mission of Joint Expeditionary Force.	19 February	Landing by 106th RCT and 3d Bn, 22d Marines, on Eniwetok Island.
4 January	1st Amphibious Brigade (Japanese) arrives at Eniwetok Atoll.	21 February	Eniwetok Island secured.
5 January	VAC OP Plan 1-44 released, superseding OP Plan 3-43.	22 February	22d Marines land on Parry and secure it.
13 January	Main body of TF 53 departs San Diego.	26 February	22d Marines relieve 25th Marines on Kwajalein.
22 January	Joint Expeditionary Force sails from Hawaii.	1 March	RAdm Bernhard receives orders to neutralize and control the Lesser Marshalls.
31 January	D-Day in the Marshalls: Landings effected* on small islands in both northern and southern Kwajalein Atoll. VAC Recon Co lands on Majuro Atoll.	4 March	4th MBDAW begins bombing campaign against Wotje, Jaluit, Mille and Maloelap.
1 February	Combat Teams 23 and 24 land on Roi-Namur. RCT's 32 and 184 land on Kwajalein Island.	10 March	Wotho Island taken.
4 February	RAdm Harry W. Hill given command of Task Group 51.11, with the mission of seizing Eniwetok Atoll. Kwajalein Island overrun. 109th NavConsBn begins repair on Roi airfield.	11 March	Ujae Atoll occupied. American flag raised on Lib Island.
7 February	Ground elements of 4th MBDAW arrive at Roi.	21 March	Ailinglapalap Atoll taken.
8 February	Kwajalein Atoll secured.	22 March	TG-1 disbanded; 1st Prov-MarBrig organized.
12 February	Japanese retaliate with air attack on Roi.	24 March	Ebon Atoll secured.
17 February	Landings effected on small islands of Eniwetok Atoll.	30 March	Flag raised on Bikini Atoll.
17-18 February	TF 58 attacks Truk.	1 April	Ailuk Atoll taken.
18 February	22d Marines land on Engebi and secure it.	2 April	Marines land on Mejit Island.
		3 April	Likiep and Rongelap Atolls secured.
		5 April	Utirik Atoll secured.
		6 April	22d Marines depart for Guadalcanal.
		17 April	Marines from 1st Defense Bn, VAC, land on Erikub and Aur Atolls.
		22 April	Soldiers of 111th Inf raise flag on Ujelang Atoll.
			1945
		22 August	Mille Atoll surrendered to American naval forces; the first of the by-passed atolls to surrender.
		2 September	Japan formally surrenders.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

APPENDIX III

Casualties

MARINE ORGANIZATIONS ¹	Killed or Died of Wounds ²		Wounded		Total	
	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted
<i>4th Marine Division:</i>						
Hq Co, Hq Bn.....			2	2	2	2
4th Sig Co.....				2		2
MP Co.....			1		1	
4th Spec Wpns Bn.....			1	8	1	8
4th Tank Bn.....	1	6	1	7	2	13
4th Serv Bn.....				2		2
4th MT Bn.....			2	2	2	2
4th Amph Trac Bn.....				1		1
10th Amph Trac Bn.....		9		8		17
11th Amph Trac Bn.....		6				6
1st Armd Amph Bn.....		9		8		17
<i>14th Marines:</i>						
1st Bn.....				2		2
2d Bn.....		1		6		7
3d Bn.....		5	1	2	1	7
<i>20th Marines:</i>						
H&S Co.....		7	3	17	3	24
1st Bn.....	1	22	2	21	3	43
2d Bn.....	2	3	1	10	3	13
<i>23d Marines:</i>						
H&S and Wpns Cos.....			1	3	1	3
1st Bn.....		2	2	13	2	15
2d Bn.....		13	1	36	1	49
3d Bn.....		3	2	10	2	13

¹ Marine casualty figures furnished by Personnel Accounting Section, Records Branch, Personnel Department, HQMC. These figures were certified and released on 26 August 1952, and includes those casualties incurred in the Marshalls within the period 31 January through 6 April 1944.

² Includes MIA and Missing, Presumed Dead figures.

MARINE ORGANIZATIONS	Killed or Died of Wounds		Wounded		Total	
	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted
<i>24th Marines:</i>						
H&S and Wpns Cos.....	1	6	2	9	3	15
1st Bn.....	3	44	3	64	6	108
2d Bn.....	3	91	5	123	8	214
3d Bn.....	6	72	5	94	11	166
<i>25th Marines:</i>						
H&S and Wpns Cos.....			1	3	1	3
1st Bn.....		9	1	7	1	16
2d Bn.....		13		8		21
3d Bn.....		1		14		15
<i>1st JASCO.....</i>	2	4		4	2	8
<i>Reconn Co, VAC.....</i>		7	1	11	1	18
<i>10th Defense Bn.....</i>				1		1
<i>15th Defense Bn.....</i>		5	1	39	1	44
<i>22d Marines:</i>						
H&S and Wpns Cos.....		8		19		27
1st Bn.....	1	97	12	193	13	290
2d Bn.....	1	60	1	128	2	188
3d Bn.....	2	72	9	145	11	217
2d Sep Pk How Bn.....		2	2	8	2	10
2d Sep Tank Co.....		6	1	13	1	19
2d Sep Engr Co.....		5	1	23	1	28
<i>4th Marine Base Defense Air Wing:</i>						
<i>MAG-13:</i>						
VMSB-231.....	1	2	1	1	2	3
VMSB-331.....			2	2	2	2
<i>MAG-22:</i>						
Hq Sq-22.....		1		2		3
AWS-1.....		1		2		3
SMS-22.....				4		4
VMF-113.....				3		3
VMF-422.....		1		4		5
<i>MAG-31:</i>						
Hq Sq-31.....		9		16		25
SMS-31.....		6		23		29
VMF-111.....	1		4	9	5	9
VMF-224.....		2	3	17	3	19
VMF-311.....			2		2	
VMF-441.....	1		4	2	5	2
Total ³.....	26	610	81	1, 151	107	1, 761

³ The following organizations suffered no casualties during the operation: 1st Defense Bn, 2d Sep Transport Co, 2d Sep Med Co and 3d Bn, 20th Marines.

NAVY MEDICAL ⁴	Killed or Died of Wounds		Wounded		Total	
	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted
4th Marine Division		1	2	15	2	16
22d Marines		6		13		19
MAG-31		2				2
Photo Sq No. 3		1				1
Total		10	2	28	2	38
ARMY ORGANIZATIONS ⁵						
<i>7th Infantry Division:</i>						
17th Inf		16	2	77	2	93
32d Inf	2	55	19	303	21	358
184th Inf	1	64	17	252	18	316
13th Engr Bn		10		31		41
57th FA Bn		2	1	9	1	11
48th FA Bn	1				1	
49th FA Bn				5		5
145th FA Bn		9		22		31
7th Div Arty	1				1	
7th Med Bn		1	1	1	1	2
7th Recon Trp		2	2	18	2	20
7th Div Hqs	1				1	
91st Chem Co		1		13		14
75th Sig Co				4		4
47th Engr Co		3		1		4
767th Tank Bn		1	2	5	2	6
111th Inf		2	1	5	1	7
867th AAA				1		1
4th Army Def Bn		1		1		2
Total	6	167	45	748	51	915
708th Amph Tank Bn ⁶		1	3	33	3	34

⁴ Navy Hospital Corpsmen, Medical and Dental Officer casualty figures furnished by U. S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Statistics Division, World War II Casualties, 1Aug52.

⁵ These figures taken from 7th Infantry Division FLINTLOCK Operation, ACofS, G-1 Report of Operation.

⁶ This unit participated in both the Kwajalein and Eniwetok operations. Casualty figures are taken from the 708th Amph Tank Bn History, 27Oct43-31Dec44, which lumps together all casualty figures for the Marshalls.

ARMY ORGANIZATIONS ⁷	Killed or Died of Wounds	Wounded	Total
<i>RCT 106 (Reinf) (less BLT 106-2):</i>			
106th Inf.....	82	281	363
104th FA Bn.....	2	8	10
104th Engr Bn.....	6	10	16
Co B, 102d Engr Bn.....	1	4	5
Co C, 102d Med Bn.....	2		2
Det, 295th Sig Co.....		1	1
Co C, 766th Tk Bn.....	1	5	6
Det, 727th Ord Co.....	1		1
Hq Btry, 27th Div Arty.....		1	1
Hq, 27th Inf Div.....		1	1
Yank Magazine.....	1		1
Total.....	96	311	407

⁷ These figures taken from 106th RCT Operation Report, Eniwetok. No breakdown into officers and enlisted was shown.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

APPENDIX IV

Task Organization

NORTHERN LANDING FORCE—MajGen Harry Schmidt

PHASE I

IVAN Landing Group—BrigGen James L. Underhill
Det Hq Co, Hq Bn, 4thMarDiv
Det Sig Co, Hq Bn, 4thMarDiv
25th Marines (plus Band Sec)
14th Marines
1st Composite Engr Bn (plus Cam Det, H&S Co, 20th Mar)
Co A, 4th Tk Bn (less 1st Plat)
Btry B, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
10th Amph Trac Bn
1st Plat, Btry A, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
Co A, 11th Amph Trac Bn (plus Prov LVT(2) Plat, 1st Armd Amph Bn)
Cos B and D, 1st Armd Amph Bn
Co A, 4th Med Bn
Co A, 4th MT Bn
1st Plat, Ord Co, 4th Serv Bn
1st Plat, Serv & Sup Co, 4th Serv Bn
1st Plat, 4th MP Co
Det 1st JASCO
Co D, 4th Tk Bn (Scout) (All less Rear Echelon)

PHASE II

Combat Team 23—Col Louis R Jones
23d Marines (plus Band Sec)
3d Composite Engr Bn (plus Cam Det, Com Plat, H&S Co, 20th Mar)
Co C, 4th Tk Bn (Medium)
1st Plat, Co A, 4th Tk Bn
Btry C, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
3d Plat, Btry A, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
4th Amph Trac Bn
Cos A and C, 1st Armd Amph Bn

Co C, 4th Med Bn
Co C, 4th MT Bn
3d Plat, Ord Co, 4th Serv Bn
3d Plat, 4th MP Co
Dets 1st JASCO (All less Rear Echelon)
Combat Team 24—Col Franklin A. Hart
24th Marines (plus Band Sec)
2d Composite Engr Bn (plus Cam Det, H&S Co, 20th Mar)
Co B, 4th Tk Bn
Btry D, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
2d Plat, Btry A, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
10th Amph Trac Bn
Cos B and D, 1st Armd Amph Bn
Co B, 4th Med Bn
Co B, 4th MT Bn
2d Plat, 4th MP Co
Dets 1st JASCO (All less Rear Echelon)
Division Reserve—Col Samuel C. Cumming
25th Marines (plus Band Sec)
1st Composite Engr Bn (plus Cam Det, H&S Co, 20th Mar)
Co A, 4th Tk Bn (less 1st Plat)
Co D, 4th Tk Bn (Scout)
Btry B, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
1st Plat, Btry A, 4th Spl Wpns Bn
Co A, 11th Amph Trac Bn (plus Prov Plat, 1st Armd Amph Bn)
Co A, 4th Med Bn
Co A, 4th MT Bn
1st Plat, Ord Co, 4th Serv Bn
1st Plat, Serv & Sup Co, 4th Serv Bn
1st Plat, 4th MP Co
Det 1st JASCO (All less Rear Echelon)
14th Marines (less Rear Echelon)—Col Louis G. DeHaven
Support Group—Col Emmett W. Skinner
Hq Bn 4th MarDiv (less dets)

20th Mar (less 1st, 2d and 3d Bns, and less Com
Plat and Cam Sec, H&S Co, 20th Mar)
4th Tk Bn (less dets)
1st Armd Amph Bn (less dets)
4th Med Bn (less Cos A, B and C)
4th Serv Bn (less dets)
4th MT Bn (less dets)
1st JASCO (less dets)
4th Spl Wpns Bn (less dets)
15th Defense Bn (Marine)

**SOUTHERN LANDING FORCE—MajGen Charles H.
Corlett, USA**

**7th Infantry Division—MajGen Charles H. Corlett,
USA**

RCT's 17, 32 and 184
7th Reconnaissance Troop
13th Engr Bn
Co D, 34th Engr Bn
1st Bn, 47th Engr Bn
50th Engr Bn
7th Sig Co
75th Sig Co
GAU 7, 163d Sig Photo Co
767th Tk Bn
Det, 8th Chem Co
91st Chem Co
7th QM Co
MP Platoon
707th Ord Co
93d Bomb Disposal Squad
Cannon Co, 111th Inf
1st Bn, 111th Inf (less Co C)
708th Prov Amph Trac Bn
Co A, 708th Amph Tk Bn
7th Med Bn
31st Field Hospital
Btry A, 55th CA
Btrys E and F, 57th CA
Btrys A, B, C and D, 96th AAA Bn
Btrys A and C, 98th AAA Bn
Det, 296th AAA Bn
Co B, 376th Port Bn
Btrys A and B, 753d AAA Bn
Btrys A and D, 867th AAA Bn
Dets, 87th ASSRON

3d Army Defense Bn
4th Army Defense Bn

**Division Artillery Group—BrigGen Archibald V.
Arnold, USA**

31st, 48th, 49th, 57th and 145th FA Bns

**SUNDANCE LANDING FORCE—LtCol Frederick B.
Sheldon, USA**

2d Bn, 106th Inf (reinforced)
V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Co
1st Defense Bn (Marine)

**RESERVE LANDING FORCE (Tactical Group-1)—
BrigGen Thomas E. Watson**

22d Marines (reinforced)
106th Inf (reinforced) (less 2d Bn reinforced)

**ENIWETOK LANDING FORCES (Tactical Group-
1)—BrigGen Thomas E. Watson**

22d Marines
2d Sep Pack How Bn
2d Sep Engr Co
2d Sep Med Co
2d Sep Tank Co
2d Sep Transport Co
Co D (Scout), 4th Tank Bn
V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Co
10th Defense Bn (Marine)
Nav Const Co (Acorn 22)
106th Inf (less 2d Bn)
104th FA Bn
104th Engr Bn (less 1 Co)
Co B, 102d Engr Bn (less 1 Plat)
Cos C and D, 102d Med Bn (less 2 Plats)
Portable Surgical Hospital #1 (Prov)
Co C, 766 Tk Bn
Det, 727th Ord Co
Det, 97th Ord Co
Det, 295th Sig Co
Co A, 708th Amph Tk Bn
708th Prov Amph Trac Bn (less 1 LVT Grp)
Prov DUKW Btry
47th Engr Bn
3d Army Defense Bn



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

APPENDIX V

Command and Staff

KWAJALEIN ATOLL¹

(31 January 1944–8 February 1944)

V Amphibious Corps²

Commanding General.....	MajGen Holland M. Smith
Chief of Staff.....	BrigGen Graves B. Erskine
G-1.....	LtCol Albert F. Metze
G-2.....	LtCol St. Julien R. Marshall
G-3.....	Col John C. McQueen
G-4.....	Col Raymond E. Knapp
G-5.....	Col Joseph T. Smith

4th Marine Division

Commanding General.....	MajGen Harry Schmidt
Asst. Div. Commander.....	BrigGen James L. Underhill
Chief of Staff.....	Col William W. Rogers
D-1.....	Col Merton J. Batchelder
D-2.....	Maj Gooderham L. McCormick
D-3.....	Col Walter W. Wensinger
D-4.....	Col William F. Brown

1st Armored Amphibian Battalion

Commander Officer.....	Maj Louis Metzger
Executive Officer.....	Capt Richard G. Warga
Bn-3.....	1stLt Thomas M. Crosby

¹ Tactical Group-1 was in reserve for the FLINT-LOCK Operation. Inasmuch as this unit participated in CATCHPOLE its command and staff organization is listed only under the latter operation.

² In the case of VAC staff, the officers shown herein occupied their respective billets during the important planning phase of FLINTLOCK, although not all of them accompanied MajGen Holland M. Smith on the Rocky Mount to Kwajalein.

4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion³

Commanding Officer.....	LtCol Clovis C. Coffman
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10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion⁴

Commanding Officer.....	Maj Victor J. Croizat
Executive Officer.....	Maj Warren H. Edwards

4th Tank Battalion

Commanding Officer.....	Maj Richard K. Schmidt
Executive Officer.....	Capt Francis L. Orgain
Bn-3.....	Capt Leo B. Case

23d Marines

Commanding Officer.....	Col Louis R. Jones
Executive Officer.....	LtCol John R. Lanigan
R-1.....	Capt Frank E. Phillips, Jr.
R-2.....	Capt Richard W. Mirick
R-3.....	Maj Edward W. Wells
R-4.....	Capt Henry S. Campbell

Regimental Weapons Company

Commanding Officer.....	Capt George W. E. Daughtry
Executive Officer.....	Capt Raymond C. Kraus

1st Battalion, 23d Marines

Commanding Officer.....	LtCol Hewin O. Hammond
Executive Officer.....	Maj Hollis U. Mustain
Bn-3.....	Capt James R. Miller

³ Executive Officer and Bn-3 not shown in available records.

⁴ Bn-3 not shown in available records.

2d Battalion, 23d Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Edward J. Dillon
Executive Officer..... Maj Lawrence V. Patterson
Bn-3..... Capt James W. Sperry

3d Battalion, 23d Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol John J. Cosgrove, Jr.
Executive Officer..... LtCol Ralph Haas
Bn-3..... Maj Robert J. J. Picardi

24th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Col Franklin A. Hart
Executive Officer..... LtCol Homer L. Litzenberg,
Jr.
R-1..... Capt Kenneth N. Hilton
R-2..... Capt Arthur B. Hanson
R-3..... LtCol Charles D. Roberts
R-4..... Maj Clyde T. Smith

Regimental Weapons Company

Commanding Officer..... Maj Richard McCarthy, Jr.
Executive Officer..... Capt Edward J. Schofield

1st Battalion, 24th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Aquilla J. Dyess
(KIA 2 February)
Maj Maynard C. Schultz
Executive Officer..... Maj Maynard C. Schultz
(to 2 February)
Bn-3..... Capt Gene G. Mundy

2d Battalion, 24th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Francis H. Brink
Executive Officer..... LtCol Richard Rothwell
Bn-3..... Maj Claude M. Cappelmann

3d Battalion, 24th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Austin R. Brunelli
Executive Officer..... Maj John V. V. Veeder
Bn-3..... Capt Webb D. Sawyer

25th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Col Samuel C. Cumming
Executive Officer..... LtCol Walter I. Jordan
R-1..... WO Daniel H. Nelson^a
R-2..... Capt Charles D. Gray
R-3..... LtCol William F. Thyson,
Jr.
R-4..... Capt Edward Sherman

Regimental Weapons Company

Commanding Officer..... Capt James T. Kisgen
Executive Officer..... Capt Thomas H. Rogers
Capt Delbert A. Graham
(from 1 February)

^a WO Nelson was actually assistant R-1 of the 25th Marines. He accompanied the regiment to Kwajalein, however, while Capt Francis A. Norton, R-1, remained with the rear echelon.

1st Battalion, 25th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Clarence J. O'Donnell
Executive Officer..... Maj Michael Davidowitch,
Jr.
Bn-3..... Capt Fenton J. Mee

2d Battalion, 25th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Lewis C. Hudson, Jr.
Executive Officer..... Maj William P. Kaempfer
Bn-3..... Capt Victor J. Barringer

3d Battalion, 25th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Justice M. Chambers
Executive Officer..... Maj James Taul
Bn-3..... Maj John H. Jones

14th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Col Louis G. DeHaven
Executive Officer..... LtCol Randall M. Victory
R-1..... 1stLt Cecil D. Snyder
R-2..... Capt Harrison L. Rogers
R-3..... Maj Frederick J. Karch
R-4..... Maj Richard J. Winsbor-
ough

1st Battalion, 14th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Harry J. Zimmer
Executive Officer..... Maj Clifford B. Drake
Bn-3..... Maj Thomas M. Fry

2d Battalion, 14th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol George B. Wilson, Jr.
Executive Officer..... Maj William McReynolds
Bn-3..... Capt Ralph W. Boyer, Jr.

3d Battalion, 14th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Robert E. MacFar-
lane
Executive Officer..... Maj Harvey A. Feehan
Bn-3..... Maj Donald M. Love, Jr.

4th Battalion, 14th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Maj Carl A. Youngdale
Executive Officer..... Maj John B. Edgar, Jr.
Bn-3..... Maj Roland J. Spritzen

20th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Col Lucian W. Burnham
Executive Officer..... LtCol Nelson K. Brown
R-1..... Capt Martin M. Calcaterra
R-2..... Capt Carl A. Sachs
R-3..... Maj. Melvin D. Henderson
R-4..... Capt Samuel G. Thompson

1st Battalion, 20th Marines

Commanding Officer..... Maj Richard G. Ruby
Executive Officer..... Capt George F. Williamson
Bn-3..... Capt Martin H. Glover

2d Battalion, 20th Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Otto Lessing
Executive Officer..... Maj John H. Partridge
Bn-3..... Capt George L. Smith

3d Battalion, 20th Marines⁴

Commanding Officer..... LtCdr William G. Byrne
Executive Officer..... LtCdr Thomas H. Flinn

15th Defense Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Francis B. Loomis,
Jr.
Executive Officer..... LtCol Peter J. Negri
Bn-3..... Capt Guy L. Wharton

7th Infantry Division

Commanding General..... MajGen Charles H. Corlett
Asst. Commanding General BrigGen Joseph L. Ready
Chief of Staff..... Col LeRoy J. Stewart
G-1..... LtCol Charles V. Wilson
G-2..... LtCol Robert G. Fergusson
G-3..... LtCol George B. Sloan
G-4..... LtCol David X. Angluin
Adjutant General..... LtCol Arthur J. Salisbury

7th Medical Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Robert J. Kamish
Executive Officer..... Maj Alan B. Eaker
S-3..... Capt Sidney Cohen

7th Reconnaissance Troop

Commanding Officer..... Capt Paul B. Gritta

13th Engineer Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Harold K. Howell
Executive Officer..... Capt George G. McCormick
S-3..... Capt Myrl A. Reaugh

17th Infantry Regiment

Commanding Officer..... Col Wayne C. Zimmerman
Executive Officer..... LtCol William B. Moore
S-1..... Capt Henry R. Sievers
S-2..... Maj Harry L. Beatty
S-3..... Capt James E. Simmons
S-4..... Capt Paul S. Foster, Jr.

1st Battalion, 17th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Albert V. Hartl
Executive Officer..... Maj Maynard B. Weaver
S-3..... Capt Robert H. Johnson

2d Battalion, 17th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Edward P. Smith
Executive Officer..... Maj Delbert L. Bjork
S-3..... Capt Robert J. Edwards

3d Battalion, 17th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Lee Wallace
Executive Officer..... Maj Earl W. Nelson
S-3..... Capt Mervin A. Elliot

32d Infantry Regiment

Commanding Officer..... Col Marc J. Logie
Executive Officer..... LtCol John M. Finn
S-1..... Capt Jack L. Oliver
S-2..... Maj Charles F. Manov
S-3..... Maj Leigh H. Mathias
S-4..... 1stLt Wayne K. Yenni

1st Battalion, 32d Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Ernest H. Bearss
Executive Officer..... Maj Leonard E. Wellendorf
S-3..... Capt James R. Hurt

2d Battalion, 32d Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Glen A. Nelson
Executive Officer..... Maj Charles A. Whitcomb
S-3..... Capt Robert E. Goodfellow

3d Battalion, 32d Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Francis T. Pachler
Executive Officer..... Maj James H. Keller
S-3..... Capt John P. Connor

184th Infantry Regiment

Commanding Officer..... Col Curtis D. O'Sullivan
Executive Officer..... LtCol Merl W. Bremer
S-1..... Capt Charles J. Simon
S-2..... Maj Jackson C. Gillis
S-3..... Maj James K. Bullock
S-4..... Maj Otto G. Niemann

1st Battalion, 184th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Roy A. Green
Executive Officer..... Maj Cortez A. Kitchen
S-3..... Capt Clark G. Campbell

2d Battalion, 184th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Carl H. Aulick
Executive Officer..... Maj Richard W. Robison
S-3..... Capt John R. Palmer

3d Battalion, 184th Infantry

Commanding Officer..... LtCol William P. Walker
Executive Officer..... Maj Daniel C. Maybury
S-3..... Capt Paul L. Smith

Division Artillery Group

Commanding General.... BrigGen Archibald V.
Arnold
Executive Officer..... Col William C. Lucas
S-1..... Maj Waldo W. Montgomery

S-2..... Maj John W. Pritchard
 S-3..... Maj Ara G. Lindley
 R-4..... Maj Waldo W. Montgomery

31st Field Artillery Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Stanley Sawicki
 Executive Officer..... Maj Clement B. Harts
 S-3..... Capt Edward L. Smith

48th Field Artillery Battalion

Commanding Officer..... Maj Harold S. Dillingham
 Executive Officer..... Capt Stanley C. Anderson
 S-3..... Maj Ray D. Free

49th Field Artillery Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Francis B. Harrison
 Executive Officer..... Maj Jack D. Beck
 S-3..... Maj Carroll Mitchell

57th Field Artillery Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Donald F. Slaughter
 Executive Officer..... Maj Stuart M. George
 S-3..... Maj John F. Hanson, Jr.

145th Field Artillery Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol George D. Preston
 Executive Officer..... Maj Ralph W. Morgan
 S-3..... Maj George F. Seacat

767th Tank Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol William G. Bray
 Executive Officer..... Maj Walter S. Hahn
 S-3..... Capt Joseph L. Lohner

708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Commanding Officer..... Maj James L. Rogers
 Executive Officer..... Maj William Rossing
 S-3..... Capt John D. Kookan

50th Engineer Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Leonard L. Kingsbury
 Executive Officer..... Capt George S. Baumgartner
 S-3..... Capt Charles J. Bainum

3d Army Defense Battalion^a

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Ralph W. Oakley

4th Army Defense Battalion^a

Commanding Officer..... Col Clifford R. Jones

^a Executive Officer and S-3 not shown in available records.

MAJURO ATOLL

(31 January 1944–1 February 1944)

2d Battalion, 106th Infantry¹

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Frederick B. Sheldon
 Executive Officer..... Maj Almerin C. O'Hara

1st Defense Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Lewis A. Hohn
 Executive Officer..... Maj Jean H. Buckner
 Bn-3..... Capt Charles S. Roberts

V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company

Commanding Officer..... Capt James L. Jones
 Executive Officer..... 1stLt Merwin H. Silverthorn, Jr.

ENIWETOK ATOLL

(17 February 1944–24 February 1944)

Tactical Group-1

Commanding General..... BrigGen Thomas E. Watson
 S-2..... Maj Robert W. Shaw
 S-3..... LtCol Wallace M. Greene, Jr.
 S-4..... Col Robert J. Straub
 Artillery Officer..... Maj Joseph L. Stewart
 Naval Gunfire Officer..... Maj Ellsworth G. Van Orman

D Company (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion

Commanding Officer..... Capt Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr.
 Executive Officer..... 1stLt James R. Barbour

V Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company^a

22d Marines

Commanding Officer..... Col John T. Walker
 Executive Officer..... Col Merlin F. Schneider
 R-1..... Capt Curtis G. Callan
 R-2..... Maj Paul H. Bird
 R-3..... LtCol Floyd R. Moore
 R-4..... Capt Roland A. Wright

Regimental Weapons Company

Commanding Officer..... Maj Theodore M. Sheffield
 Executive Officer..... Maj Cecil D. Ferguson

1st Battalion, 22d Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Walfried H. Fromhold
 Executive Officer..... Maj Crawford B. Lawton
 Bn-3..... Capt Peter R. Dyer

¹ S-3 not shown in available records.

^a Command and staff for this unit shown under Majuro Operation.

2d Battalion, 22d Marines

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Donn C. Hart
Executive Officer..... Maj Robert P. Felker
Bn-3..... Capt William B. Koren

3d Battalion, 22d Marines

Commanding Officer..... Maj Clair W. Shisler
Executive Officer..... Maj William E. Sperling,
III
Bn-3..... Capt Leighton M. Clark,
(KIA 20 February)
Capt Harry D. Hedrick

2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Edwin C. Ferguson
Maj Alfred M. Mahoney
(from 17 February)
Executive Officer..... Maj Alfred M. Mahoney
Maj Nathan C. Kingsbury
(from 17 February)
Bn-3..... Maj Nathan C. Kingsbury
Capt Robert T. Gillespie
(from 17 February)

2d Separate Engineer Company

Commanding Officer..... Maj Paul F. Sackett
Executive Officer..... Capt Frederick G. Bloom-
field

2d Separate Medical Company⁹

Commanding Officer..... Lt Llewellyn E. Wilson

2d Separate Tank Company

Commanding Officer..... Capt Harry Calcutt
Executive Officer..... 1stLt Robert Hall

2d Separate Transport Company⁹

Commanding Officer..... Maj Joseph A. Meyer

10th Defense Battalion

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Wallace O. Thompson
Executive Officer..... LtCol Robert E. Hommel
Bn-3..... Maj Paul A. Fitzgerald

106th Infantry Regiment

Commanding Officer..... Col Russell G. Ayers
Executive Officer..... LtCol Joseph J. Farley
S-1..... Capt George E. White
S-2..... Capt William A. Foxen
S-3..... Capt. George H. Temme, Jr.
S-4..... Capt Jacob Ludwig

1st Battalion, 106th Infantry⁷

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Winslow Cornett
Executive Officer..... Maj John M. Nichols

3d Battalion, 106th Infantry⁷

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Harold J. Mizony
Executive Officer..... Maj Ernest C. Delear

104th Field Artillery Battalion⁸

Commanding Officer..... LtCol Van Nostrand

708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion¹⁰

3d Army Defense Battalion¹⁰

⁹ Executive Officer not shown in available records.

¹⁰ Command and staff for this unit shown under Kwajalein Operation.



THE MARSHALLS: INCREASING THE TEMPO

Index

- ABRAHAM. *See* Ennugarret.
ADONIS Road, 148
Ailinginae Atoll, 153
Ailinglapalap Atoll, 152, 154, 155, 157
Ailinglapalap Island, 154
Ailuk Atoll, 41, 153, 156, 156n
Air Group. *See* Japanese Units.
Air Flotilla. *See* Japanese Units.
Air Force. *See* Army Units.
Akiyama, RAdm Monzo, 29, 29n, 107, 107n
ALBERT. *See* Ennumennet.
Aleutians, 5
Aliso Canyon, 23
ALLEN. *See* Ennubirr.
Amphibian Tractors. *See* Landing Vehicle, Tracked, (LVT).
Amphibian Trucks. *See* DUKW.
Amphibious Corps. *See* Marine Units.
Amphibious Force Flagship. *See* USS *Appalachian*, USS *Rocky Mount*, and Ships.
Anderson, Col Joseph C., USA, 11n, 121n, 136n, 143n
Anderson, USS, 81
ANDREW. *See* Obella Island.
Apamama, 39, 39n
Appalachian, USS, 17, 17n, 44, 71. *See also*: Amphibious Force Flagships and Auxiliary General Communications under Ships.
ARBUTUS. *See* Muzinbaarikku Island.
Armored Amphibian Tractors [LVT(A)]. *See* Landing Vehicles, Tracked (Armored).
Army Units (U. S.)
 Army Forces, Central Pacific Area, 35
 Air Force, Seventh, 38, 160
 Infantry Division, 7th, 8, 10n, 12, 13, 20, 26, 26n, 27, 27n, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 53, 53n, 58, 62, 63, 99, 100, 103, 106, 107, 114, 123
 Infantry Division, 27th, 8, 12, 121, 123, 151
 Division Artillery, 7th, 55, 58, 101
 Infantry Regiment, 17th, 26n, 55, 58, 100, 112-114
 Infantry Regiment, 32d, 100, 103-106, 114
 Infantry Regiment, 53d, 26n
 Infantry Regiment, 106th, 8, 12, 13, 13n, 20, 35, 121-124, 134, 136, 136n, 137, 141, 141n, 142, 143n, 145, 148, 149, 151
 Infantry Regiment, 111th, 53, 53n, 54, 143, 143n
 Infantry Regiment, 184th, 26n, 100, 103-107, 114
 Infantry Battalion, 1/17, 55-57, 101, 113
 Infantry Battalion, 1/32, 106, 107
 Infantry Battalion, 1/106, 136, 136n, 137-141
 Infantry Battalion, 1/184, 105, 106
 Infantry Battalion, 2/17, 55, 57, 58, 113
 Infantry Battalion, 2/32, 103-107
 Infantry Battalion, 2/106, 13, 20, 58, 61, 124, 136, 136n, 151
 Infantry Battalion, 2/184, 104-107
 Infantry Battalion, 3/17, 55, 113
 Infantry Battalion, 3/22, 104
 Infantry Battalion, 3/106, 136, 137, 140, 140n, 142, 151
 Infantry Battalion, 3/111, 158
 Infantry Battalion, 3/184, 101-104
 Field Artillery Battalion, 31st, 58
 Field Artillery Battalion, 48th, 58
 Field Artillery Battalion, 49th, 58
 Field Artillery Battalion, 57th, 58
 Field Artillery Battalion, 104th, 124, 128, 136, 140, 142, 143n, 145
 Field Artillery Battalion, 145th, 20, 58
 Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 708th Provisional, 20, 36, 57, 101, 114, 123, 128, 145, 151n
 Engineer Battalion, 47th, 123
 Engineer Battalion, 50th, 20, 37
 Tank Battalion, 766th, 145
 Tank Battalion, 767th, 20, 55
 Defense Battalion, 3d Army, 13, 20, 123, 143
 Defense Battalion, 4th Army, 13, 20
 Bombardment Squadron, 392d, 101
 Cannon Company, 106th Infantry, 130
 Engineer Topographic Company, 64th, 29
 Field Hospital, 31st, 20
 Joint Assault Signal Company, 75th, 20, 28
 Reconnaissance Troop, 7th, 53, 54, 112, 113, 121

Separate Chemical Company, (Motorized) 91st, 20
 Signal Photo Company, 163d, 20
 Signal Service Company, 972d, 20
 Arno Atoll, 61, 158n
 Arsenault, LtCol Albert, 87n, 89n
 Artillery. *See* Army Units; Marine Units.
 Asbill, Capt Ed, 45n
Ashland, USS, 55, 55n, 127
 Attack Force Reserve Group. *See* Task Group 51.1.
 Attu, 26, 26n, 36
 Aur Atoll, 158, 160
 Auxiliary General Communication Vessel. *See* USS
Appalachian, USS *Rocky Mount*, Amphibious Force
 Flagship, Ship types.
 Ayers, Col Russell G., USA, 136, 138-140, 142

 Bailey, Maj Kenneth D., 56n
Bailey, USS, 56, 56n
 Baker Island, 7
 BANKRATE. *See* FLINTLOCK.
 Bartley, LtCol Whitman S., 115n
 Base Defense Force (Japanese). *See* Japanese Units.
 Battalion. *See* Army Units; Marine Units; Japanese
 Units.
 Bearss, LtCol Ernest H., USA, 107n
Belleau Wood, USS, 39
 BENNETT. *See* Bigej Island.
 Berkeley, Capt Charles C. Jr., 95
 Bernhard, RAdm Alva D., 112, 152, 157n
 BERNIE Blockhouse, 65n
 Betio, 11, 15, 27, 34, 80, 114, 115
Biddle, USS, 47, 48, 67
 Bigej Channel, 26
 Bigej Island, 113, 152
 Bikar Atoll, 153, 157
 Bikini Atoll, 3, 153, 157
Bilowi, USS, 43, 66
 Bird, Maj Paul H., 152n
 Bismarcks, 5
 BOBBY Blockhouse, 65n
 Boggerik Island, 111
 Boggerlapp Island, 111
 Bogon Island, 124, 127, 129
 Bougainville, 126
Boyd, USS, 39n
 Brigade. *See* Japanese Units; Marine Units.
 Brink, LtCol Francis H., 82, 87, 89, 92-94, 94n, 95, 96
 Brown, Maj Alfred T., 46n
 Brown's Range, 117n
 BRUCE Blockhouse, 65n
 Brunelli, LtCol Austin R., 81n, 83, 88n, 89, 94, 96
 Buchanan, LtCol William W., 23
 Buck, LtCol Arthur E., Jr., 45n, 46n, 109n, 110n
Bullard, USS, 58
Bunker Hill, USS, 41
 BURLESQUE. *See* Roi Island.
 BURTON. *See* Ebeye Island.
 BUSTER Blockhouse, 72
 Butler, Capt Thomas, 117n

Cabot, USS, 39, 49, 68
 Calalin Island, 17, 18, 58, 60
 Calcutt, Capt Harry, 147
Cambria, USS, 36, 61, 124, 125
 CAMELLIA, 124, 127, 128, 131
 CAMOUFLAGE. *See* Namur Island.
 CANARY Strong Point, 102n, 103
 CANNA. *See* Rujiyuru Island.
 CARILLON. *See* Kwajalein Atoll.
 CARLOS. *See* Ennyabegan Island.
 CARL Road, 103, 104
 Carlson, LtCol Evans F., 20n, 21
 CARLSON. *See* Enubuj Island.
 Caroline Islands, 2-6, 26, 121
 Carrier Forces, 9, 14
 CARTER. *See* Gea Island.
 CARTWHEEL. *See* New Guinea; New Britain.
Casco, USS, 61
 CATCHPOLE Plan, 121, 122, 150
 CAT Strong Point, 102n
 Cate, J. L., 7n
 CECIL. *See* Ninni Island.
 Celebes Sea, 5
 Central Pacific, 5, 6, 6n, 8, 10, 14, 20, 22, 29, 30, 115,
 116, 125
 Central Pacific Force, 8, 9, 9n, 15, 25, 39
 Chain Pier, 58
 Chambers, LtCol Justice M., 46, 48-51, 51n, 52, 62, 81,
 82, 111
 Chapin, 1stLt John C., 98n
 CHAUNCEY. *See* Gebh Island.
Chenango, USS, 40, 44, 65, 67, 125
Chester, USS, 39
 Claude, LtCol David K., 20n
 CLIFTON. *See* Eller Island.
 COHEN. *See* Ennugenliggelap Island.
 Cokin, LtCol Milton G., 96n
Colorado, USS, 81, 124, 127, 128, 131
 Combined Chiefs of Staff, 5, 6, 6n, 8
 Commander Central Pacific Force. *See* Central Pacific
 Force.
 Commander Fifth Amphibious Force. *See* Fifth
 Amphibious Force.
 Commander Fifth Fleet. *See* Fifth Fleet.
 Commander-in-Chief, Pacific-Pacific Ocean Area (CinC-
 Pac-CinCPOA. *See* Pacific-Pacific Ocean Area.
 Commander-in-Chief, 14, 15n
 Company. *See* Army Units; Marine Units; Japanese
 Units.
 Conolly, RAdm Richard L., 13, 17, 23, 23n, 35, 36, 40,
 43, 44, 48, 48n, 49, 49n, 64, 65, 67, 111
 Cook, Maj Earl J., 156, 157, 157n; LtCol, 140n
Coral Sea, USS, 41
 Corlett, MajGen Charles H., USA, 13, 17, 20, 27, 33n,
 36, 100, 100n, 103, 105, 107, 114
 CORN Strong Point, 104
 Cornett, LtCol Winslow, USA, 137, 139
Corregidor, USS, 41
 Cosgrove, LtCol John J., Jr., 79n
Cowpens, USS, 41
 Craven, W. F., 7n

Croizat, Maj Victor J., 18, 18n, 25n, 51n, 67n, 115n
 Crowl, Philip A., 36n, 100n, 121n, 139n, 151n
 Crown, LtCol John A., 84n
 Cruise, Capt Edgar A., USN, 61
 Cumming, Col Samuel C., 45, 45n, 46, 46n, 51, 111, 112, 152
 Cushman, BrigGen Thomas J., 159n

Dalap Island, 18, 58, 60
 Darritt Island, 18, 58, 60, 61
 Davidowitch, Maj Michael J., 45, 46n
 Deep Entrance, 117, 128, 143
 Defense Battalion. *See* Army Units; Marine Units.
 Defense Group. *See* Task Group 51.3.
Defense of Wake, The, 3n
 Denig, Capt James L., 93
 Destroyer Squadron 1, (USN), 43n
 Dillon, Col E. J., 67n, 69, 71, 80
 Division. *See* Army Units; Marine Units; Japanese Units.
 DOWNSIDE. *See* Eniwetok Atoll.
 DuBose, RAdm Laurance T., 65, 81n
 Duchain, Maj Charles, 23
 DUKW, 35, 36, 58, 99, 114, 123, 128, 143, 149
 Dyess, LtCol Aquilla J., 84, 96, 97, 159n
 Dyess Field, 159

Ebeye Island, 26, 29, 35, 38, 41, 57, 112, 113
 Ebon Atoll, 10, 152, 155, 156
 Edgigen, 152
 Edwards, LtCol Harry W., 132n, 133n
 Eller Island, 113
 Ellice Islands, 38, 39
 Ellis, Maj E. H. "Pete", 3, 3n, 4
 Elugelab Island, 130
 ENERVATE Trall, 130
 Engebi, 117, 118, 118n, 120, 124, 125, 128, 128n, 129-132, 134, 137, 143, 145, 145n, 146, 151, 153n, 159
 Engineer. *See* Army Units; Marine Units.
 Eniwetok Atoll, 114-118, 120-122, 122n, 123, 124, 124n, 125, 126n, 127, 128, 134, 136, 136n, 137, 139, 140, 140n, 142, 143, 143n, 145, 145n, 150-152, 159
 Eniwetok Island, 2-4, 8, 11, 13, 28, 31, 37, 41, 109, 114-116, 118, 120-122, 122n, 123, 124, 124n, 125, 127, 128, 131n, 134, 136, 136n, 137, 139, 140, 140n, 142, 143, 143n, 145, 145n, 151, 152
 Eniwetok Lagoon, 128
 Ennubirr Island, 17, 21, 40-42, 44, 46, 46n, 47-50, 50n, 51, 62, 81, 111, 152
 Ennuebing Island, 17, 42-45, 45n, 46-49, 51, 53, 55, 62, 66
 Ennuebing Pass, 48, 49
 Ennugarrett Island, 18, 42, 44, 46, 50, 51, 51n, 52, 62, 67, 68, 81
 Ennugenliggelap Island, 113, 114
 Ennunnnet Island, 17, 42, 44, 46, 46n, 47-51, 52, 62, 81
 Ennylabegan Island, 17, 53, 55-58, 62
Enterprise, USS, 39
 Enubuj Island, 17, 26, 29, 53, 55-58, 58n, 62, 101, 103
Epping Forest, USS, 36, 51
 Erikub Atoll, 158

Eroj Island, 17, 58, 60
 Erskine, Col Graves B., 13n, 15, 15n, 21
Essex, USS, 39, 45, 49, 65
 Expeditionary Troops. *See* Task Force 56.

Felker, Maj. Robert P., 157, 158
 Ferguson, LtCol Cecil D., 149n
 Field Hospital. *See* Army Units.
 Fifth Amphibious Force, 9, 15n, 23, 23n, 25, 29
 Fifth Fleet (USN), 9, 11, 28, 30, 121
 Fijis, 3
 Fitzgerald, Col Paul A., 145n
 Fleet. *See* Japanese Units; Fifth Fleet (USN).
 Fletcher, VAdm Frank J., 9n
 FLINTLOCK, 9, 10, 10n, 11, 13, 15, 18, 23, 28, 35, 121
 FLINTLOCK II, 13
 FLINTLOCK, JR., 152
 FRAGILE. *See* Engebi Island.
Frazier, USS, 56
 Fromhold, LtCol Walfried H., 130, 132, 132n, 133n, 135n, 144n, 146, 146n, 147, 147n, 148

Garretson, Capt Frank E., 87n, 89, 90n, 94, 94n, 95
 Garrison Group. *See* Task Group 51.9.
 Garhart, Maj Theodore M., 67n, 69n
 GALVANIC. *See* Gilbert Islands.
 Gea Island, 17, 53-55, 62
 Gehh Island, 54, 62, 112
 Germany, 2
 Gibraltar, 125
 Giffen, RAdm Robert C., 100
 Gilbert, Capt, 2
 Gilbert Islands, 1, 2, 3n, 5, 7-10, 12n, 15, 15n, 25, 29-31, 38, 39, 123
 Gillis, LtCol Jackson C., USA, 106n
 Ginder, RAdm Samuel P., 41, 124, 125
 Giusti, Capt Ernesto H., 160n
 Great Britain, 2, 5n
 Greene, Col Wallace M., Jr., 13n, 35n, 122n, 123, 123n
 Griffen, RAdm Robert M., 100
 Gritta, Capt Paul B., USA, 53, 54, 54n, 112
 Grussendorf, Maj Carl O. J., 70n
 Guadalcanal, 14, 56n, 158, 158n
 Guam, 2, 151
 Gugegwe Island, 26, 57
Gunston Hall, USS, 36

Haggard, USS, 137
 Hahn, Carl F., 157
Hailey, USS, 137, 146
 HAILSTONE Plan, 125
 Hale, MajGen Willis, USA, 14
Hall, USS, 56 131
Halligan, USS, 56
 Halsey, VAdm William F., 9n, 14
 Hammond, LtCol Hewin O., 71, 72, 72n
Haraden, USS, 42, 50
 Hart, LtCol Donn C., 130, 134, 146, 147
 Hart, Col Franklin A., 81, 82, 82n, 83, 84, 89, 89n, 91, 94, 96-99
 Hartl, LtCol Albert V., USA, 55

- Hashida, LtCol Masahiro, 120
Hawaii, 3, 8, 20, 25-27, 29, 35, 41, 111, 112, 114, 122, 123, 151
HEARTS CIRCLE, 148
HEARTSTRINGS. *See* Parry Island.
Heermann, USS, 128, 131
Heinl, LtCol Robert D., Jr., 3*n*, 5*n*
Henderson, LtCol Melvin D., 108*n*
Hill, RAdm Harry W., 13, 17, 29*n*, 34*n*, 36, 58, 61, 122; VAdm, 116, 116*n*, 120, 122*n*, 124, 124*n*, 125, 127, 128, 128*n*, 137, 138, 142, 143*n*, 145, 150*n*
Hoel, USS, 128, 137
Hoffman, Maj Carl W., 115*n*
Hokkaido, 30
Holcomb, LtGen Thomas, 14*n*
HOLLIS Island, 111
HOMER. *See* Boggerik Island.
Hoover, RAdm John H., 9, 14, 38, 39
Hopewell, USS, 112
Hough, Maj Frank O., 3*n*
HUBERT. *See* Boggerlapp Island.
Hudson, LtCol Lewis C., 46, 47, 50, 111, 111*n*
Idaho, USS, 55, 57
Independent Garrison Unit. *See* 1st Amphibious Brigade (IJA).
Indianapolis, USS, 13, 43, 45, 66, 81*n*, 128, 137, 146
Infantry. *See* Army Units; Marine Units; Japanese Units.
Initial Transport Group. *See* Transport Division 26.
Intrepid, USS, 39, 48, 68, 127
Ireland, Maj Charles T., Jr., 87*n*, 93*n*, 95*n*
Isely, Jeter A., 121*n*, 151*n*
Isuzu, IJN, 29, 30, 38
IVAN Landing Group, 23, 42*n*, 43, 46, 49, 64. *See also* Marine Units.
IVAN. *See* Mellu.
Iwo Jima, 115, 116
JACOB. *See* Ennuebing.
JACOB Landing Forces, 43. *See also* Marine Units.
JACOB Pass, 49
Jaluit, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 28, 31, 37, 38, 39*n*, 41, 116, 159, 160
Jaluit Branch Bureau, 2, 3
Japan, 2-5, 5*n*, 7*n*, 11, 31, 115, 159, 160
Japanese, 3, 11
Japanese Army, 5
Japanese Fleet, 117
Japanese Navy, 5
Japanese Units
 Army
 1st Amphibious Brigade (IJA); also known as 1st Mobile Seaborne Infantry Brigade, 1st Mobile Shipborne Force and 3d Independent Garrison Unit, 31, 34, 118, 120, 124, 136
 122d Infantry Regiment, 34
 Navy
 Combined Fleet, 13, 15, 125, 126
 2d Fleet, 30, 126
 3d Fleet, 30
 4th Fleet, 3*n*, 28, 29, 29*n*, 30, 38
 6th Fleet, 125
 4th Division (Naval), 30
 7th Cruiser Division, 30
 8th Cruiser Division, 30
 Special Naval Landing Force, 74
 Fleet Construction Section, 4th, 118
 Base Defense Force, 6th; 28, 29, 34
 Guard Force, 61st, 32, 118, 120, 124
 Air Flotilla, 22d, 29, 30
 Air Flotilla, 24th, 30, 32, 39
 Air Group, 281, 39, 40, 75
 Air Group, 752d, 75
 Air Group, 755th, 75
 Air Group, 952d, 34
Japtan Island, 117, 126, 128, 143, 145
Jemata, Chief, 155
Jemo Island, 153, 156
Jeroru Island, 143
Joint Assault Signal Company, 23*n*
Joint Chiefs of Staff, 6, 6*n*, 7, 8, 11, 12
Joint Expeditionary Force. *See* Task Force 51.
Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Oceans Areas, 29
Jones, Capt James L., 58, 128, 143, 148
Jones, Col L. R., 66-68, 68*n*, 71, 74, 75, 79
Jordan, LtCol Walter I., 20*n*
Joslin, LtCol H. V., 50*n*
Kahoolawe, T. H., 28, 37, 37*n*, 41
Kanakas, 3
Kane, USS, 36, 60, 61, 128, 143
Kashima, IJN, 127
Katzenbach, Capt Edward L., Jr., 143
Kauai, T. H., 18, 25, 26
Kavieng, 11, 121
Keibitai Detachment. *See* Japanese Navy Units; Naval Guard Force.
Kidd, USS, 58
Kill Island, 1, 152, 156
King, Adm E. J., 12*n*, 14, 14*n*, 15*n*
Kingman, RAdm Howard F., 81
Kira, RAdm Shunichi, 29
Kisgen, Maj James T., 111*n*
Kiska, 26*n*
Kobayashi, VAdm Masashi, 29, 29*n*, 30
Koga, Adm Mineichi, 126
Korean laborers, 28, 58
Koror Town, 2
Kuriles, 5
Kusaie, 8, 13, 37, 38, 109*n*, 121, 159
Kwajalein Atoll, 1, 3, 3*n*, 7, 10, 10*n*, 11-13, 17, 21, 21*n*, 23, 26, 28, 28*n*, 29-32, 32*n*, 33, 35, 36, 39*n*, 41, 53*n*, 54, 56, 100, 108, 111, 112, 118, 120, 121, 123, 124, 152, 154, 156
Kwajalein Island, 3*n*, 12, 17-20, 26-29, 29*n*, 31-33, 33*n*, 34, 35, 37-39, 41, 42, 54, 55, 57, 61-63, 99, 100, 100*n*, 101, 102, 102*n*, 103, 106, 107, 109, 112, 114-116, 118, 121, 122, 122*n*, 123, 125, 127, 127*n*, 136, 140*n*, 145, 151, 152, 154, 155, 155*n*, 156, 158, 159
Kwajalein Lagoon, 21, 61

LADYSLIPPER. *See* Japtan Island.

Lae, 5, 152, 154

Lahaina Roads, 41

Lanai, 41

Landing Craft, Control (LCC) 33, 48, 49*n*

Landing Craft, Control 71, 72

Landing Craft, Infantry (Gunboat) [LCI(G)], 50

Landing Craft, Infantry (Gunboat) 450, 48*n*

Landing Craft, Vehicle-Personnel (LCVP), 46, 47, 49*n*

Landing Ship, Tank

LST 42, 67

LST 126, 67

LST 246, 127

LST 272, 128

Landing Vehicle, Tracked (LVT), 18, 24, 25, 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 57, 64, 66-68, 68*n*, 69, 82-84, 84*n*, 86, 98, 101, 101*n*, 111, 112, 114, 123, 130, 131, 131*n*, 132, 136, 137, 145, 146, 153, 156, 157

LVT (2), 18, 25, 35, 36, 49, 69, 86, 128

Landing Vehicle, Tracked (Armored) [LVT(A)], 24-26, 36*n*, 45, 51, 52, 57, 68, 69, 75, 75*n*, 84, 84*n*, 85, 85*n*, 92, 123, 131, 137, 138, 146

LVT(A) (1), 18, 35

Langley, USS, 39, 41, 125

Lanigan, LtCol John P., 132*n*, 134*n*, 145*n*, 148*n*

LAURA. *See* Majuro Island.

Lawton, Maj Crawford B., 154, 154*n*

League of Nations, 2

Lejeune, MajGen John A., 3

Lessing, Col Otto, 109*n*

Lexington, USS, 39

Lib Island, 153, 154

Likiep Atoll, 153, 156, 156*n*, 157*n*

LILAC. *See* Jeroru Island.

Linda Vista, 122

Litzenberg, Col Homer L., 22*n*, 43, 43*n*, 86*n* 87*n*, 89*n*, 91*n*

Lockwood, VAdm C. A., 126

Lodge, Maj O. R., 115*n*

Logie, Col Marc, USA, 100

Loomis, Capt Donald W., 13, 17

Lo Prete, Lt Joseph E., 90, 90*n*

Louisville, USS, 42, 48, 81, 81*n*, 128, 131, 146

Love, Edmund G., 36*n*, 100*n*, 121*n*, 139*n*

Loyassa, García de, 2

LUCILLE. *See* Eroj Island.

LUELLA. *See* Calalin Island.

Maalaea Bay, Maui, 28

MacArthur, Gen Douglas, 6, 6*n*, 9*n*, 116

Madison, Michael, 60

Mahoney, Maj Alfred M., 128; LtCol, 146*n*, 152*n*

Majuro Atoll, 11, 13, 17, 18, 28, 29, 45*n*, 61, 122

Majuro Attack Force. *See* Task Group, 51.2.

Majuro Attack Group, 17

Majuro Force, 36

Majuro Island, 3, 11, 13, 13*n*, 21, 29, 41, 58, 60, 61, 116, 122*n*, 124*n*, 126, 136*n*, 158, 158*n*, 159, 160*n*

Makin, 10, 30, 39

Maloelap Atoll, 7, 21, 29, 31, 37, 159

Maloelap Island, 3, 10, 10*n*, 11-13, 28, 31, 39*n*, 61, 116, 118, 158-160

Manchuria, 31, 118

Mandated Islands, 3

Manila Bay, USS, 41

Manley, USS, 53, 53*n*, 54

Marianas, 2, 3, 5, 30, 115, 127*n*

Marine Corps Schools, 22*n*

Marine Air Units

Marine Aircraft Wing, 4th, 116

Marine Base Defense Air Wing 4th, 159, 159*n*

Marine Air Group-13, 159

Marine Air Group-22, 159

Marine Air Group-31, 159

Marine Scout Bombing Squadron-151, 153

Marine Scout Bombing Squadron-331, 159

Marine Units

Amphibious Corps, V, 3*n*, 9, 10, 10*n*, 12, 14, 15, 15*n*, 19-21, 23, 26, 28, 29, 35, 37*n*, 122, 127, 154

Marine Division, 2d, 11, 18, 25, 30, 115, 121, 151

Marine Division, 4th, 8, 10*n*, 12, 13, 20, 21, 21*n*, 23, 25-27, 29, 35, 36, 44, 46, 48, 53, 64*n*, 67, 75, 76, 92, 99, 105, 108, 109, 111, 112, 114, 115, 123, 152

Marine Brigade, 1st Provisional, 158

Marine Brigade, 3d, 122

Tactical Group-1; 13*n*, 20, 114, 121-123, 127, 134, 140, 144, 151, 158

Marine Artillery Regiment, 14th, 23, 25, 42, 46, 81, 109, 111

Marine Engineer Regiment, 20th, 37, 80, 108, 111

Marine Infantry Regiment, 22d, 8, 10*n*, 13, 20, 35, 35*n*, 112, 112*n*, 122-124, 128*n*, 130, 133, 134, 143, 145, 146, 148, 149*n*, 150, 151, 151*n*, 152, 154, 158, 158*n*

Marine Infantry Regiment, 23d, 25, 53, 64, 66-68, 75, 76, 79, 80, 81*n*, 84, 94, 95, 109

Marine Infantry Regiment, 24th, 25, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 79, 81-85, 87*n*, 90-93, 93*n*, 94, 94*n*, 96-99

Marine Infantry Regiment, 25th, 23, 25, 42, 53, 66, 88, 89, 94*n*, 109, 111, 112, 151, 152

Marine Artillery Battalion, 1/14, 51, 66*n*, 81, 109, 152

Marine Artillery Battalion, 2/14, 51, 52*n*, 66*n*, 81, 157

Marine Artillery Battalion, 3/14, 46, 49, 66

Marine Artillery Battalion, 4/14, 46, 66

Marine Infantry Battalion, 1/22, 130, 132, 134, 143, 145, 146, 146*n*, 147-150, 152, 154

Marine Infantry Battalion, 1/23, 67-69, 71, 73, 75*n*, 77, 78*n*, 79, 96, 97*n*

Marine Infantry Battalion, 1/25, 42, 42*n*, 45, 111, 112

Marine Infantry Battalion, 2/22, 130, 132, 143, 145-149, 151, 152

Marine Infantry Battalion, 2/23, 67-69, 69*n*, 72, 75-80, 109

Marine Infantry Battalion, 2/24, 93*n*, 96, 97*n*, 109

Marine Infantry Battalion, 2/25, 43, 46, 47, 49, 50, 111, 112

Marine Infantry Battalion, 3/22, 130, 134, 136, 139, 140, 140*n*, 141, 141*n* 142, 144, 145, 148-150, 152, 154, 156, 157

- Marine Infantry Battalion, 3/23, 76, 79
 Marine Infantry Battalion, 3/24, 96, 97, 97n
 Marine Infantry Battalion, 3/25, 43, 46, 47, 49-52, 68, 81, 111, 112
 Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 4th, 20, 25, 35, 53, 65, 66, 109
 Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 10th, 10, 18, 23, 25, 35, 43, 49, 64, 64n, 66, 109, 111, 112, 152, 158n
 Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 11th, 20, 25, 35, 49, 51n, 66, 158n
 Armored Amphibian Battalion, 1st, 20, 23-25, 35, 44, 50, 68, 69, 72, 75n, 84, 109
 Defense Battalion, 1st, 13, 20, 158
 Defense Battalion, 10th, 123, 145n, 151
 Defense Battalion, 15th, 13, 20, 108, 109
 Pack Howitzer Battalion, 2d Separate, 122, 124, 127, 128, 143, 145, 152, 152n
 Special Weapons Battalion, 4th Division, 62, 79, 88, 108n
 Tank Battalion, 4th, 23, 42, 50, 69, 74, 89, 123, 124, 129, 143, 145, 149, 151n
 Reconnaissance Company, V Amphibious Corps, 13, 20, 45n, 58, 60, 61, 123, 124, 128, 135, 143, 145, 148, 151n
 Scout Company, 4th Division, 109
 Engineer Company, 2d Separate, 122, 135, 140
 Company, 1st Joint Assault Signal, 20, 23
 Medical Company, 2d Separate, 122
 Motor Transport Company, 2d Separate, 122
 Tank Company, 2d Separate, 122, 124, 130, 132, 134, 136, 139, 144, 145, 147, 149-151
 Marshall, Captain, 2
 Marshall, LtCol S. L. A., 53n; Col, 100n, 106n
 Marshall Islands, 1-3, 3n, 4-12, 12n, 13, 13n, 15, 17, 17n, 18, 20-23, 25, 26, 28-31, 33n, 36, 37, 39, 39n, 41, 42, 58, 109, 116-118, 151, 152, 155, 157-159, 159n, 160
 Martin, LtCol Glen E., 133n, 146n
 Maryland, USS, 43, 48, 66, 81
 Matsuura, Cdr Goro, 29n, 30n
 Maui, 37n, 41, 109, 122, 123
 McCabe, LtCol Robert A., 140n, 155n
 McCord, USS, 128, 131
 McGovern, Captain John B., USN, 57
 McKee, USS, 56, 57
 McQueen, BrigGen John C., 100n
 McReynolds, LtCol William, 51n, 52n
 Meade, USS, 56
 Mejit Island, 153, 156, 156n
 Melanesians, 3
 Mellu, 17, 42, 43, 43n, 44-46, 46n, 47-49, 53-55, 62, 66
 Mellu Pass, 45, 47, 48
 Merritt, BrigGen Lewie G., 14, 159
 Metzger, LtCol Louis, 24n, 25, 26n, 69n, 75n
 Micronesian, 3
 Midway, 38, 41
 Mille Atoll, 159
 Mille, 3, 3n, 7, 10, 11, 13, 28-31, 37, 38, 39n, 41, 116, 118, 159, 160, 160n
 Miller, Capt James R., 79
 Mindanao, 6
 Minneapolis, USS, 39, 55, 57
 Minoru, Petty Officer Fujita, 107
 Mississippi, USS, 56, 57, 100n
 Mitscher, RAdm Marc A., 9, 13, 14, 38, 125-127, 127n
 Mizony, LtCol Harold I., USA, 137, 140, 142
 Mobile, USS, 42, 48, 81
 Mobile Seaborne Infantry Brigade. *See* 1st Amphibious Brigade (IJA).
 Mobile Shipborne Force. *See* 1st Amphibious Brigade (IJA).
 Molokai, 41
 Monterey, USS, 41
 Montgomery, RAdm Alfred E., 38-40, 126
 Moore, Col Floyd R., 123, 144n
 Morison, Samuel Eliot, 6n, 117n, 125n
 Morris, USS, 81
 Munda, 5
 Murray, USS, 63
 Musashi, IJN, 126
 Muzinbaarikku Island, 135
 Nabeshima, RAdm Shunsaku, 29n, 30n
 NADINE Point, 94, 95
 Nagara, IJN, 29, 30, 38
 Nagata, Warrant Officer, 61
 Nagato, IJN, 126
 Nagazyna, MSgt John J., 141
 Naka, IJN, 29, 127
 Nakajima, Cdr Chikataka, 30n, 31n, 126n, 127n
 Namorik Atoll, 152, 156
 Namu Atoll, 152, 155, 157
 Namur Island, 13, 17, 18, 19n, 20, 21, 21n, 22-26, 28, 29, 31-34, 39, 40, 42-44, 46, 46n, 48, 49, 52, 53, 62, 64, 65, 66n, 67-70, 77, 79, 79n, 80-82, 84, 87-89, 89n, 91, 92, 94, 95, 95n, 96-99, 105, 108, 108n, 109-112, 115, 117, 122-124, 146, 152, 159n
 NAP Strong Point, 106
 NARCISSUS Street, 93, 94
 Nassau, USS, 58
 NASTURTIAM Lane, 93
 NAT Circle, 75, 76, 78, 79
 NATALIE Point, 94, 97, 97n
 NATHAN Road, 105, 106
 Natoma Bay, USS, 58
 Nauru, 5, 7, 10, 12n, 37-39
 Naval Construction Battalion, 109th; 108
 Negri, Col Peter J., 108n, 109n
 Neutralization Group. *See* Task Group 50.15.
 New Britain, 7, 18
 New Guinea, 6, 7
 New Jersey, USS, 126, 127, 127n
 New Mexico, USS, 56, 57, 63
 New Orleans, USS, 39, 39n, 55, 57
 NEWT Point, 134
 Nimitz, Adm Chester W., 6, 6n, 7-9, 9n, 10-12, 12n, 13, 14, 14n, 15, 21, 36, 116, 121, 151
 Ninni Island, 17, 53-55, 57, 62
 Ninni Pass, 53, 54
 Nishida, MajGen Yoshima, 118, 120, 128
 NOB Pier, 100, 105-107
 NOEL Road, 105

NORA Point, 89n, 97
 NORA Road, 104, 105
 NORBERT Circle, 72, 77
 Northern Attack Force. *See* Task Force 53.
 Northern Landing Force. *See* Task Group 56.2.
 North Pacific Area, 6n
 North Pacific Force, 9n
 NUBBIN Lane, 91, 92
 NUT Lane, 91, 92, 97

 Oahu, 7, 26, 41
 Obella Island, 49, 50, 152
 Ocean Island, 5
 O'Donnell, LtCol Clarence J., 42, 43, 46, 111
 Okinawa, 151
 Oldendorf, RAdm Jesse B., 124
 ORANGE Plan, 3, 4, 4n
 Ormsby, USS, 55n
 O'Sullivan, Col Curtis D., USA, 100
 Overton, USS, 53, 54, 112

 Pacific Fleet, 6, 6n, 14, 15n, 37n
 Pacific Ocean, 1-3, 3n, 5, 17, 28, 35, 36, 48, 115, 125, 150, 160
 PAL Blockhouse, 65, 65n, 81
 Palaus, 2, 126
 Paramount Studios, 17n
 Parry Island, 117, 118, 120, 120n, 124, 127, 128, 131n, 136, 137, 140, 142, 143, 143n, 144, 145, 145n, 146-149, 149n, 150, 151
 PAULINE Point, 81, 92, 96
 Pearl Harbor, 14, 18, 21, 26, 28, 37, 41, 60, 109, 121, 125, 127, 151
 Pendleton, Camp Joseph H. 20, 23, 25
 Pennsylvania, USS, 56, 56n, 57, 124, 128, 131, 145-147
 Pensacola, USS, 39
 Peter Road, 74n, 84
 Pfeiffer, Col Omar T., 15n; BrigGen, 124n
 Phelps, USS, 43, 43n, 44, 45, 48, 49, 49n, 50, 66, 68, 131, 137
 Philippines 4, 31
 Polynesians 3
 Ponape Branch Bureau, 2
 Ponape Island, 37, 109n
 PORCELAIN. *See* Kwajalein Island.
 Porterfield, USS, 42, 50
 Portland, USS, 58, 60, 128, 137
 POSY. *See* Rigili Island.
 Power, 1stLt John V., 88
 Pownall, RAdm Charles A., 38, 39
 President Polk, USS, 55n
 Princeton, USS, 39, 41, 125
 PRIVILEGE. *See* Eniwetok Island.

 QUADRANT Conference, 8
 Quantico, 53n
 Quebec, 8

 Rabaul, 5, 30
 Ragsdale, RAdm, V. H., 124
 RAINBOW Plans, 4n

 Ralik, 1, 3
 Ralik Chain, 155
 Ratak, 1, 3
 Ready, BrigGen Joseph L., USA, 58
 Reconnaissance Company. *See* Marine Units.
 Reconnaissance Troop. *See* Army Units.
 Redmond, Bernard, 110n
 Reeves, RAdm John W., 39, 126
 Regiment. *See* Army Units; Marine Units; Japanese Units.
 Reinhardt, Maj Robert S., Jr., 134n, 146n
 Relief, USS, 37
 Rentz, Maj John N., 5n
 Reserve Group, 36
 Reserve Landing Force. *See* Task Group 56.3.
 Rickets, Capt Claude V., USN, 128n
 Rigili Island, 143
 Ringgold, USS, 56, 57
 RITA. *See* Darrit Island.
 Roberts, LtCol Charles D., 20n
 Rocky Mount, USS, 17, 30
 Rogers, Maj James L., USA, 36, 145
 Rogers, Maj Thomas H., Jr., 111n
 Rogers, Col William W., 21, 21n, 22n, 51n, 53n, 82n, 99, 99n
 Roi Island, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19n, 20, 21, 21n, 22, 22n, 23-26, 28, 29, 31-34, 37-40, 42-46, 46n, 48, 53, 64, 64n, 65, 65n, 66-74, 74n, 75-77, 79-81, 85, 85n, 87, 88, 91, 94, 96, 105, 108, 108n, 109-112, 115, 117, 118, 122, 124, 152, 153n, 157, 159
 Rongerik Atoll, 153, 157
 ROSALIE. *See* Uliga Island.
 Ross, Capt John F., Jr., 84n, 85, 85n, 86n, 94, 94n
 Rothwell, LtCol Richard S1n, 85n
 Rujiyoru Island, 124, 127, 128, 131
 Runway Able, 74n

 Saavedra, Albaro de, 2
 SAGEBRUSH. *See* Elugelab Island.
 Saipan 28, 115, 115n, 116, 124n, 127n, 160
 Salamaua 5
 Salerno, 17
 SALLY, 32
 SALLY Point, 44, 49, 67, 81, 86
 SALOME. *See* Dalap Island.
 Salt Lake City, USS, 39
 Samoa, 3, 8, 35, 122, 123
 Samoan area, 151
 San Clemente Island, 23-25
 Sanders, LtCol Alvin S., 108n
 Sanderson, BriGen Lawson H. M., 159n
 San Diego, 17n, 20, 23n, 25, 67, 122
 San Francisco, USS, 39, 56, 57
 Sangamon, USS, 40, 73, 125, 131
 Santa Fe, USS, 43, 45n, 65, 66, 75
 Saratoga, USS, 39, 41, 108n, 125
 Scales, Maj James S., 75n, 79n
 Schley, USS, 42n, 129, 143
 Schmidt, MajGen Harry, 13, 17, 17n, 19, 23, 35, 44, 64, 67, 71, 75, 79, 79n, 82, 82n, 83, 94, 94n, 96, 96n, 99, 111, 124

Schneider, Col Merlin F., 154, 158; BrigGen, 149n
 Scott, Maj Thomas D., 134n, 147n, 149n
Seal, USS, 29, 30
 Search and Patrol Group. *See* Task Group 57.3
 Sheldon, LtCol Frederick B., USA, 13, 20, 58, 61
 Sherman, RAdm Frederick C., 41, 126
 Sherrod, Robert, 110n, 152n, 159n
 Shionoya, Warrant Officer, IJA, 127, 127n, 145, 145n.
 Ships
 AGC, 17, 17n
 Amphibious Force Flagship, 17n
 Auxiliary General Communications vessel (AGC).
 17n
 Landing Ship, Dock 1, *See* *Ashland*, USS
 Salvage Boat 8, 67
 SC 997, 43, 48, 49, 49n
 SC 1012, 72n
 SC 1066, 136
 Shisetsubu, *See* Fleet Construction Section, Japanese Units.
 Shisler, Maj Clair W., 130, 139, 140, 140n, 141, 141n, 148, 149n, 154-156; Col, 139n
 Siegfried Line, 32
 Signal. *See* Army Units.
Sigsbee, USS, 56
 SILVERLEAF Lane, 87
 SKUNK Point, 132-135
 SLUMBER Point. *See* Parry Island.
 Small, RAdm Ernest G., 14
 Smith, LtCol Edward P., 55
 Smith, MajGen Holland M., 9-13, 13n, 14, 15, 15n, 17, 17n, 19, 121, 122
Solace, USS, 37
 Solomons, 1, 3
 Southern Attack Force. *See* Task Force 52.
 Southern Landing Force, *See* Task Group 56.1.
 South Pacific, 3, 5, 7, 11, 109
 South Pacific Area, 6n
 South Pacific Force, 9n
 South Seas Administration, 2
 Southwest Pacific, 3, 5, 6, 116
 Southwest Point, Roi, *See* WENDY.
 Spain, 2
 Sperling, Maj William E., III, 140n, 142n, 154, 155
 Spruance, Adm R. A., 8-11, 11n, 12, 13, 15, 37, 39, 42, 43, 61, 109n, 121, 125-127, 127n
 Stark, Adm H. R., 4n
 Stein, Lt Saul, 90, 90n
Stevens, USS, 56, 57
 Stevenson, 1stLt Robert E., 52
 Stiff, LtCol Houston, 92n, 97n
 Stines, 2dLt Charles J., 76n
 Stockman, Capt James R., 20n, 114n
 STRAWBERRY Lane, 87
 Strike Command. *See* Task Group 57.2.
Sumter, USS, 47
 SUNDANCE. *See* Majuro Atoll.
Suwanee, USS, 40, 125, 131
 SYCAMORE, 91, 95
 SYCAMORE Boulevard, 84, 88, 92-94

Tactical Group. *See* Marine Units.
 Taka Atoll, 153, 156
 Tanks, 36, 69, 70, 73-78, 86, 89, 92, 93, 93n, 94, 96, 97, 103, 104, 123, 132, 136, 139-142, 147-151, 154n
 Tarawa, 1, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 25, 27-30, 32, 37, 39, 39n, 80, 114, 150
 Taroa, 37-39, 41, 118
Tarpon, USS, 29
 Task Force 17, 126
 Task Force 50, 13
 Task Force 51, 9, 13, 15n, 17, 23n, 122n
 Task Force 52, 13, 17, 18, 36, 41, 55, 63, 122n
 Task Force 53, 13, 17, 18, 23, 23n, 25, 37, 39-42, 44, 57, 62, 111n, 122n
 Task Force 56, 9, 13
 Task Force 57, 14
 Task Force 58, 14, 101, 125, 126, 126n, 127
 Task Group 50.15, 14
 Task Group 51.1, 7, 13
 Task Group 51.2, 13, 17, 18, 58
 Task Group 51.3, 13
 Task Group 51.9, 13
 Task Group 51.11, 122, 127
 Task Group 56.1, 13, 20, 26, 35, 37, 53, 58, 113, 114, 127, 123
 Task Group 56.2, 13, 19, 23, 25, 27, 46, 52, 53, 55, 57, 108, 112, 114, 127, 128
 Task Group 56.3, 13, 20
 Task Group 57.2, 14
 Task Group 57.3, 14
 Task Group 58.4, 125, 126, 128
Tennessee, USS, 42, 48, 65, 81, 124, 128, 131, 137, 145, 146
 Thomas, BrigGen G. C., 124n
 Tinian, 115, 124n, 127n
 Tokyo, 3, 17, 29n, 128
 Tokyo Pier, 66, 69-71, 73
 Transport Division 4, 57, 57n
 Transport Division 26, 48, 52, 67
 Transport Division 28, 77n
Trathen, USS, 128, 137
 Treasury Islands, 18
 TRIDENT Conference, 5
 Trinidad, 22n
 Truk, 5, 28, 29, 29n, 30, 31, 109n, 115, 118, 121, 122, 125, 126, 126n, 127, 151
 Turner, RAdm Richmond K., 9, 11, 11n, 12, 13, 13n, 14, 15, 15n, 17-19, 23n, 25, 36, 37, 54, 55, 57, 100n, 107, 121, 121n, 122, 122n
 Typhoon (native chief on Ailuk), 156
 Ujae Atoll, 152, 154, 158
 Ujelang Atoll, 2, 4, 158
 Uliga Island, 18, 58, 60
 Underhill, BrigGen James L., 20n, 23, 43, 46, 46n, 48, 48n, 49, 49n, 109
 Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) 1, 18, 19n
 Utiirik Island, 41, 153, 157
 VALENTINE Pier, 144, 146, 146n, 148
 Vella Lavella, 5

Victory, Col Randall M., 46*n*
Virgo, USS, 55*n*

Wake, 3*n*, 5, 26, 37, 38, 41
Walker, Col John T., 122, 128, 134, 135, 143, 143*n*, 144,
145, 148, 149, 151, 152, 154; MajGen, 132*n*
WALLACE Road, 102, 102*n*
Warren, USS, 42*n*
Watson, BrigGen Thomas E., 13, 20, 122, 122*n*, 123-125,
127, 128, 131*n*, 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, 143, 143*n*,
144, 145, 148-151
WEASEL Point, 132, 134
Weeks, Lt Harvey C., 60
Wellington, New Zealand, 18
Wendt, LtCol William R., 17*n*, 23, 23*n*, 98*n*, 109*n*
WENDY, 32, 44
WENDY POINT, 66, 71, 72
Wensinger, Col Walter W., 20*n*, 92, 94
West, Lt William R., 87
WHEELER Strong Point, 102*n*
WHISKEY Road, 132
WHISTLER Strong Point, 102, 102*n*
WHOOPIE Trail, 130
Widdecke, LtCol Charles F., 147*n*
Wide Passage, 117, 118, 128

WILL Road, 102*n*, 106
WILMA Road, 102
WILMA Strong Point, 102
Wilson, LtCol A. Vincent, USA, 32
Windsor, USS, 55*n*
Woods, MajGen Louis E., 159*n*
Wotho Atoll, 154, 154*n*
Wotho Island, 152, 154, 158-160
Wotje Island, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 10*n*, 11-13, 21, 21*n*, 28, 29,
31, 37-39, 39*n*, 41, 108, 116, 118

Yamada, VAdm Michiyuki, 30, 39, 88
Yamato, IJN, 126
Yano, Col Toshio, 118, 120, 131
Yokohama Pier, 66*n*, 81
"Y" Plan, 5*n*
Yorktown, USS, 39, 126
Young, Capt Buenos A. W., 140*n*, 141*n*

Zeilin, USS, 55*n*
Zimmerman, Maj John L., 3*n*, 5*n*, 14*n*
Zimmerman, Col Wayne C., USA, 55, 112, 113
ZINNIA. *See* Bogon Island.
"Z" Plan, 3, 5, 31
Zutty, Mr. Samuel H., 89*n*, 95*n*



BIKAR ATOLL

BIKINI ATOLL

RONGELAP ATOLL

RONGERIK ATOLL

AILINGINAE ATOLL

TAKA ATOLL

UTIRIK ATOLL



MEJIT ISLAND

AILUK ATOLL

JEMO ISLAND

LIKIEP ATOLL

WOTHO ATOLL

UJELANG ATOLL

UJAE ATOLL

LAE ATOLL

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

WOTJE ATOLL

ERIKUB ATOLL

MALOELAP ATOLL

AUR ATOLL

LIB ISLAND

NAMU ATOLL

JABWOT ISLAND

AILINGLAPALAP ATOLL

MAJURO ATOLL

ARNO ATOLL

JALUIT ATOLL

NAMORIK ATOLL

KILI ISLAND

MILLE ATOLL

EBON ATOLL

KUSAIE ISLAND

PACIFIC

OCEAN

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Main Japanese Defenses



NAUTICAL MILES

MAP 1

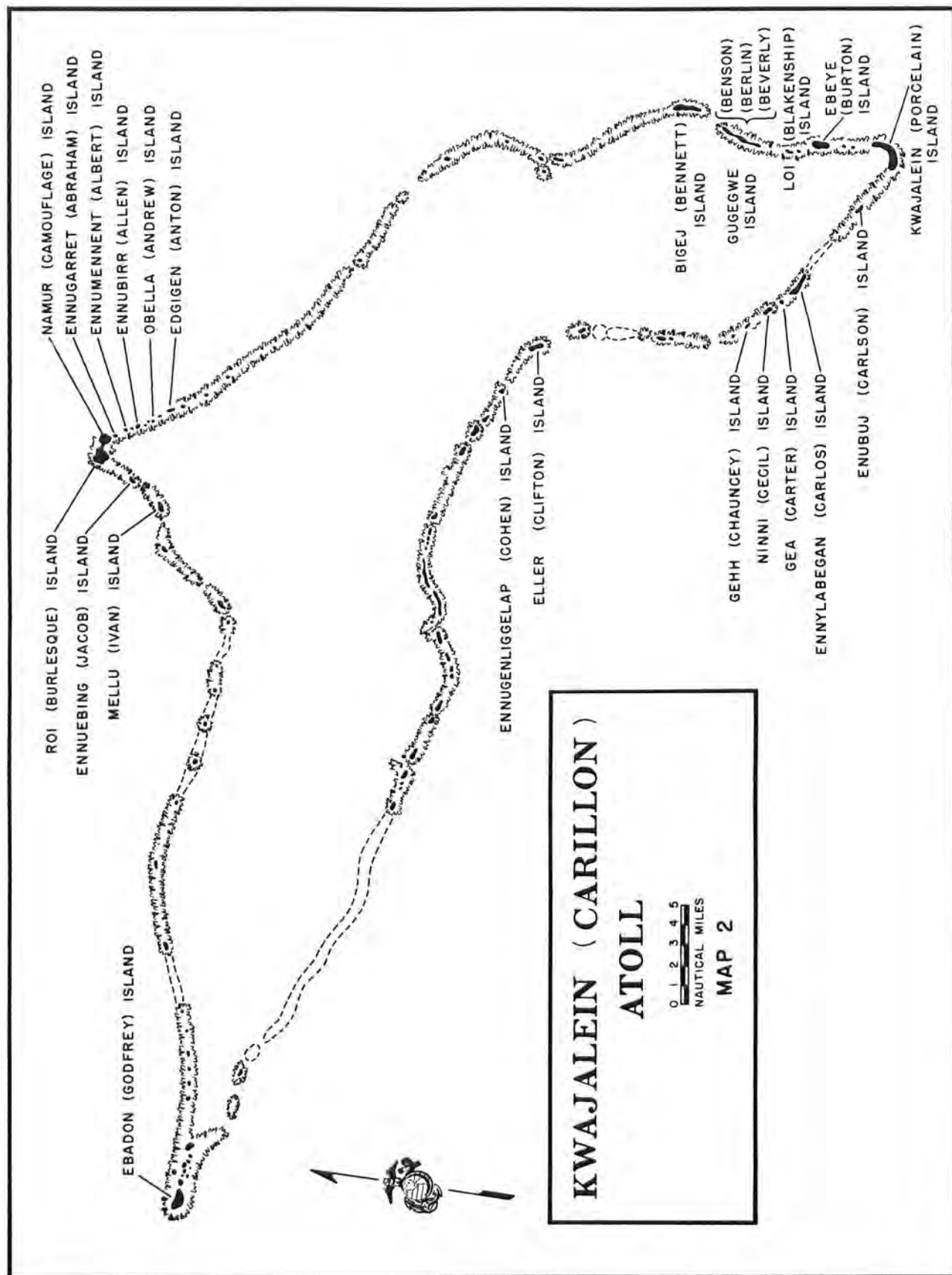


Chart 1

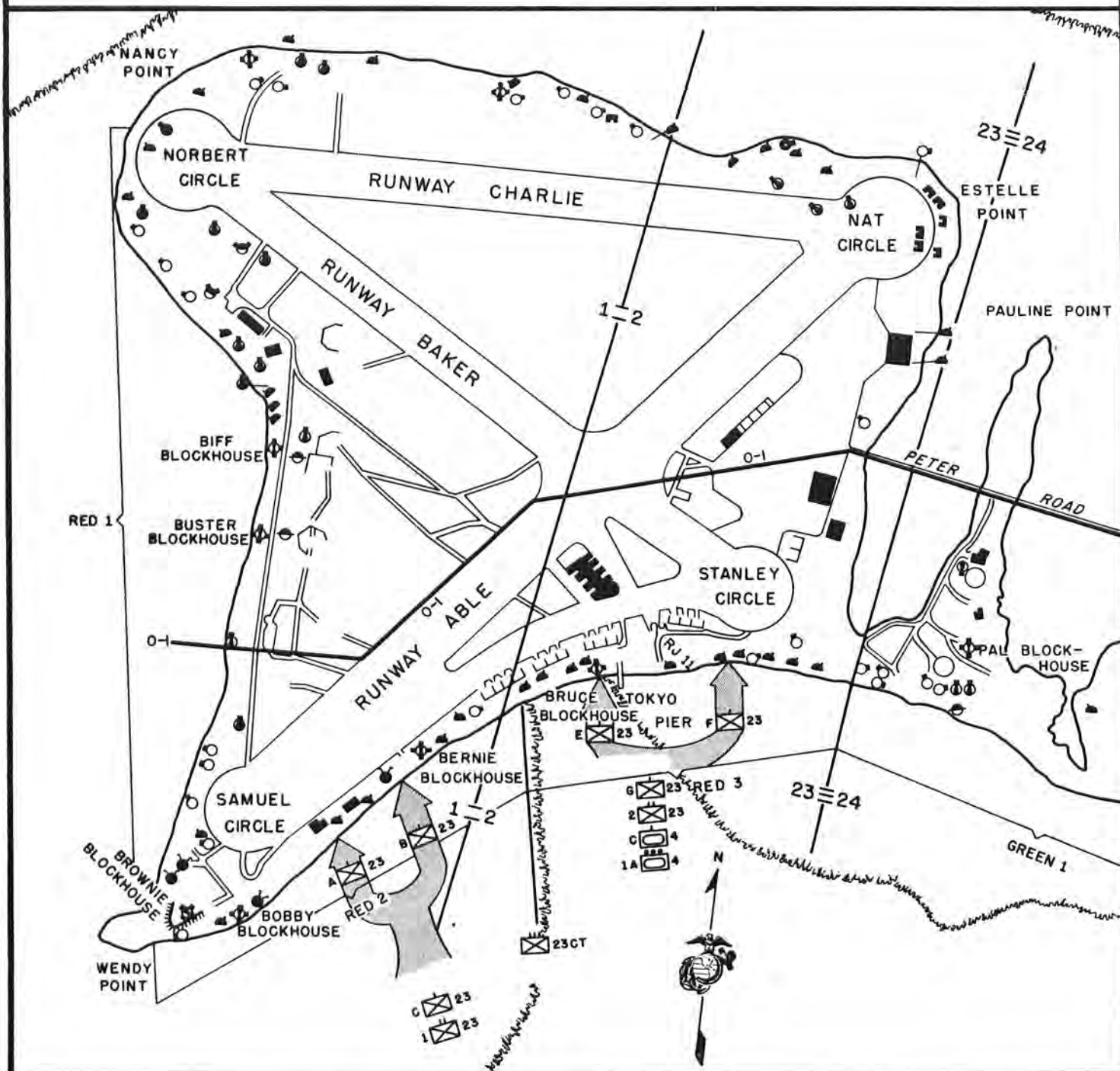


ROI (BURLESQUE) ISLAND

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| ✚ BLOCKHOUSE | ☉ HEAVY AA GUN (DOUBLE MOUNT) | ☼ RADAR |
| ☼ COAST DEFENSE GUN | ○ MACHINE GUN | ☼ PILLBOX |
| ☼ COVERED ARTY POS | ☼ MEDIUM AA GUN | ☼ OPEN ARTY POS |



MAP 8



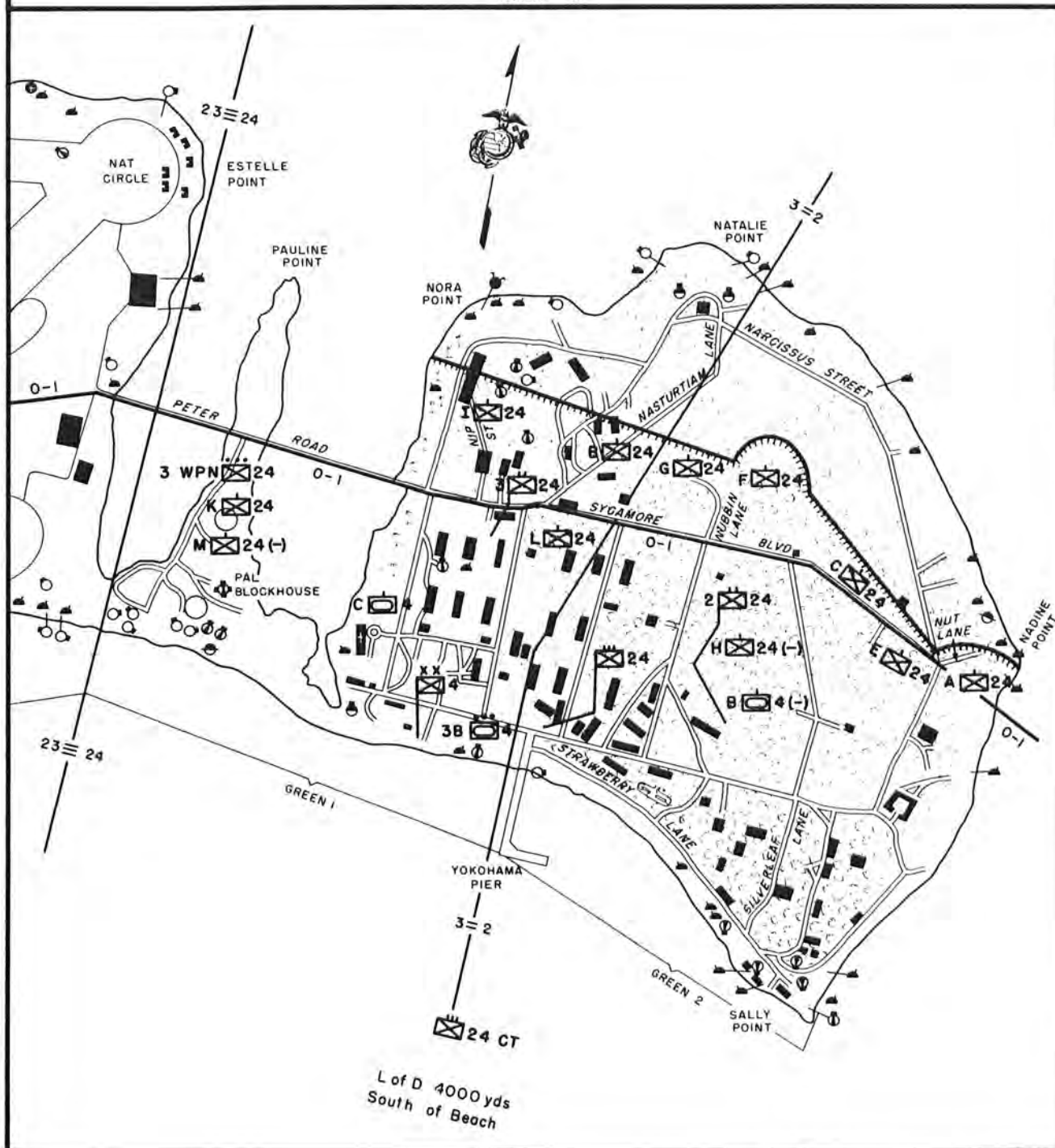
NAMUR (CAMOUFLAGE) ISLAND

(Approximate Disposition of RCT24 the Night of D-plus 1)

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| ⊕ BLOCKHOUSE | ○ MACHINE GUN | ⊕ HEAVY GUN (SINGLE MOUNT) |
| ⊕ COAST DEFENSE GUN | ⊕ MEDIUM AA GUN | ⊕ RADAR |
| ⊕ COVERED ARTY POS | ⊕ OPEN ARTY POS | ⊕ PILLBOX |

100 0 100 200 YARDS

MAP 9



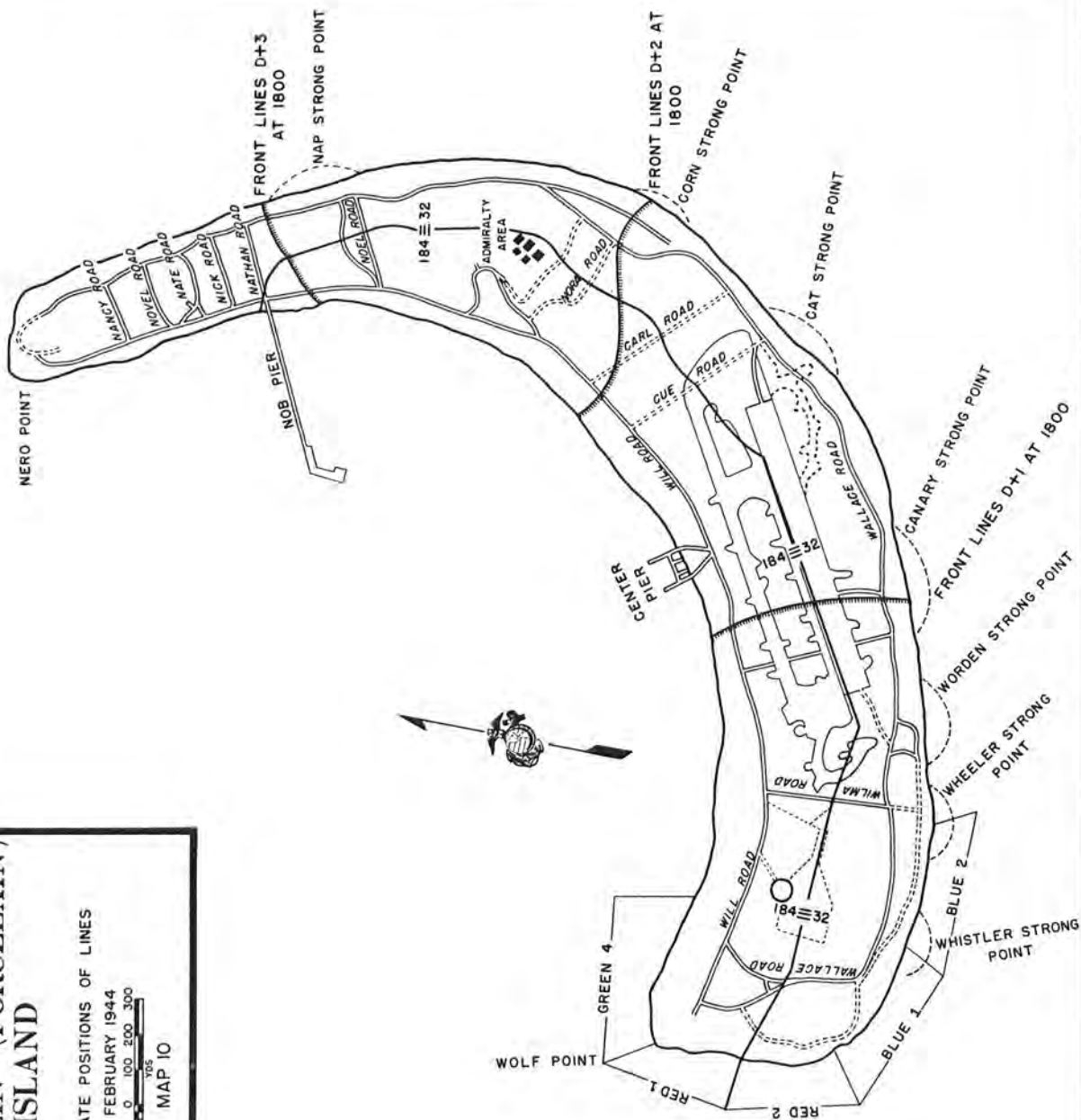
KWAJALEIN (PORCELAIN) ISLAND

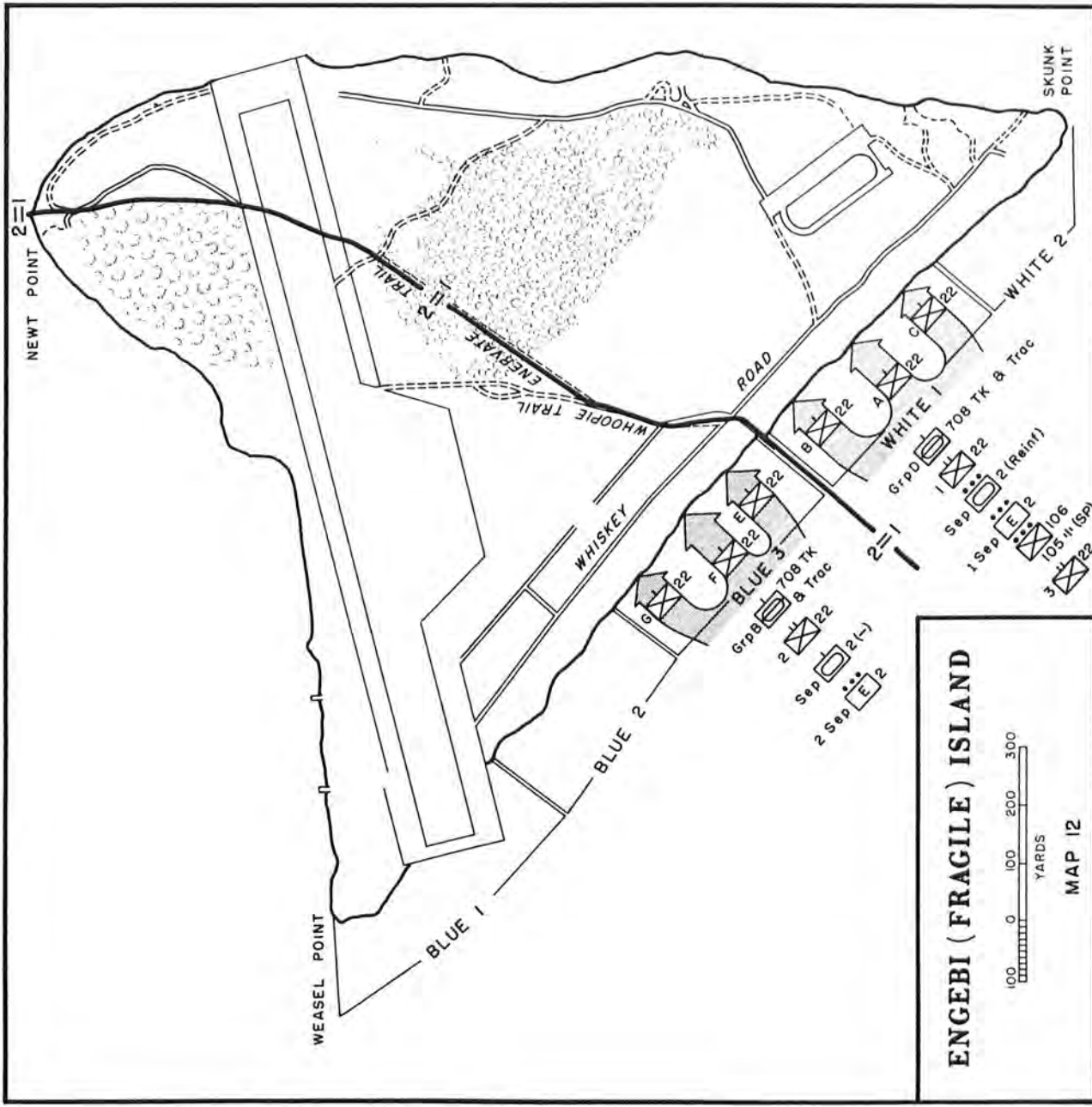
APPROXIMATE POSITIONS OF LINES

1-3 FEBRUARY 1944

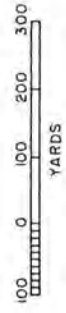
100 0 100 200 300

MAP 10

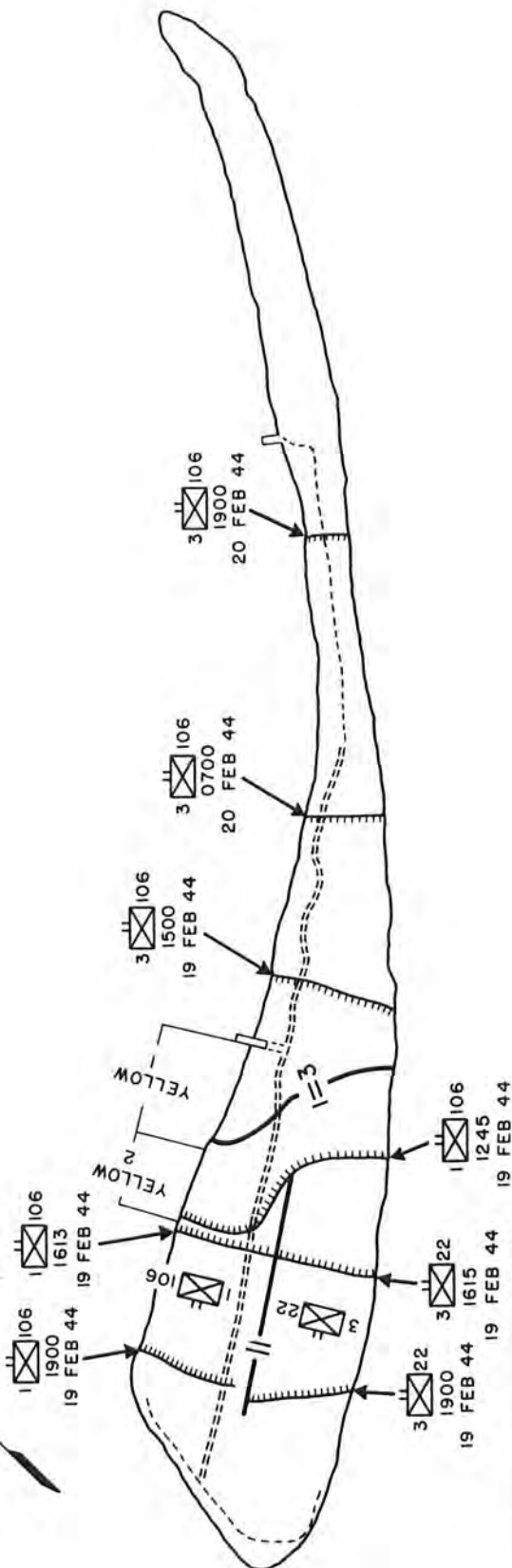




ENGEBI (FRAGILE) ISLAND



MAP 12



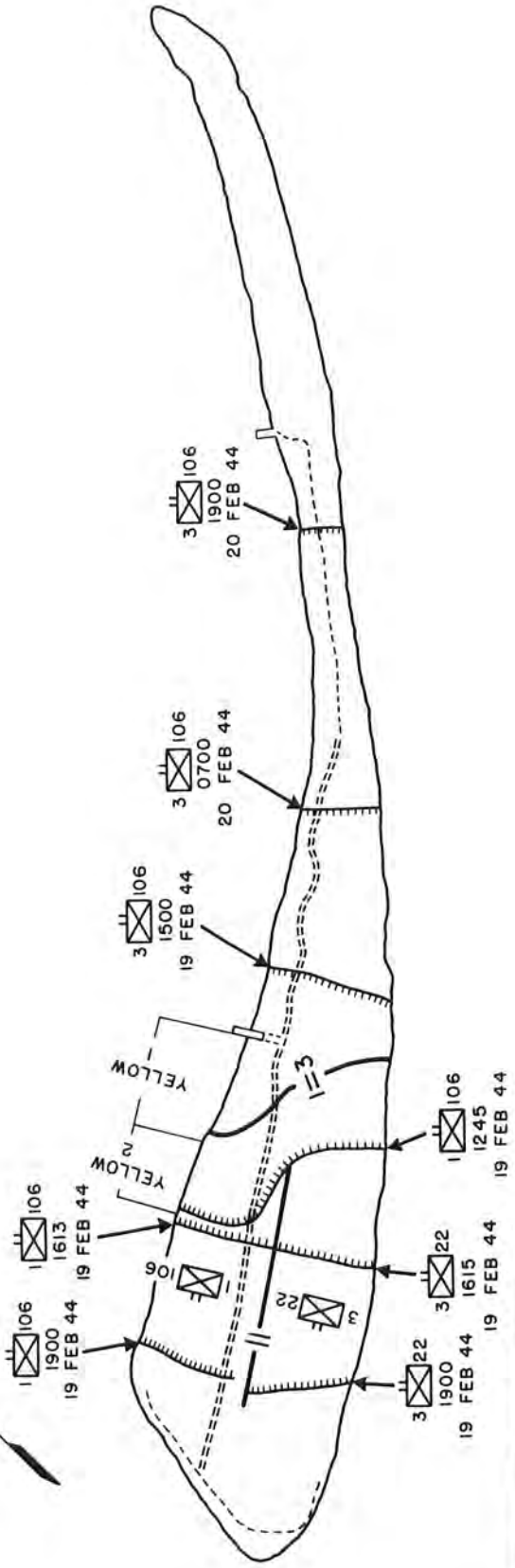
ENIWETOK (PRIVILEGE)

ISLAND

Approximate Positions of Lines
19-20 February 1944



MAP 13

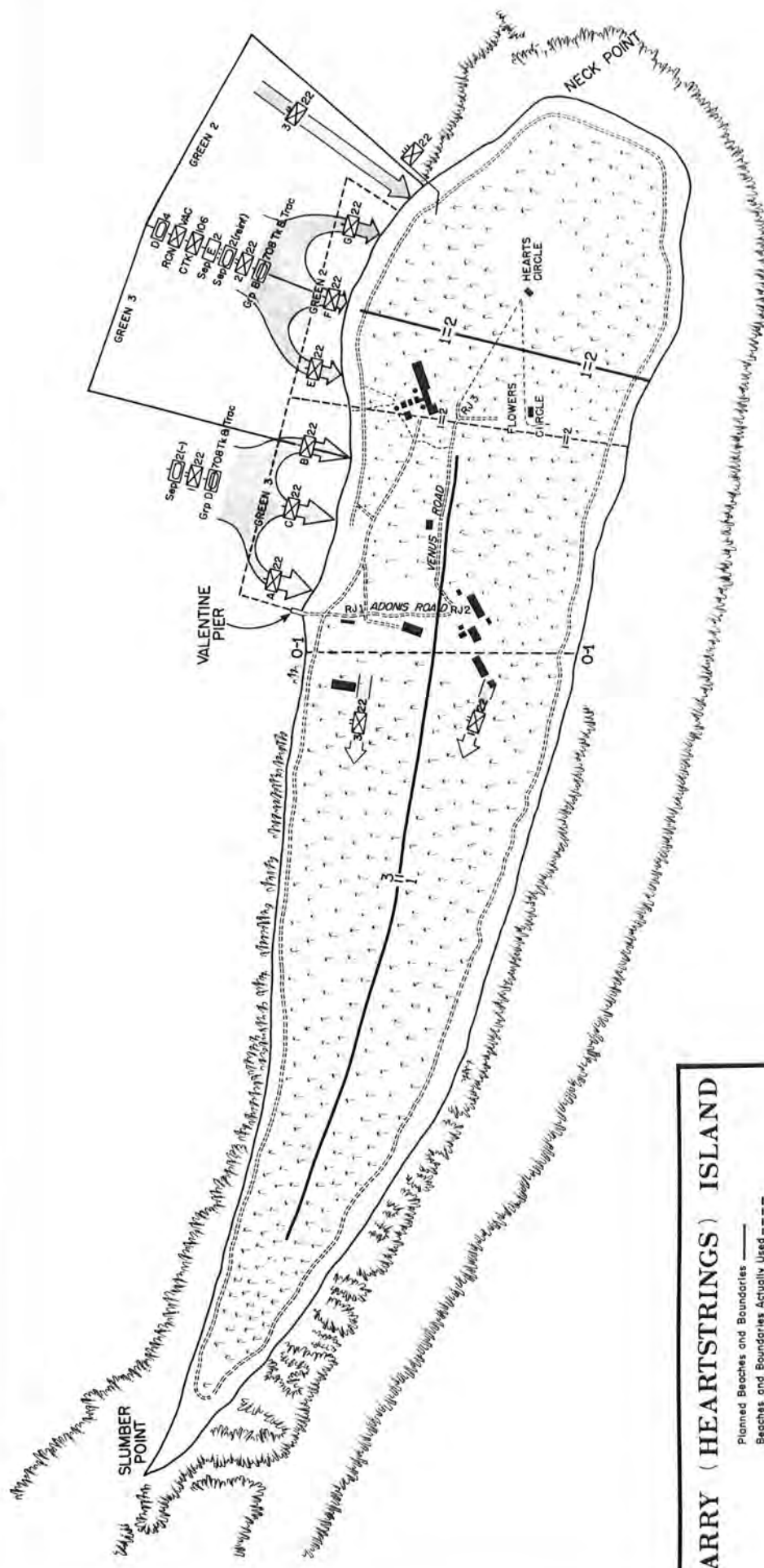


ENIWETOK (PRIVILEGE) ISLAND

Approximate Positions of Lines
19-20 February 1944



MAP 13

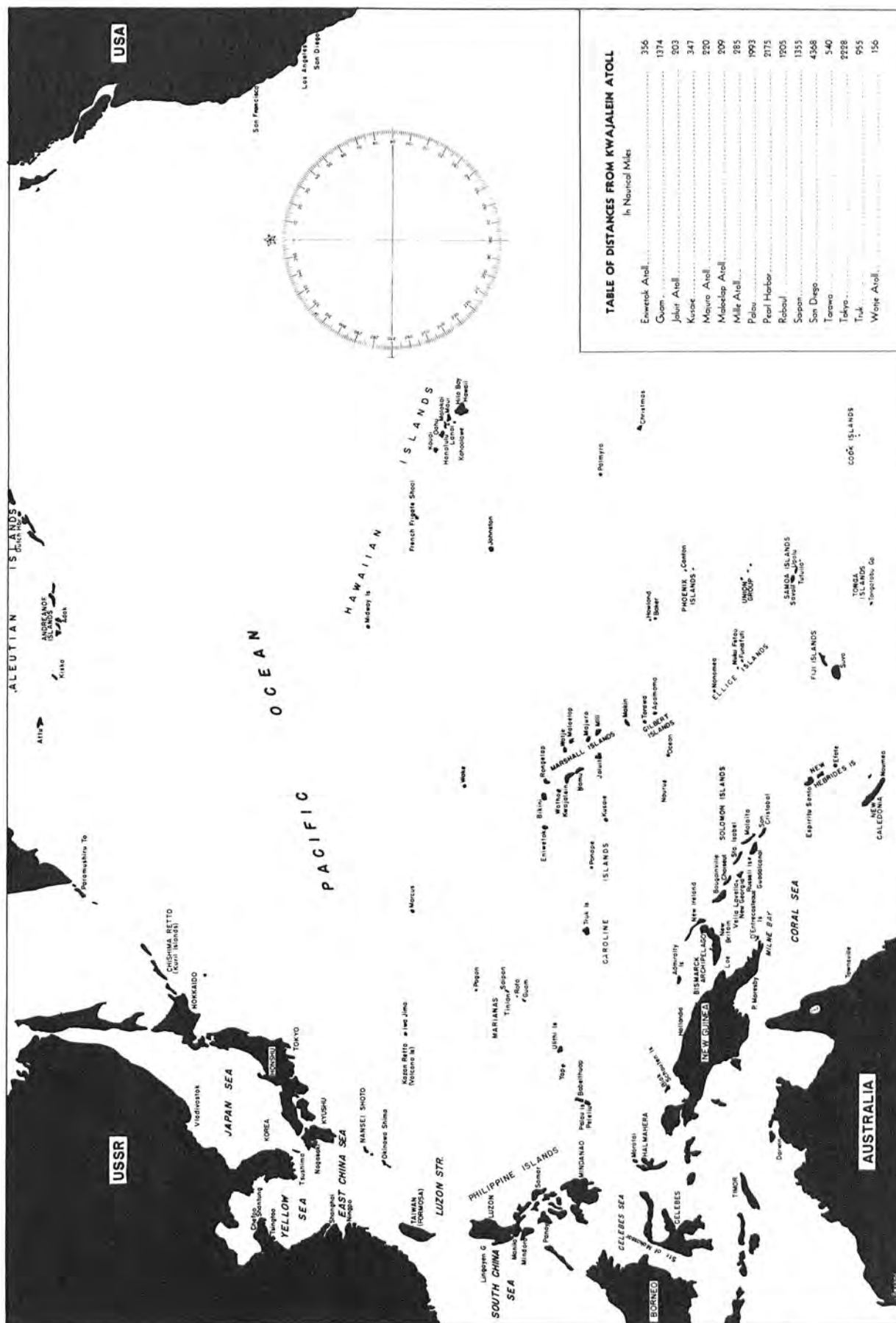


PARRY (HEARTSTRINGS) ISLAND

Planned Beaches and Boundaries —
 Beaches and Boundaries Actually Used - - - -



MAP 14



MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL LIBRARY