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OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT GENERAL COMMITTEE

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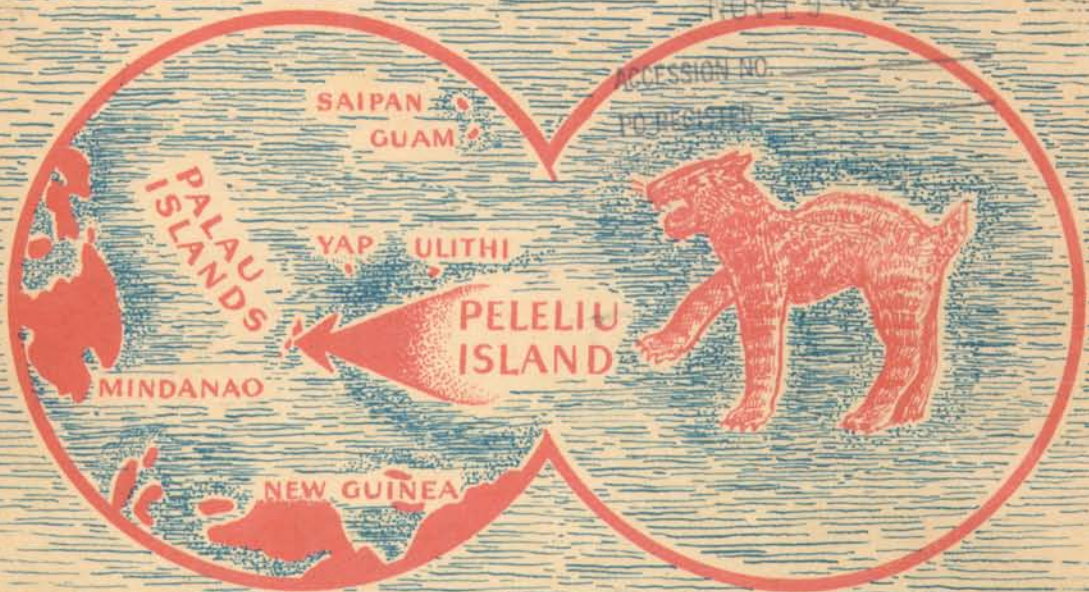
OPERATION REPORT

81ST INFANTRY DIVISION

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ACCESSION NO.
FD-REG-100



OPERATION ON PELELIU ISLAND

23 SEPT • 27 NOV 1944

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Operations of the 81st Infantry "Wildcat" Division (Reinforced) in the Stalemate II operations in the Western Carolines have been divided into three general phases for the purpose of recording results, as follows:

- Phase I - Capture of Angaur Island
- Phase II - Operations on Peleliu Island
- Phase III - Seizure of Ulithi and other Western Caroline Islands

The report covering Phase I, the amphibious operation of landing on Angaur Island, Palau Group, Western Carolines and the seizure, occupation, and initial development of that island, has been published and distributed.

This report covers Phase II, the operations on Peleliu Island and the islands immediately to the north thereof, from 22 September to 27 November 1944.

The following is a chronology of principal events in the history of these operations:

Phase I - Capture of Angaur Island

- 11 June - 8 July Division troops arrive in Oahu during period.
- 6 July Division Headquarters established in Oahu.
- 6 July - 6 Aug Planning and loading phase for Stalemate II.
- 6 Aug - 12 Aug Division enroute for Guadalcanal.
- 25 Aug - 8 Sept At Guadalcanal Rehearsal Area.
- 8 Sept - 15 Sept Enroute for Palaus.
- 0830 - 17 Sept Landing on Angaur Island with Division less RCT 323.
- 1034 - 20 Sept Angaur Island declared secure.
- 20 Sept Airbase development begun.
- 21 Sept RCT 323 departs for Ulithi operation.
- 22 Sept RCT 321 embarks for Peleliu, attached to 1st Marine Division.
- 24 Sept Unloading of cargoes of assault shipping completed.
- 1 Oct Ceremony symbolizing acquisition of Angaur Island for Government of the United States of America.
- 14 Oct Assault phase of operation declared complete, and administration and development of base turned over by Angaur Landing Force Commander (CG 81st Infantry Division) to Island Commander Angaur.

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22 Oct RCT 322 completed defeat of Japanese defense force when last cave area was entered and cleared of the enemy, including the senior commander, Major Goto.

Phase II - Operations on Peleliu Island

23 Sept RCT 321 arrived on Peleliu; attached to 1st Marine Division.

23 Sept - 29 Sept RCT 321 advanced along west coast of Peleliu and seized high ground in the center of the island.

29 Sept - 30 Sept RCT 321 relieved Fifth Marine Regt on Ngesebus and Kongauru Islands.

9 Oct RCT 321 seized Garakayo Island.

14 Oct - 15 Oct RCT 321, reinforced by 1st Bn 323 Inf, began offensive action to destroy the large enemy force in the hill mass in south central part of island.

20 Oct Commanding General 81 Infantry Division assumes command of all combat troops on Peleliu and Angaur, relieving Hq III PhibCorps and Hq 1st Marine Div.

26 Oct RCT 323 returned from Ulithi and relieved RCT 321 (less 3d Bn) in the combat area on Peleliu.

11 Nov 81 Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop (Reinf) seized Gorokottan Island.

15 Nov 81 Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop (Reinf) seized Ngeregong Island.

27 Nov RCT 323, reinforced by 3d Bn 321 Inf, completed defeat of Japanese defense force on Peleliu when last cave area was entered and cleared of the enemy, including the two senior officers, Major General Murai and Col Nakagawa.

Phase III - Seizure of Ulithi and Other Western Caroline Islands

21 Sept RCT 323 departs from Palau area under a naval task group command. RCT conducts reconnaissance of Ulithi Atoll.

23 Sept RCT 323 occupies Ulithi Atoll.

15 Oct - 16 Oct Elements of RCT 323 seize Ngulu Atoll.

18 Oct - 20 Oct RCT 323 enroute from Ulithi Atoll to Peleliu.

4 Nov Reconnaissance made of Pulo Anna Island.

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20 Nov Detachment 52 Engr (C) Bn (Reinf) occupies Pulo Anna Island.
1 Dec 81 Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop (Reinf) seizes Kayangel Atoll.
1 Jan Elements of RCT 321 seize Fais Island.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON PELELIU

The 81st Infantry Division, reinforced, less 323d Regimental Combat Team, was on its fifth day of the operation on Angaur Island, Palau Group, and had secured the island, when the Commanding General III PhibCorps inquired of the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division whether a regimental combat team could be made available to the Corps without delay for operations on Peleliu Island. Later in the day Rear Admiral George H. Fort, Commander Task Force 32; Major General Julian Smith, Commanding General Expeditionary Troops; and Major General Roy S. Geiger, Commanding General III PhibCorps, arrived at Division Headquarters, Angaur Island, for discussion of the situation. Inasmuch as completion of the occupation of Angaur Island could be accomplished readily without further employment of RCT 321, it was made available and alerted. Orders were issued for the movement the following day to Peleliu where it was to be attached to the 1st Marine Division for operational control.

The 321st Infantry and attached troops promptly relieved elements of the 1st Marine Division on the western coast of Peleliu Island and on 23 September initiated a vigorous attack. By determined offensive action this regimental combat team made a fine contribution toward the defeat of the enemy. On 16 October, after a brief defensive mission, it again assumed the offensive combat role with the objective the destruction of the final Japanese force in the Umurbrogal Mountain pocket. By 20 October, on which date the regiment reverted to control of the 81st Infantry Division, it had been a determining factor in clearing the enemy from the northern area of Peleliu Island and in driving the remaining defense forces into a pocket in the southern part of Umurbrogal Mountain. The regiment had assisted in mopping up Ngesebus Island and had seized and secured Garakayo Island still farther to the north.

The manner in which RCT 321 carried out its battle missions as part of the 1st Marine Division is best described by quoting from a letter of the Commanding General of that Division, as follows:

"The performance of duty of the officers and men of Regimental Combat Team 321 throughout the assault phase on Peleliu, Ngesebus, and the northern outpost islands warrants the highest praise. It was a pleasure to have this unit serve as part of my command during this extremely difficult operation, and I

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express the sentiments of every officer and man of the 1st Marine Division in wishing them good luck in future operations against the enemy. In the eyes of the entire 1st Marine Division they have earned a 'Well Done'."

The 323d RCT, which had seized and secured the Ulithi Atoll in an energetic manner, had been ordered to proceed to Peleliu. The 1st Battalion, 323d Infantry, arrived on 14 October and was attached to RCT 321 for the operation beginning 16 October.

At 0800, 20 October 1944 the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division was designated as Commanding General Ground Defenses, Southern Palau Islands, command passing at that time from the III PhibCorps. Headquarters 1st Marine Division was relieved at the same time and certain elements of that Division which had not already embarked for another station were placed under temporary command of the 81st Infantry Division until shipping could be made available. The Division now operated directly under command of the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area, Rear Admiral J. W. Reeves, Jr. The Commanding General 81st Infantry Division was also designated ComGenPOA Representative, Western Carolines, with certain general administrative functions.

Varying estimates were furnished the Division on the strength of the Japanese forces remaining on Peleliu. The maximum estimate was a force of 1200, a figure which was subsequently ascertained to be underestimated. Initial field orders issued by the Division from the Command Post on Peleliu prescribed that the mission and tactical plans of RCT 321 remain unchanged. This regiment was making gradual progress in reducing the size of the perimeter surrounding the Japanese defenders. Hills with precipitous sides and sharp coral pinnacles, matted with roots of shattered tree trunks, were blasted with all available weapons including air strikes with high explosives and napalm bombs. Infantrymen battled the Japanese defenders at close range. During daylight hours the enemy was generally secure in the intricate cave system. Infantry units advanced slowly under supporting fires and established themselves on the peaks and ridges with sandbag emplacements designed to withstand the sniper's bullet. At night the enemy ventured forth to counterattack and for other purposes, and little by little his force was whittled down in hand-to-hand combat. During night combat the hand grenade was the principal weapon of the infantrymen in the outpost and mortar fire was used extensively to harass the enemy in the areas in which he was known to circulate. In this night combat our troops had an advantage over the enemy by reason of an adequate supply and use of 60mm mortar illuminating flares.

On 26 October the 321st Infantry (less 1 battalion) was relieved by the 323d Infantry in the central combat zone. The 321st

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Infantry relieved the 5th Marines on the northern outpost zone. The 323d Infantry, employing similar tactics and attacking with determination and courage, closed in gradually on the Japanese and cleaned the enemy out of his innumerable caves in which the flamethrower, the bulldozer, and the tank played a prominent part in aiding the infantryman. Finally, on 25 November it was learned from prisoners that Major General Murai, tactical adviser present on Peleliu when it was attacked on 15 September, and Colonel Nakagawa, commander of the defenses of Peleliu, had on the previous night burned the regimental flag, reported by radio to Division Headquarters at Babelthuap "This is the end", and ordered the remaining troops to move out and attack to the death. The two commanders then committed suicide in the cave that already was filled with dead members of their command. On 27 November this final cave area was entered by troops of the 323d Infantry and the defense of Peleliu was definitely terminated.

A report to the Commander Forward Area on 28 November by the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area contained the following:

"Cleanup of the enemy by the 81st Division began on the 20th of October and was completed on the 27th of November. The successful accomplishment of this task under extremely difficult conditions of terrain and stubborn enemy resistance has been accomplished with a minimum of loss to our own troops and in a relatively short time For the efficient and workmanlike job of cleaning out enemy resistance as well as in preparing defenses of this island Major General Paul J. Mueller and the personnel under his command deserve hearty commendation and I recommend that the successful completion of their task be mentioned in the communique."

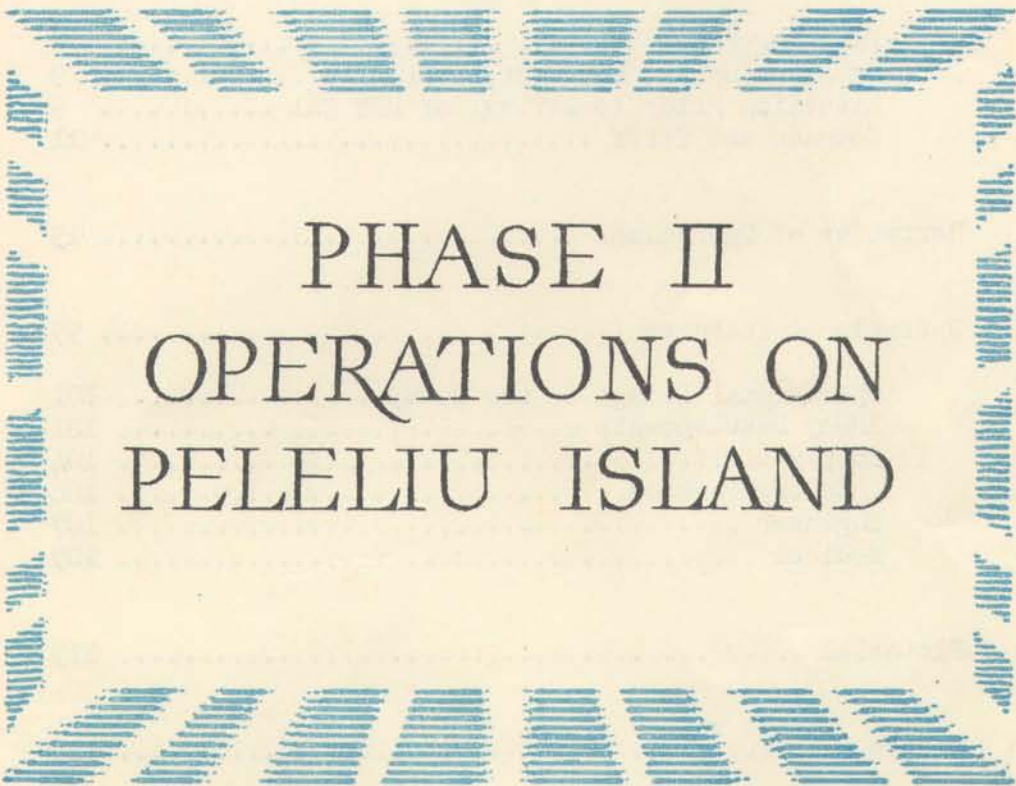
On 27 December 1944 the 81st Division Monument in the Peleliu Cemetery was dedicated before 7,000 troops of the Division who had assembled in honor of the heroic dead whose remains were there interred.

On 8 February 1945 the last elements of the 81st Infantry Division departed from Peleliu Island, thus terminating the Division's activities in the Western Carolines.



PAUL J. MUELLER
Major General, U. S. A.
Commanding.

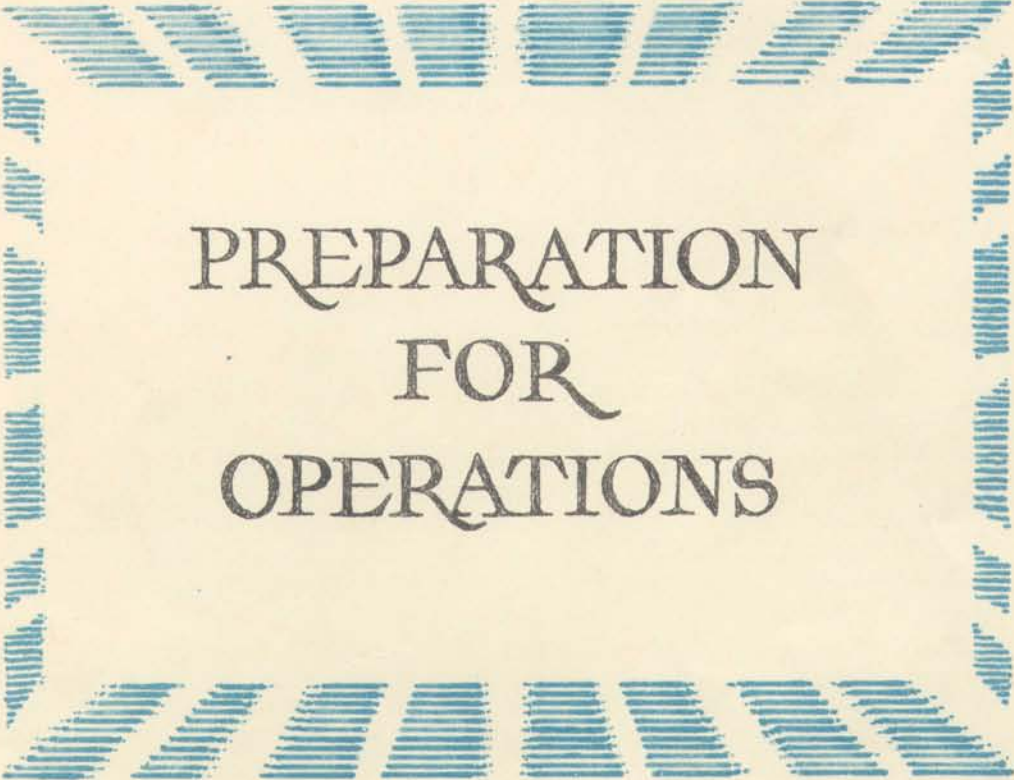
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PHASE II
OPERATIONS ON
PELELIU ISLAND

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PREPARATION
FOR
OPERATIONS

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PLANNING PHASE

A - PRELIMINARY PLANS

1. The concept of the Stalemate II Operation envisioned the capture and development of Peleliu and Angaur Islands in the Palau Group as bases for future operations against the Japanese, and seizure of Ulithi Atoll to provide an anchorage, seaplane base, and air base for units of the Pacific Fleet. Operations against the Palau Islands were to be conducted by the III PhibCorps, with the 1st Marine Division and the 81st Infantry Division (Reinf), less RCT 323, the landing forces to capture Peleliu and Angaur Islands respectively. RCT 323 was designated floating reserve for the Corps. Its subsequent employment at Ulithi was contemplated after its release as reserve by the Corps.

2. Assault landings on Peleliu and Angaur Islands were made on the 15th and 17th September 1944 respectively. In view of the satisfactory progress of these operations, RCT 323 was released from Corps reserve on 18 September and departed from Angaur beginning 20 September for independent action at Ulithi under Naval control (*). Angaur Island was declared secure on 20 September as remnants of the Japanese defense force were driven into two isolated pockets and mopping-up operations instituted to destroy them. On Peleliu, unexpectedly strong enemy resistance from the central hill mass prevented the advance of the 1st Marine Division northward to complete capture of the Island.

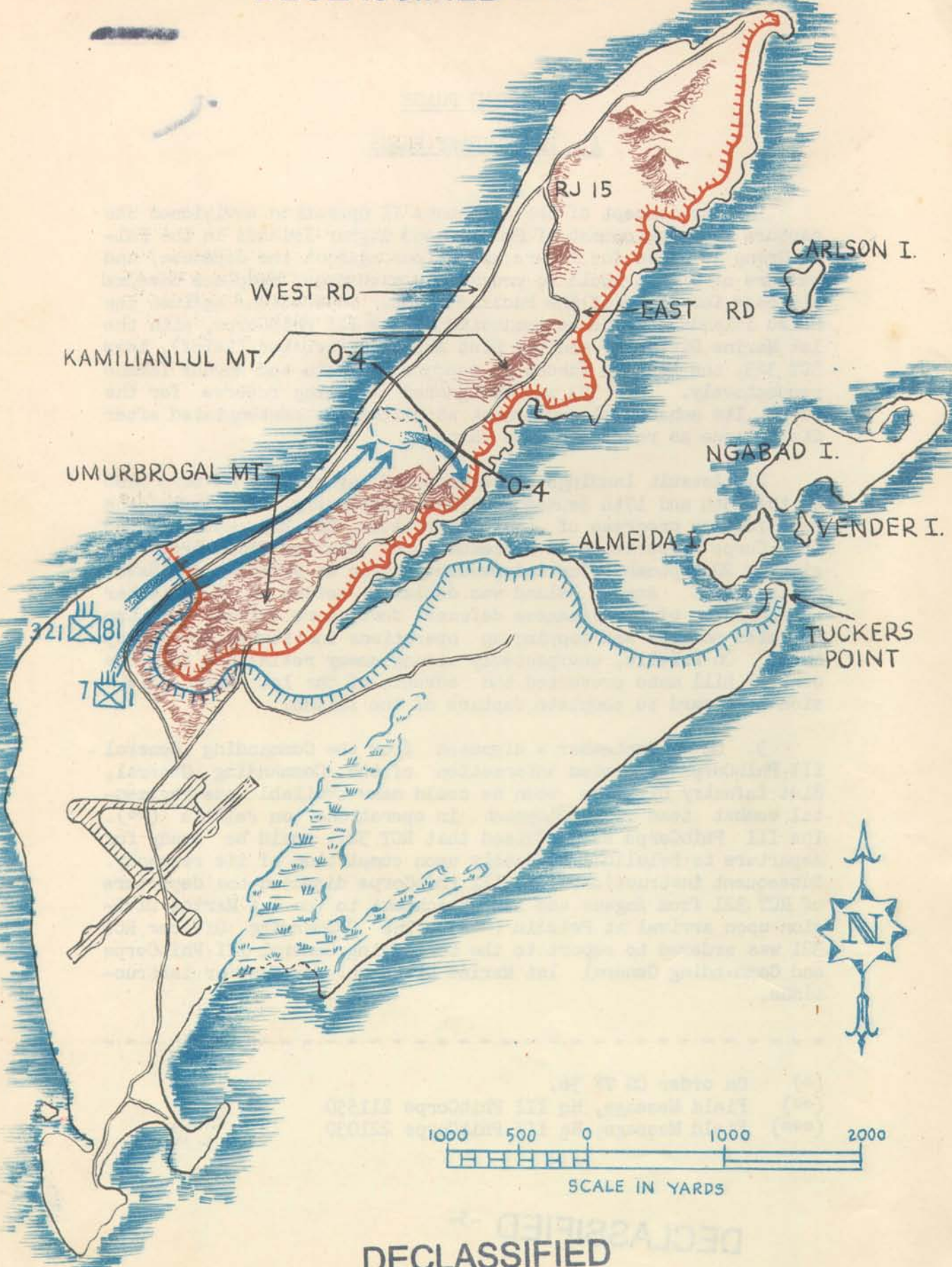
3. On 21 September a dispatch from the Commanding General III PhibCorps requested information of the Commanding General, 81st Infantry Division when he could make available one regimental combat team for employment in operations on Peleliu (**). The III PhibCorps was advised that RCT 321 could be ready for departure to Peleliu immediately upon completion of its resupply. Subsequent instructions from III PhibCorps directed the departure of RCT 321 from Angaur and its attachment to the 1st Marine Division upon arrival at Peleliu (***). The Commanding Officer RCT 321 was ordered to report to the Commanding General III PhibCorps and Commanding General 1st Marine Division for further instructions.

(*) On order CG TF 36.

(**) Field Message, Hq III PhibCorps 211550

(***) Field Message, Hq III PhibCorps 221030

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B - FINAL PLANS

1. The force as constituted for operations on Peleliu was under the command of Colonel Robert F. Dark, and was composed of the following units (*):

- 321 Inf Regt
 - Co A 306 Engr (C) Bn plus Det H&S Co
 - Co A (plus Co D less 2 Plats) and Det Hq 306 Med Bn
 - Det 781 Ord (LM) Co
 - 154 Engr (C) Bn (less 1 Co) plus Det H&S Co 1138 Engr (C) Gp
 - Det 592 JAS Co
 - Det 481 Amph Truck Co (20 DUKWS)
 - Co B 726 Amph Tractor Bn plus Det H&S Co
 - Co A plus Prov Mortar Plat 710 Tank Bn
 - Det Prov Gr Reg Co
 - Det Translator-Intrprtr Team "A", HCPA

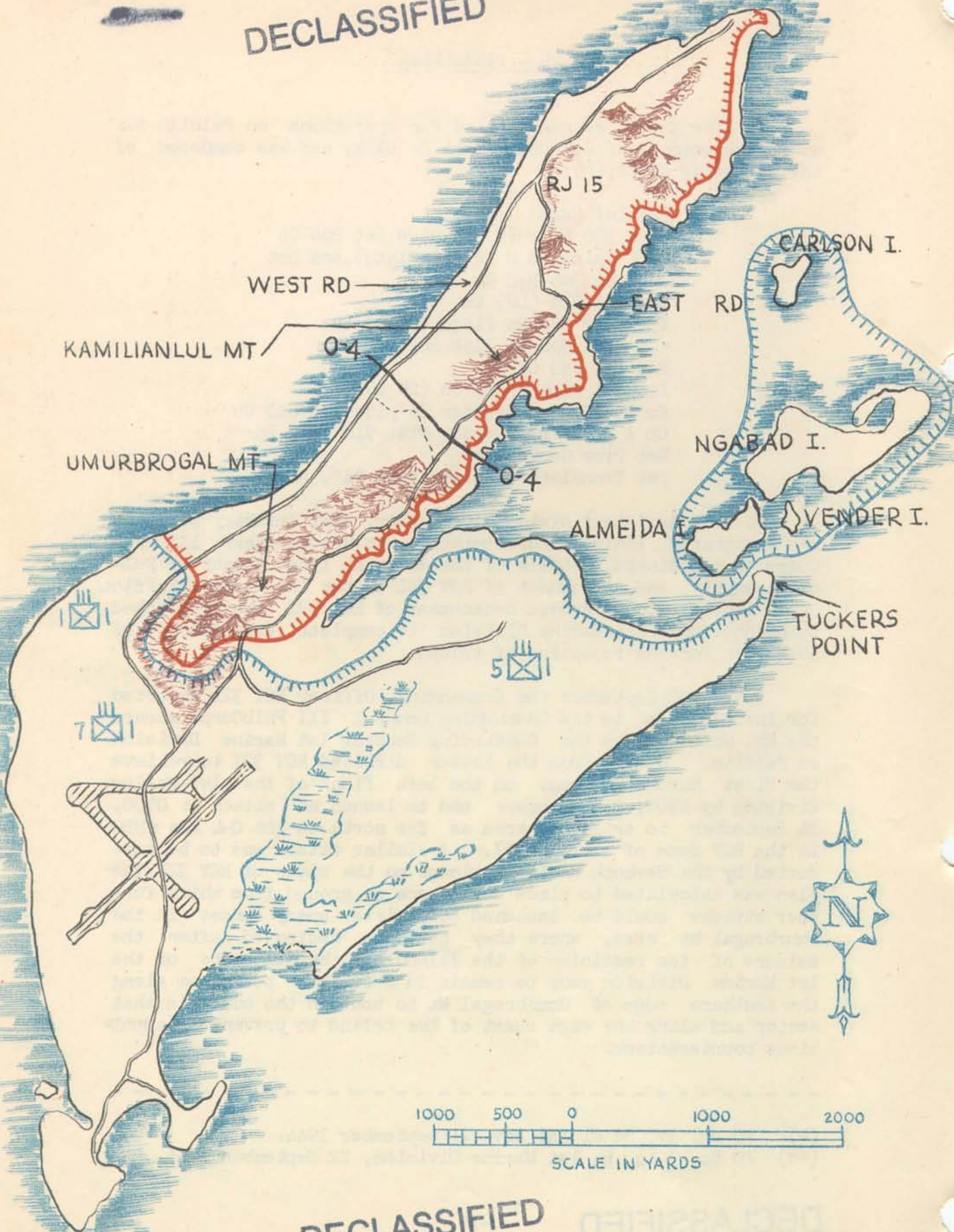
2. The Assistant Division Commander, 81st Infantry Division was designated liaison representative to Headquarters III PhibCorps to coordinate details of the movement from Angaur to Peleliu, supply, and attachment of RCT 321 to the 1st Marine Division. On 22 September an advance detachment of RCT 321 was dispatched to Headquarters 1st Marine Division to complete arrangements as necessary for the reception of troops.

3. On 22 September the Commanding Officer RCT 321 reported for instructions to the Commanding General III PhibCorps aboard the Mt. McKinley and the Commanding General 1st Marine Division on Peleliu. Orders from the latter directed RCT 321 to relieve the First Marine Regiment on the left flank of the 1st Marine Division by 1800, 23 September and to launch an attack at 0700, 24 September to seize the area as far north as the O-4 line within the RCT zone of action (**). A similar attack was to be conducted by the Seventh Marine Regiment on the right of RCT 321. The plan was calculated to place our troops on ground from which further attacks could be launched to isolate enemy forces in the Umurbrogal Mt area, where they could be destroyed after the seizure of the remainder of the Island. Other elements of the 1st Marine Division were to remain in defensive positions along the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt to contain the enemy in that sector and along the east coast of the island to prevent an amphibious counterattack.

(*) FO No. 17, Hq 81 Inf Div, 21 September 1944.

(**) FO No. 3-44, Hq 1st Marine Division, 22 September 1944.

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II - EMBARKATION AND MOVEMENT TO PELELIU

1. Embarkation commenced at 0700, 22 September on Red Beach Angaur (*). Loading of all troops and equipment except for LVT units, was completed at 1630. Ships lay to off Red Beach during the night 22-23 September. Shortly after daylight 23 September LVTs were loaded on LSTs. The force departed from Angaur at 1000 23 September and arrived at Orange Beach Peleliu 1200 the same date.

III - SITUATION ON PELELIU PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF RCT 321

1. On 23 September the combat situation on Peleliu was approaching a stalemate. The 1st Marine Division had completed occupation of the southern and east central portions of the Island to include the airfield, the approaches to the hill mass immediately to the north thereof, Purple Beach, Tucker's Point, and Almeida, Vender, Carlson, and Ngabad Islands. Landings on 15 September had been made in the face of strong enemy resistance. The subsequent seizure of the airfield had also been opposed with fanatical determination. By 23 September ".....the long sustained struggle against strong opposition and intense heat began to take its toll on combat efficiency....."(**). During the period 20-23 September the greatest gains were made in the eastern sector where Ngabad, Almeida, Vender, and Carlson Islands were occupied.

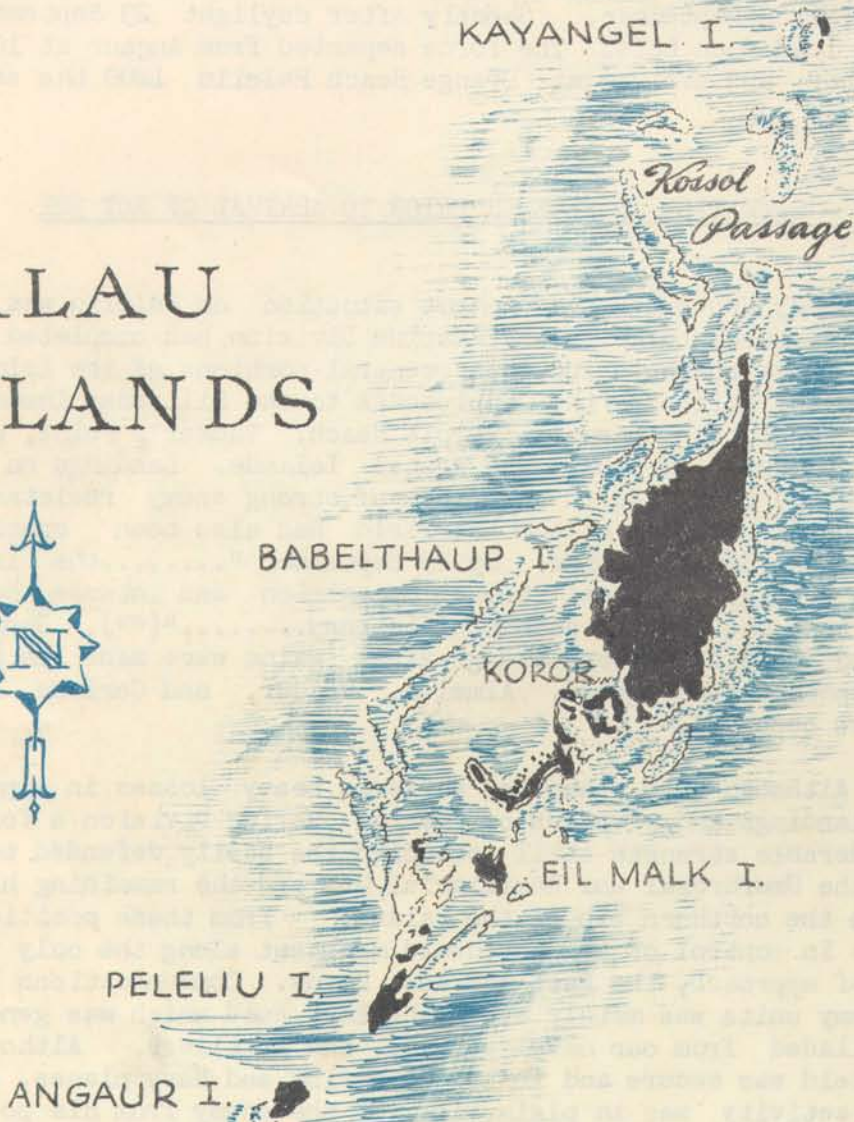
2. Although the enemy had suffered heavy losses in opposing the landings and advances of the 1st Marine Division a force of considerable strength still occupied the easily defended terrain of the Umurbrogal and Kamilianlul Mts and the remaining high ground to the northern tip of the island. From these positions they were in control of all northward movement along the only two avenues of approach, the East and West Roads. Communications between enemy units was mainly along the East Road which was generally defiladed from our naval gunfire and artillery. Although the airfield was secure and in use by Marine and Navy planes, all friendly activity was in plain view of the enemy from his positions on the commanding terrain. American troops and installations were in constant danger of counterattack. Japanese reinforcements from Babelthaup, Korrer, and Eil Malk could be landed on the northern shore of Peleliu provided their movements were undetected by our Naval Patrol craft.

(*) FO No. 17, Hq 81 Inf Div, 21 September 1944.

(**) Special Action Report, Palau Operation, 1st Marine Division (Reinf).

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... of the ...

PALAU ISLANDS



LEGEND

 Reef

 Land

SCALE (Approx.) 1" = 12 miles

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IV - COMMAND AND STAFF

81st INFANTRY DIVISION (Reinf)

The Command and Staff of units of the 81st Infantry Division (Reinf) as constituted for the Stalemate II Operation was as follows:

CG 81 Inf DivMaj Gen Paul J. Mueller
CG 81 Div ArtyBrig Gen Rex W. Beasley
Asst Div ComdrBrig Gen Marcus B. Bell
Chief of StaffCol James C. Short
AC of S, G-1Lt Col John J. LaPage
AC of S, G-2Lt Col Paul D. Goddard
AC of S, G-3Lt Col William R. Woodward
AC of S, G-4Lt Col Langfitt B. Wilby
Adjutant GeneralLt Col Wesley U. Moran
Ordnance OfficerLt Col Cam Longley, Jr.
QuartermasterLt Col William D. Smith, Jr.
ChaplainLt Col Percy M. Hickcox
Chemical OfficerLt Col Henry T. Galt
Inspector GeneralLt Col George W. Gibson
Judge AdvocateLt Col Hilary A. Bush
Signal OfficerLt Col Leo V. Merle, Jr.
SurgeonLt Col F. Stanley Ewing
Provost MarshalMaj Rowland McD. Ness

CO 321 InfCol Robert F. Dark
Ex O 321 InfLt Col Paul Craig
CO 1st Bn (WIA on 22 Sept).....Lt Col Lester J. Evans
(18 - 20 Sept).....Maj William J. Porte
CO 2nd BnLt Col Peter D. Clainos
CO 3rd BnMaj Dallas A. Pilliod

CO 322 Inf (WIA on 22 Sept).....Col Benjamin W. Venable
Ex O 322 Inf (CO 322 Inf since 22 Sept).....Lt Col Ernest H. Wilson
CO 1st Bn (Until 23 Sept).....Maj William R. White
(KIA on 17 Oct).....Maj Louis K. Harthrong
(Since 17 Oct).....Maj Michael Gussie
CO 2nd BnLt Col Thomas D. McPhail
CO 3rd Bn (Ex O 322 Inf since 22 Sept).Lt Col Leonard L. Cutshall
(Since 22 Sept).....Maj Manuel M. Schechet

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CO 323 InfCol Arthur P. Watson
Ex O 323 InfLt Col Robert E. Quackenbush
CO 1st Bn (KIA on 17 Nov).....Lt Col Raymond G. Gates
(17 - 30 Nov).....Maj Bart W. LaHatte
CO 2nd BnLt Col Hugh J. Forsman
CO 3rd BnLt Col Arthur W. Hutchinson

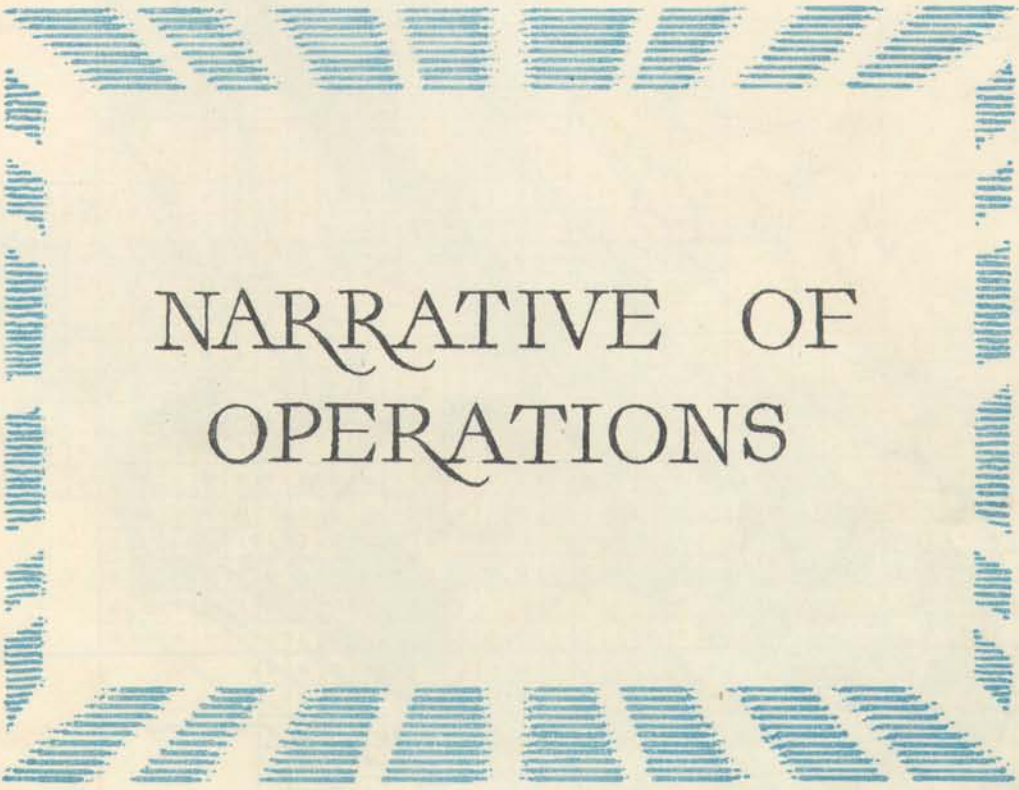
Ex O 81 Div ArtyCol James T. Loomer
CO 316 FA BnLt Col Carl Darnell, Jr.
CO 317 FA BnLt Col Wilson M. Riley
CO 906 FA BnLt Col John E. Barlow
CO 318 FA BnMaj Thomas J. McClane, Jr.

CO Sp Trs 81 Inf DivLt Col Newell E. Watts
CO 306 Engr (C) BnLt Col Eskil M. J. Alenius
CO 306 Med BnLt Col Eugene F. Melaville

ATTACHED UNITS

CO 1138 Engr (C) GpLt Col Charles R. Damon
CO 52 Engr (C) BnLt Col Harold Tabor
CO 154 Engr (C) BnLt Col Alan E. Gee
CO 155 Engr (C) BnLt Col John P. McWhorter
CO 483 AAA (AW) BnLt Col Arthur Roth
CO 710 Tank BnLt Col William M. Rodgers
CO 726 Amph Tractor BnLt Col Henry C. Switzer
CO 17 Field HospLt Col Robert H. Bell
CO 41 Port Surg HospMaj David S. Ascher
CO 592 JAS CoMaj William S. Houston
CO 481 Amph Truck CoCapt Arthur W. Van Husen
CO Co D 88 Cml Wpns BnCapt Edward L. Lockman, Jr.
CO Co D 776 Amph Tank BnCapt Booth Thomas
CO 1st Plat Prov QM Gr Reg Co2d Lt Stanley J. Lewis

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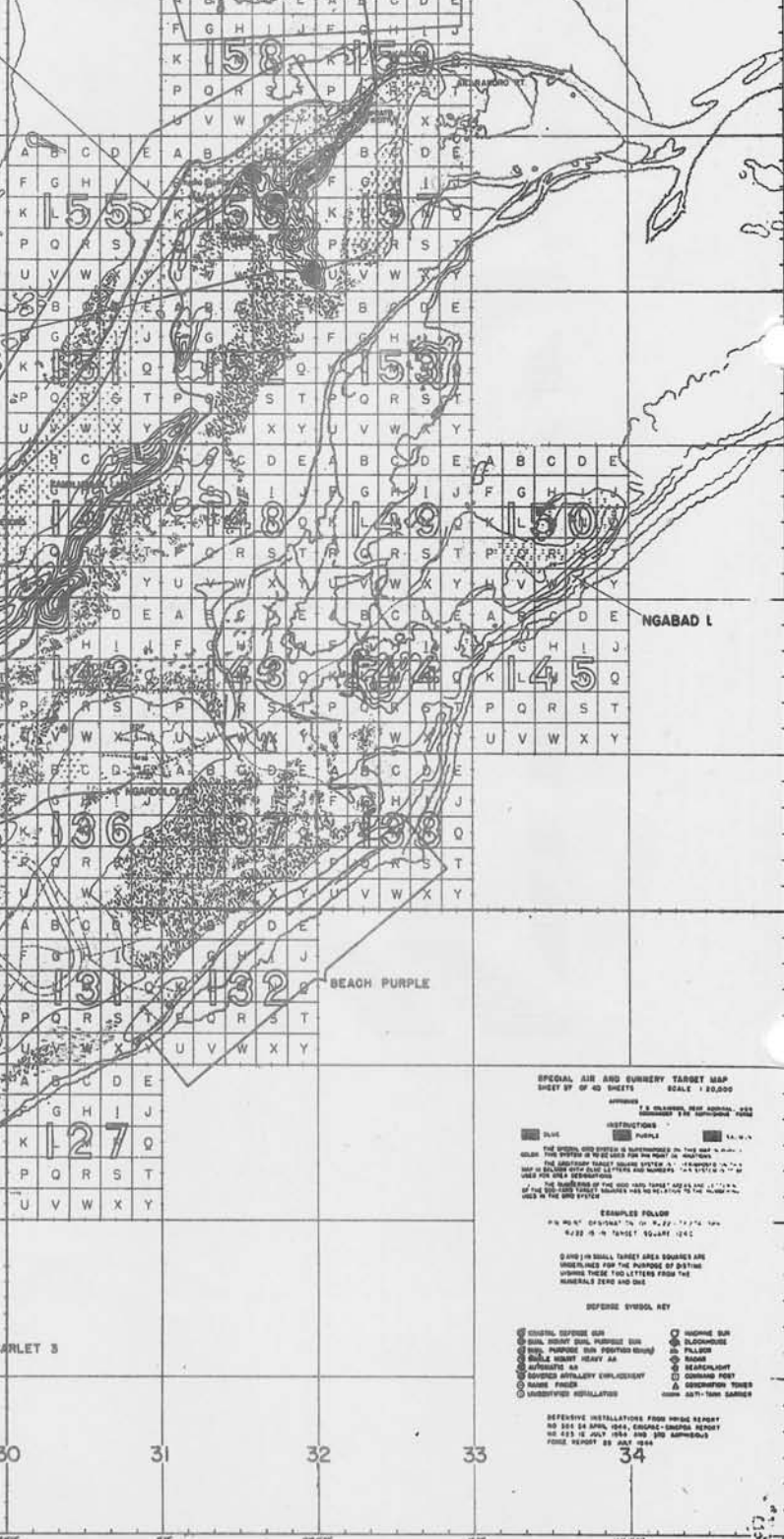
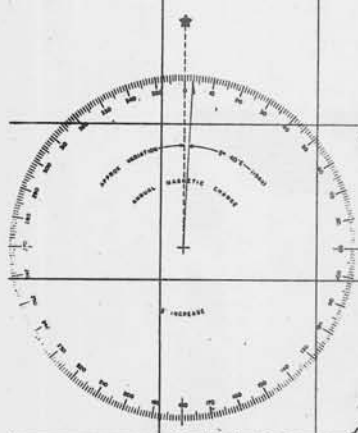


NARRATIVE OF
OPERATIONS



TX

3 GAGE TYPE RADIO TOWERS



PELELIU I.
BEACH WHITE 1
BEACH WHITE 2
BEACH ORANGE 1
BEACH ORANGE 2

SPECIAL AIR AND GUNNERY TARGET MAP
 SHEET OF 40 SHEETS SCALE 1:50,000

INSTRUCTIONS
 THE GRID AND POINT NOTATIONS ON THIS MAP ARE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DESIGNATING TARGETS TO BE ENGAGED BY AIR AND GUNNERY.
 THE GRID LETTERS AND NUMBERS ARE PRINTED IN THE MARGINS OF THIS MAP AND ARE TO BE USED IN THE MARGINS OF THE TARGET SQUARES.

EXAMPLES FOLLOW
 "N 60" DESIGNATED IN M. 22 7 17
 "E 20" DESIGNATED IN M. 22 7 17

DEFENSE SYMBOL KEY

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ AIRFIELD | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER CONSTRUCTION | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR |
| ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR |
| ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR |
| ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR | ○ AIRFIELD UNDER REPAIR |

DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS FROM SOURCE REPORT
 NO. 505 IN APRIL 1944. SOURCE - GUNNERY REPORT
 NO. 518 IN JULY 1944 AND 519 IN SEPTEMBER
 1944. SOURCE REPORT IN JULY 1944

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V - NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS

23 September 1944

Debarkation of RCT 321 began at 1200, 23 September at Orange Beach, Peleliu. The 2d Bn, 3rd Bn, and 1st Bn came ashore in order. Troops marched from Orange Beach to the vicinity of the left flank of the 1st Marine Division. The positions occupied by the entire First Marine Regiment were taken over by the 2d Bn, and the relief of that unit completed by 1500. All elements of the First Marine Regiment were withdrawn from the area and dispatched to man the defense sector along the east coast of the island. The 3d Bn moved to an area just south of the 2d Bn. At 1600 the 1st Bn closed into an assembly area in TX 133 O as RCT reserve. Headquarters RCT 321 came ashore on Peleliu at 1300 and established a command post at TX 134 R, the site formerly occupied by the First Marine Regiment.

Immediately upon relief of the First Marine Regiment, the 2d Bn instituted a reconnaissance to its front in preparation for the attack the following morning. Patrols advanced northward along the coast to the left of the West Road and succeeded in reaching Gorekoru Village, approximately 1200 yards in advance of the front of the 2d Bn. There was no Japanese activity west of the road, although the patrol received some fire from the ridge to the east. The road leading to Gorekoru and the area in the vicinity of the village were heavily mined and booby trapped with Japanese aerial bombs. A few weakly held defensive works were also found in the vicinity of the village. Upon return of the patrol the above information was furnished the 1st Marine Division.

In belief that the enemy had effected a withdrawal, the Commanding General 1st Marine Division ordered RCT 321 to advance a battalion northward that afternoon to occupy as much ground as possible before dark and defend on that location for the night (*). The mission was assigned the 2d Bn which moved out at 1730 with two companies abreast, one on each side of the road. The company on the left advanced 100 yards without encountering resistance. A low-lying ridge just to the west of the road partially masked the movement of troops from enemy observation and fire from the high ridge to the east. On the right, troops were subjected to heavy rifle and automatic weapons fire which pinned them to the ground and made an advance impossible. Troops on the left were withdrawn to straighten the line and defenses were prepared for the night.

(*) Oral order, CG 1st Marine Division.

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RADIO STATION

RJ 15

WEST RD

EAST RD

0-4

GOREKORU

321ST INF TRAIL

0-4

HILL B

HILL 100

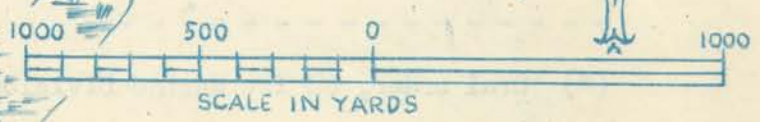
3 321

3 7

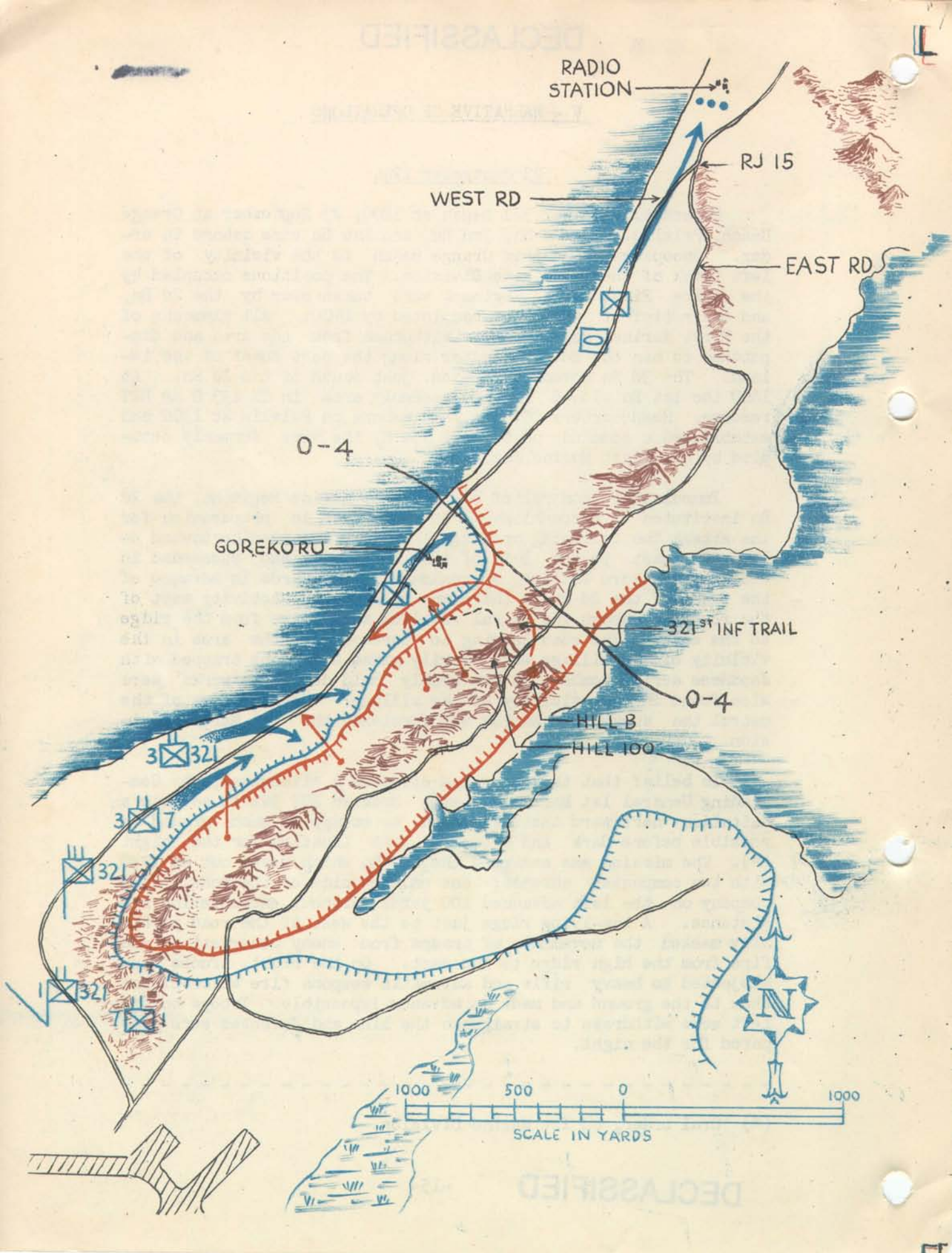
321

321

7



SCALE IN YARDS



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24 September 1944

At 0700 the attack was launched to seize the area south of The O-4 line and west of Umurbrogal Mt. RCT 321 attacked with two battalions in column, the 2d Bn leading followed by the 3d Bn. The 1st Bn remained in its assembly area as reserve. The 3d Bn Seventh Marine Regt followed closely behind and to the right of the 2d Bn 321 Inf. The remainder of the Seventh Marine Regt held fast to contain the enemy in the southern part of Umurbrogal Mt.

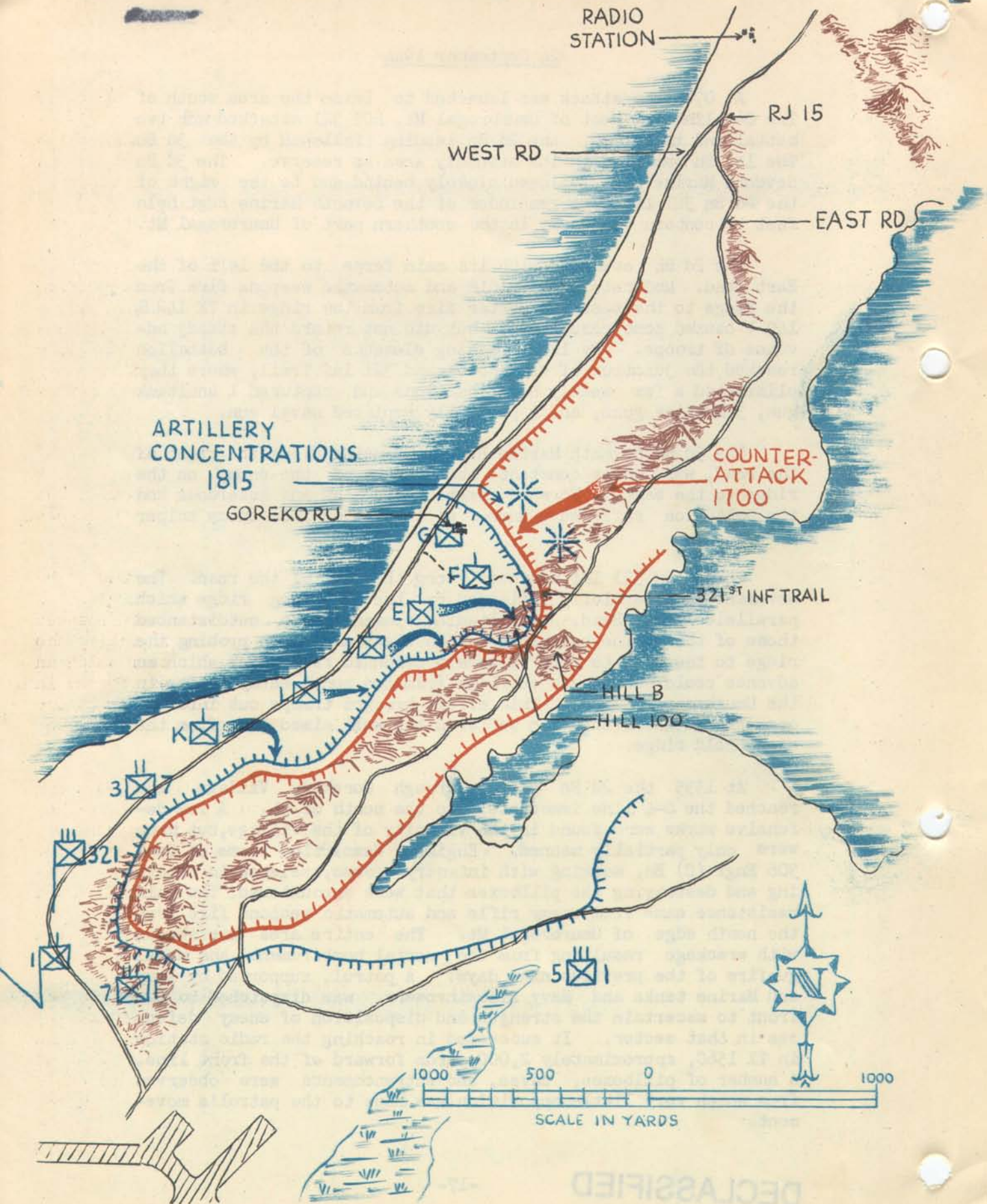
The 2d Bn advanced with its main force to the left of the East Road. Moderate enemy rifle and automatic weapons fire from the ridge to the east and mortar fire from the ridge in TX 142 B, 147 V caused some casualties, but did not retard the steady advance of troops. By 1200 leading elements of the battalion reached the junction of West Road and 321 Inf Trail, where they eliminated a few weakly held positions and captured 1 antitank gun, 3 machine guns, and 1 partially emplaced naval gun.

The 3d Bn Seventh Marine Regt, advancing along the right of the road, was under constant observation of the enemy on the ridge to the east. Forward movement was slow and hazardous and the battalion suffered a number of casualties from enemy sniper fire.

The 3d Bn 321 Inf advanced along the left of the road. The movement was partially defiladed by the low-lying ridge which paralleled West Road. Its leading elements soon outdistanced those of the Marine battalion on the right and began probing the ridge to the east to find a weakly defended route over which an advance could be made to outflank from the north enemy forces in the Umurbrogal Mt area. This effort brought troops out into the open ground where they too suffered the well aimed fire from the enemy held ridge.

At 1535 the 2d Bn passed through Gorekoru Village and reached the O-4 line immediately to the north of it. A few defensive works were found in the vicinity of the village, but these were only partially manned. Engineer demolition teams of Co A, 306 Engr (C) Bn, working with infantry troops, assisted in clearing and destroying the pillboxes that were encountered. The main resistance came from enemy rifle and automatic weapons fire from the north edge of Umurbrogal Mt. The entire area was strewn with wreckage resulting from the aerial bombardment and naval gunfire of the previous nine days. A patrol, supported by Army and Marine tanks and Navy flamethrowers, was dispatched to the front to ascertain the strength and disposition of enemy defenses in that sector. It succeeded in reaching the radio station in TX 156C, approximately 2,000 yards forward of the front line. A number of pillboxes, caves, and entrenchments were observed from which very little opposition was made to the patrol's movement.

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In the meantime, Co G, the leading unit of the 2d Bn, began organizing for defense to protect the north flank of the RCT, while Co E moved eastward in an attempt to outflank enemy defenses on Umurbrogal Mt. Co E succeeded in seizing Hill 100 which overlooked the entrance of the 321 Inf Trail into the hill mass which separated our troops from the vital East Road. Co F moved to position between Co G and Co E and completed the defense line along the north flank.

The 3d Bn, following closely behind the 2d Bn, continued to probe the ridge to the east. Co I attacked in conjunction with Co E and succeeded in occupying the western rim of the ridge running south from Hill 100. Co L and Co K, in column behind Co I, overcame strong enemy resistance and occupied part of the same ridge. In organizing for defense of the line, contact was maintained with elements of the 3d Bn Seventh Marine Regt farther to the south.

At 1700 an enemy counterattack struck forward elements of the 2d Bn and forced a withdrawal of approximately 200 yards. The ground was promptly retaken. At 1813 another counterattack was observed taking shape in front of the 2d Bn. Effective artillery concentrations were immediately placed on the area and the counterattack was dissipated before it got under way.

The eastward movement of troops made the problem of supply and evacuation a difficult one. The swampy terrain over which the 321 Inf Trail ran had to be improved to withstand the necessary flow of traffic. The West Road, which was the only access to the area from the south, was narrow and in exceedingly poor condition. Orders were issued to Co A, 306 Engr (C) Bn to begin immediate improvement of these two arteries. Armored bulldozers had to be used because of the enemy sniper fire that continued to come from the enemy positions on the ridge. Supply and evacuation for elements of the 3d Bn on the ridge was made extremely difficult because of the complex nature of the terrain. Paths up the steep cliff were non-existent. Supply and evacuation had to be effected by climbing from rock to rock and by use of ladders. As the enemy was driven farther eastward, a makeshift aerial tramway was constructed which did much to solve the problem.

25 September 1944

The plan of operations for 25 September was to cut across the island in the vicinity of the 321 Inf Trail and complete the isolation of enemy forces in the Umurbrogal Mt area. The attack

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RADIO STATION

RJ 15

WEST RD

EAST RD

INF • TANK • LVT
COMBAT PATROL

5 321

GOREKORU

321ST INF TRAIL

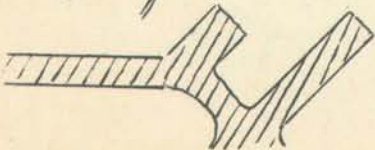
HILL B
HILL 100

3 7

321

321

5 1



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was resumed at 0700. Co E moved eastward from Hill 100 and at 1030 reached the edge of the East Road. Resistance was moderate and consisted mainly of rifle and machine gun fire from enemy positions on Hill B which dominated the road.

The 3d Bn attempted to expand its holdings on the ridge by moving eastward across it. Strong enemy fire was encountered from a series of pill boxes and emplacements built on promontories and protected by steep walls and sheer cliffs. In an attempt to outflank these defenses, a gap developed between Co I and Co L which was filled later in the afternoon by Co G. Gains for the day were unappreciable.

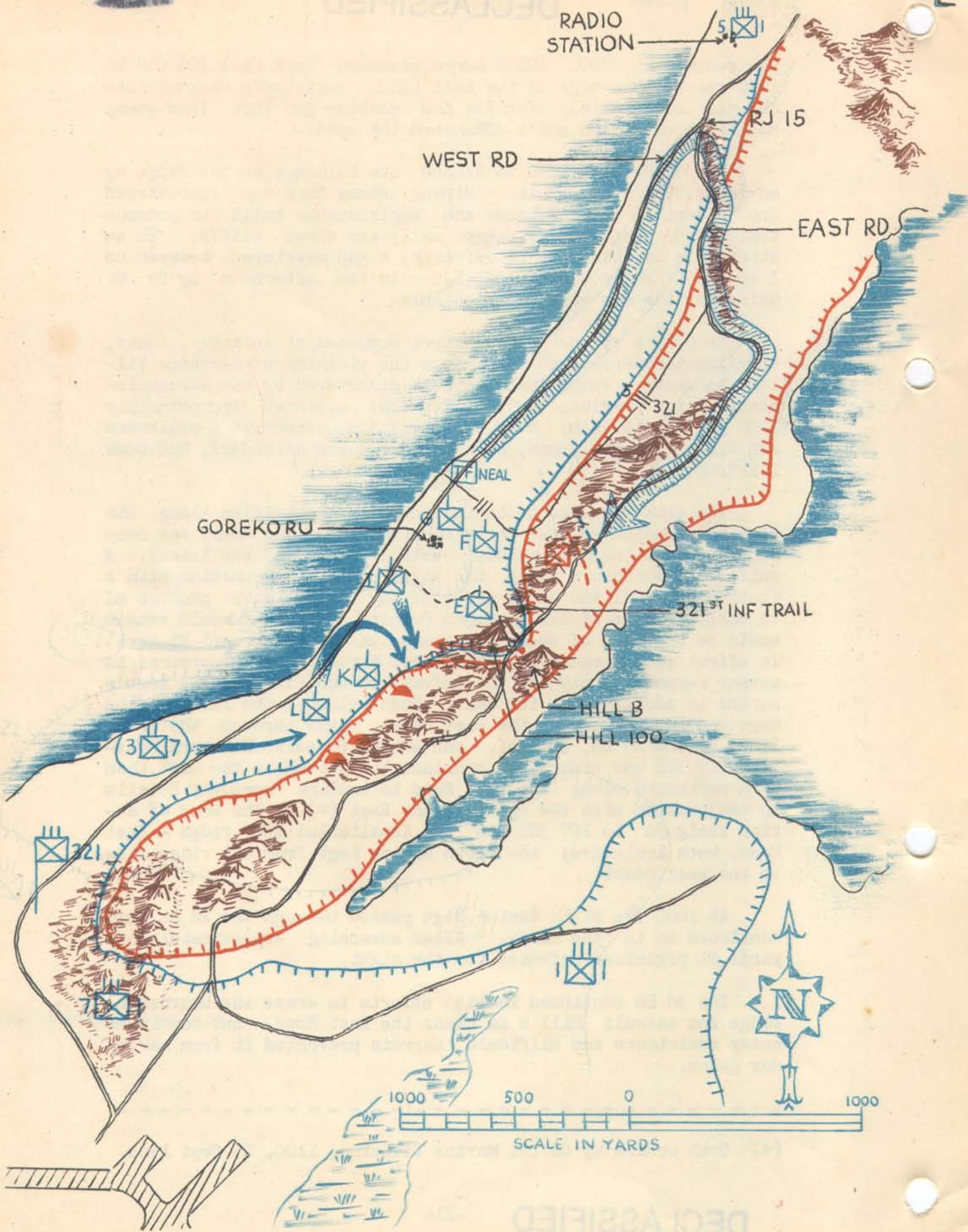
At 0700 a strong combat patrol composed of infantry, tanks, and flamethrowers moved north from the vicinity of Garekoru Village to destroy enemy installations discovered by the reconnaissance of the previous day. The patrol advanced approximately 1200 yards into enemy held territory and destroyed 4 pillboxes and 2 large supply dumps, killed 30 Japanese defenders, and took 1 prisoner.

The weak resistance to the patrol's activities along the West Road indicated that the main strength of the enemy was concentrated in the mountainous central sector of the island. A swift move northward along the west coast in conjunction with a continuation of the drive eastward by RCT 321 gave promise of an early seizure of all northern Peleliu. All that would remain would be the core of enemy resistance in the Umurbrogal Mt. area. To effect such a maneuver, the First Marine Regt was ordered to assume responsibility for the defense of the Fifth Marine Regt's sector in addition to its own. Upon relief, the Fifth Marine Regt was to proceed to the west coast, pass through the front lines of the 2d Bn, 321 Inf, and attack to seize northern Peleliu. RCT 321 was ordered to continue the attack to the east, then turn northward along the East Road to capture northern Peleliu in conjunction with the Fifth Marine Regt (*). The zone of action assigned to RCT 321 was the Kamalianlul Mt. ridge - East Road, both inclusive; the Fifth Marine Regt from the ridge line to the west coast.

At 1600 the Fifth Marine Regt passed through the 2d Bn and continued on to the north. After advancing approximately 600 yards it organized defenses for the night.

The 3d Bn continued in its efforts to cross the Umurbrogal ridge and assault Hill B to clear the East Road, but continued enemy resistance and difficult terrain prevented it from making any gains.

(*) Oral orders by CG 1st Marine Division, 1100, 25 Sept 1944.



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Throughout the day work progressed on improvement of the 321 Inf Trail and West Road. The presence of the Fifth Marine Regt on the west coast further complicated the traffic control problem. The strictest supervision was required to keep vehicles moving properly, for in addition to the narrowness of the road which in some places permitted one way traffic only, enemy sniper fire from the ridge was directed at slowly moving vehicles. Traffic control posts were established at short intervals along the road to prevent congestion and officers assigned to patrol the road and keep vehicles moving properly.

Enemy activity during the night consisted of mortar and artillery fire into the areas occupied by the 2d and 3d Bns. Infiltration patrols attempted to penetrate positions occupied by Co E and Co K, but were driven off. Seventeen Japanese were killed in these activities.

26 September 1944

In order to secure the East Road for movement to the north, Hill B which controlled it had to be seized. The 3d Bn was given this mission. The 2d Bn was to support it by fire from its positions on and around Hill 100.

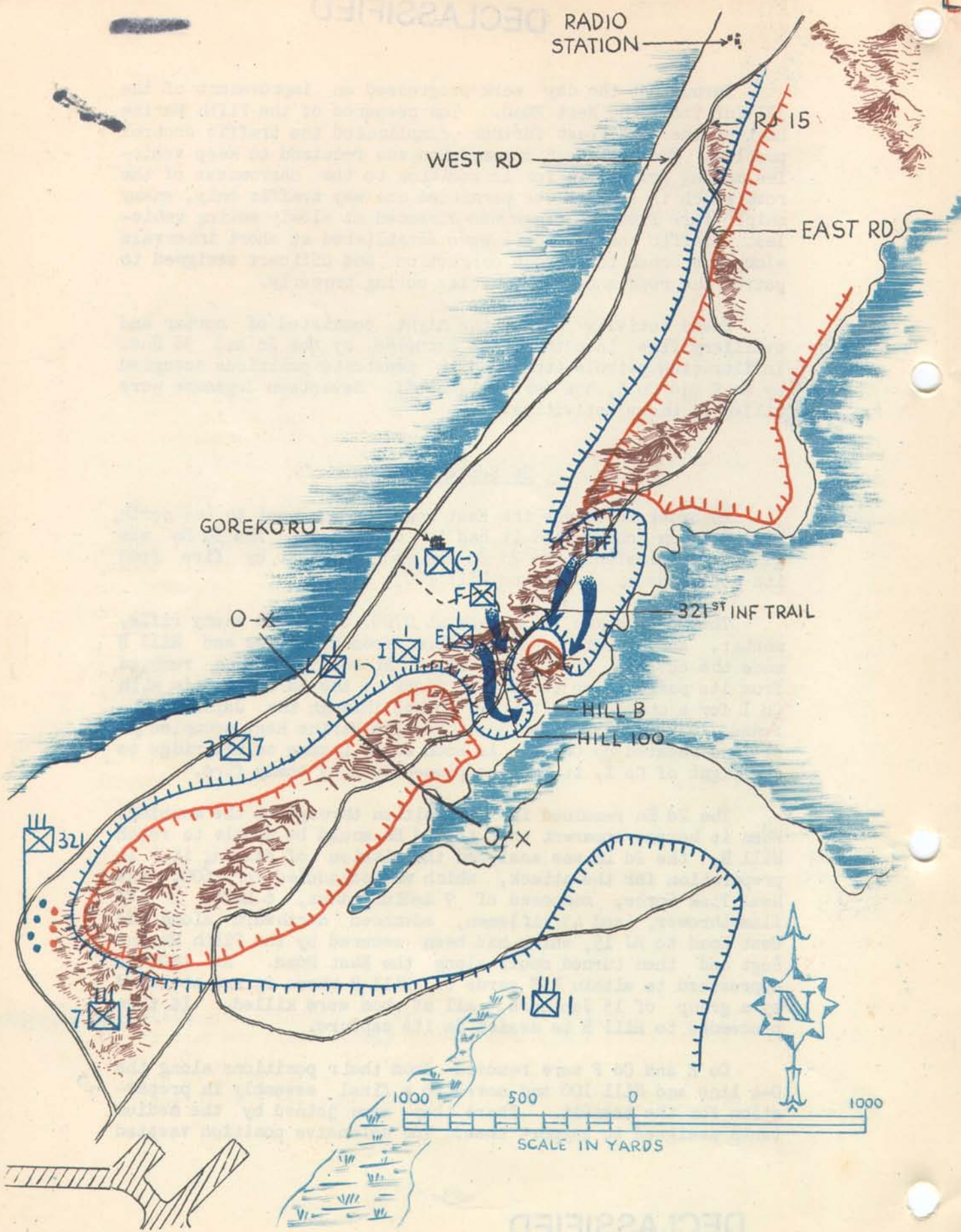
The 3d Bn began its attack at 0700. Continued enemy rifle, mortar, and automatic weapons fire from the ridge and Hill B made the advance slow and costly. At 0820 Co L was removed from its position on the right flank of the 3d Bn to join with Co I for a concerted effort to break through the Japanese defenses. Elements of the 3d Bn Seventh Marine Regt occupied positions vacated by Co L. As soon as Co L came on the ridge to the right of Co I, it too was pinned down by enemy fire.

The 2d Bn remained in its position throughout the morning. When it became apparent that the 3d Bn would be unable to reach Hill B, the 2d Bn was assigned the mission of seizing it. In preparation for the attack, which was scheduled for 1600, the Neal Task Force, composed of 7 medium tanks, 6 LVTs, 1 LVT flamethrower, and 45 riflemen, advanced northward along the West Road to RJ 15, which had been secured by the Fifth Marine Regt and then turned south along the East Road. At 1500 it approached to within 150 yards of Hill B where it was attacked by a group of 15 Japanese, all of whom were killed. It then proceeded to Hill B to assist in its capture.

Co E and Co F were removed from their positions along the O-4 line and Hill 100 and moved to a final assembly in preparation for the assault. There they were joined by the medium tanks assigned to support them. The defensive position vacated

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by Co E was occupied by Co K; that of Co F by Co C sent up from the south. The remainder of the 1st Bn, less a security detachment left at the RCT CP, was moved to the vicinity of the O-4 line to meet a possible counterattack in that direction while 2d Bn was attacking Hill B.

The attack on Hill B was launched at 1600. WP mortar shells completely enveloped the hill in smoke. The Neal Task Force attacked from the north, as Co E and Co F attacked from the west and south. The enemy offered strong resistance, but at 1647 our troops succeeded in capturing the hill. All Japanese defenders were killed. A number of Korean laborers were taken prisoner. Consolidation of the position was instituted immediately.

Continued heavy fire on Co I and Co L forced a withdrawal of these units from their positions on the west rim of the ridge. At 1800 Co I reoccupied its position. Co L organized a defense perimeter at the base of the ridge.

A flurry of enemy activity occurred during the afternoon in vicinity of RCT CP. A number of Japanese had infiltrated through the perimeter of the Seventh Marine Regt. The Defense Platoon, composed of 1 platoon Co B and reinforced with two medium tanks, was assigned the mission of clearing the area. The enemy was armed with rifles and machine guns and was apparently operating in force. The rugged terrain handicapped the movement of tanks and made their support negligible. Although 35 Japanese were killed, the platoon suffered heavy casualties and was ordered to withdraw to the vicinity of the CP where it manned the perimeter in conjunction with headquarters troops.

At 1800 orders were issued for continuation of the attack on the following day. Oral instructions from the Commanding General 1st Marine Division required an advance by one battalion along the East Road from the O-4 line and an attack southward along the East Road by another battalion in order to seize the area in the vicinity of the O-X line. The 1st Bn was assigned the mission of attacking to the north. The 2d Bn, with Co K supplanting Co G and supported by Co A, 710 Tank Bn, was to attack to the south. The 3d Bn, with Co G replacing Co K, was ordered to hold Hill 100 and the ridge line.

Enemy activity during the night consisted of artillery fire in the area occupied by 3d Bn. Several Japanese were killed as they attempted to infiltrate through the 2d Bn in the vicinity of Hill 100 and Hill B. During the early morning hours, 20 Koreans surrendered to elements of the 2d Bn in the vicinity of Hill B. All were non-military personnel who had survived the previous afternoon's fighting by hiding in caves.

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NGESEBUS



500 JAPANESE
CONCENTRATED
IN THIS AREA

WEST RD.

RADAR HILL
HILL ROW

CARLSON I.

B

EAST RD.

C

NGABAD I.

O-x

32ND INF TRAIL

ALMEIDA I.

I

G

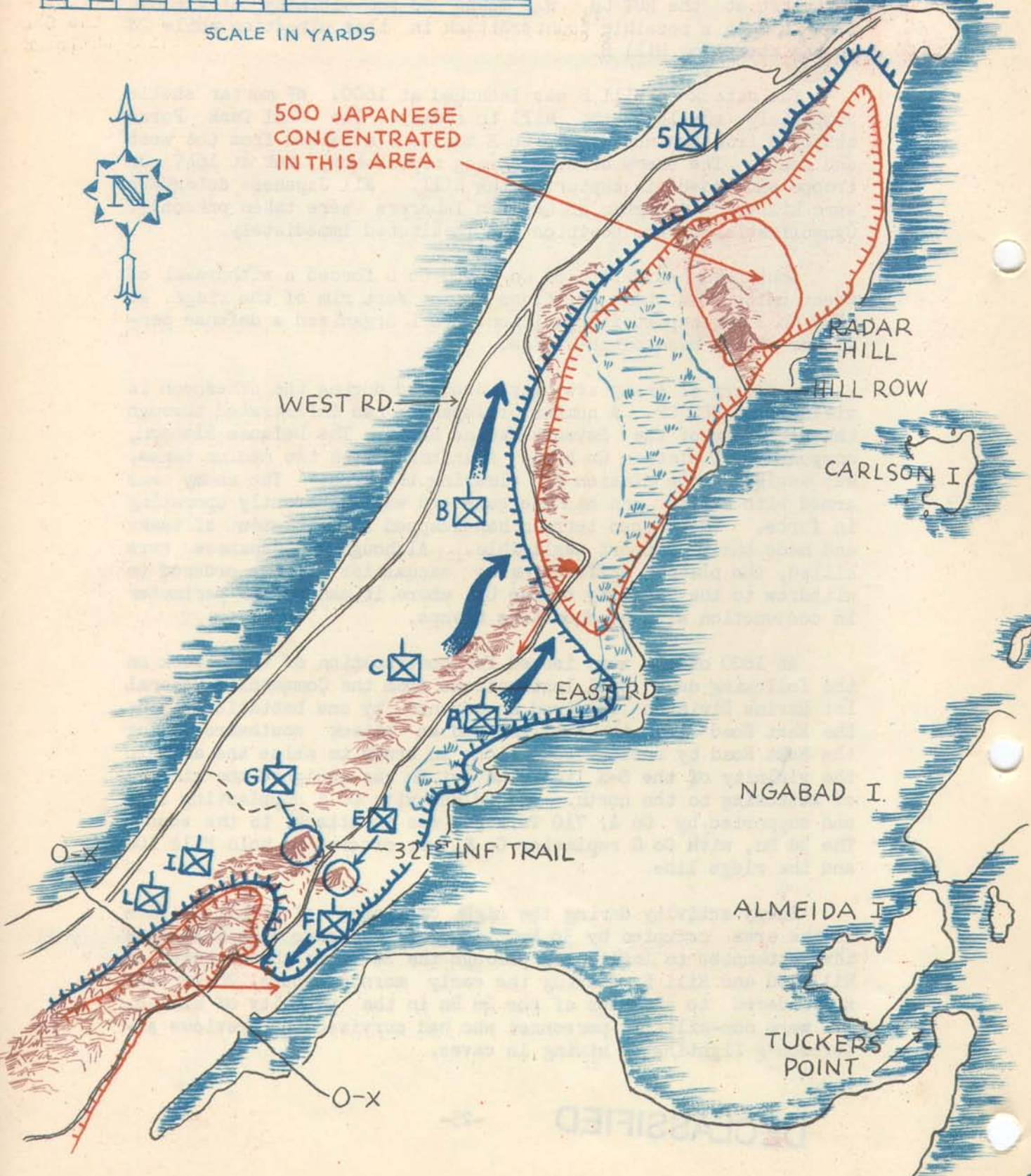
E

A

F

TUCKERS
POINT

O-x



DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

27 September 1944

The 1st Bn began its advance northward at 0700, 27 September with two companies abreast and one in reserve. Co C, on the left, moved along both sides of Kamilianlul Mt. Co A, on the right followed the East Coast Road with Co B to its rear. Throughout the morning the battalion advanced without opposition. Rocky terrain on the left flank and swampy ground on the right were the only obstacles encountered. By 1235 the battalion had advanced 1,000 yards, passing through abandoned Japanese defenses and storage areas. The enemy had apparently withdrawn to the hilly area in the northern part of the island. At 1235 the battalion was ordered to advance to a general east-west line passing through RJ 15 and establish a defense against possible counterattack by a force of 500 Japanese whom prisoners of war reported to be concentrated in TA 156. The battalion was further directed to coordinate the defense on its left flank with elements of the Fifth Marine Regt operating in the vicinity of RJ 15.

The 2d Bn moved south from Hill B at 0700 with two companies abreast. Co K, on the right, advanced along the ridge line to the right of East Road. Co F, on the left, advanced along East Road supported by Task Force Neal. Co E remained in defensive positions on Hill B. The terrain in the zone of Co K was extremely broken with ridges, deep valleys, and defiles, which offered excellent opportunities for Japanese sniper and machine gun fire. Co K suffered numerous casualties including the company commander. The advance of Co F was hindered by heavy fire from the eastern rim of Umurbrogal Mt and numerous caves cut into the cliff wall of the ridge, which were most difficult to reach. The caves were attacked with direct fire by tanks using WP shells and LVT flamethrower, but resistance continued strong. By 1200 troops along the East Road reached a point approximately 200 yards from the O-X line, but could advance no farther.

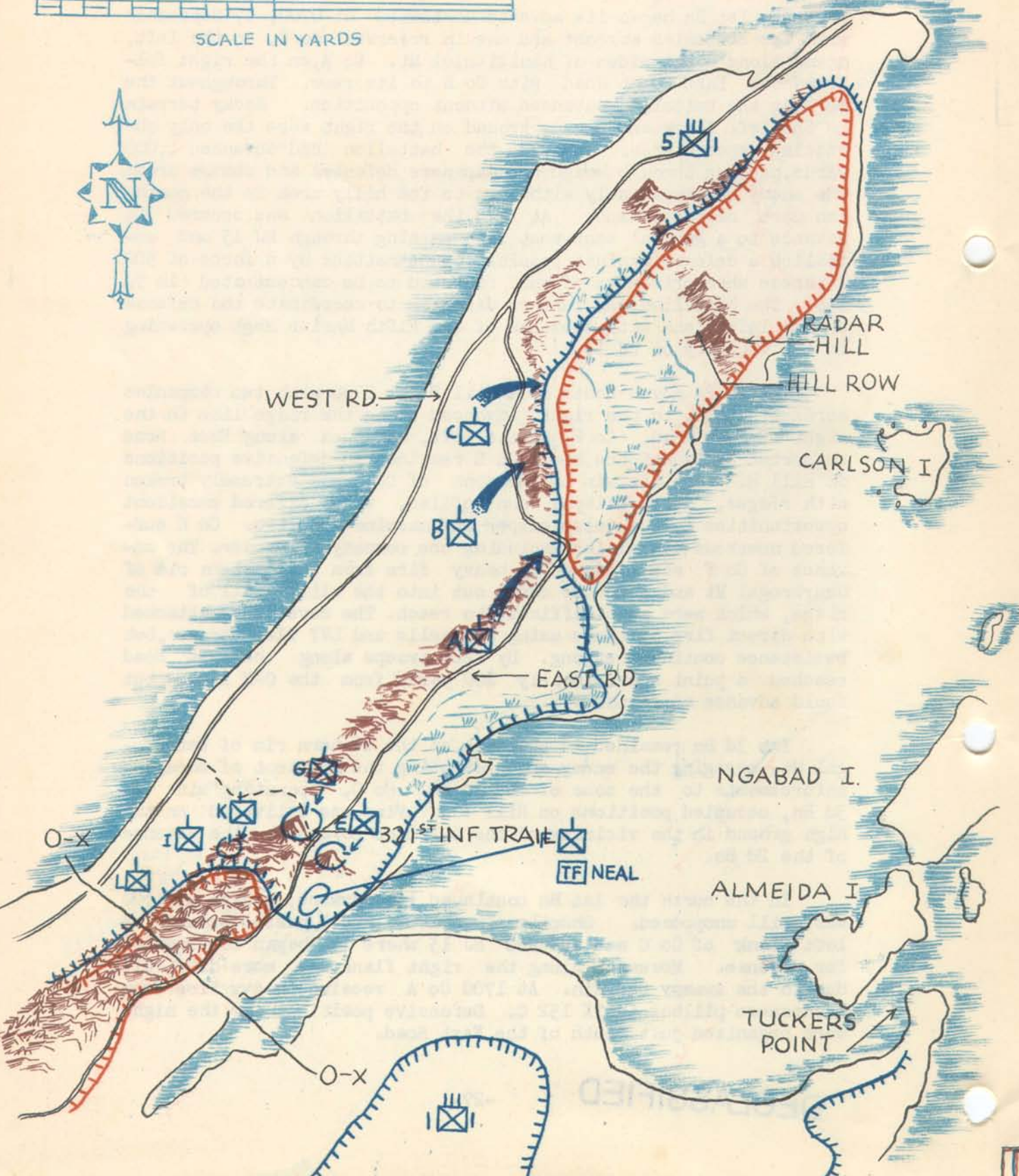
The 3d Bn remained in position on the western rim of Umurbrogal Mt, engaging the enemy and preventing the movement of enemy reinforcements to the zone of the 2d Bn. Co G, operating with the 3d Bn, occupied positions on Hill 100. Fire was delivered on the high ground in the vicinity of the O-X line to assist the advance of the 2d Bn.

In the north the 1st Bn continued its advance, which at 1600 was still unopposed. Shortly after 1700, Co B passed around the left flank of Co C and reached RJ 15 where it began to organize for defense. Movement along the right flank was more difficult due to the swampy terrain. At 1700 Co A received heavy fire from a Japanese pillbox in TX 152 Q. Defensive positions for the night were organized just south of the East Road.

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NGESEBUS



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In the south, the strength of Japanese resistance and the exposed positions of our troops seemed to make a withdrawal advisable. Prior to darkness Co K moved into the perimeter occupied by CO I. Co F and Task Force Neal withdrew to the base of Hill B where defenses were organized for the night.

During the day intermittent enemy machine gun fire from Umurbrogal Mt into Hill B caused a number of casualties in Co E. Korean laborers continued to surrender to elements of the 2d Bn in vicinity of Hill B. By nightfall the total taken in that area reached 86. Interrogation of them indicated that 3,000 Japanese occupied the Umurbrogal Mt area and 500 more the high ground in the northern part of Peleliu.

The Fifth Marine Regt, in operations on northern Peleliu, seized the high ground in TX 156 H-J, 157 A, and 159 V and secured the northern beach for shore to shore operations against Ngesebus Island to take place the following day.

At 1900 the CO RCT 321 reported to Headquarters 1st Marine Division and received a warning order to be prepared to relieve the Fifth Marine Regt in the northern sector, and to mop-up, organize, and defend the area against counterattack. No effective date for the relief was given.

Fifteen Japanese were killed as they attempted to infiltrate along the front of the 1st Bn. No other enemy activity during the hours of darkness was reported.

28 September 1944

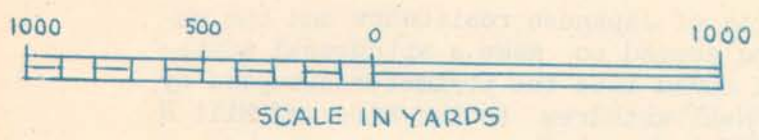
Shortly after daylight on 28 September preparations were made for the resumption of the attacks to the north and south. The 1st Bn was ordered to complete the seizure of East Road and the high ground in front of Co B, and organize the defense of the area by 1600 that day. In the south, Co K, which had suffered numerous casualties in the previous day's fighting, replaced Co E on Hill B. A composite battalion was formed consisting of Co E, Co F, and Co I, and placed under command of CO 3d Bn. Co A, 710 Tank Bn was placed in support. The mission assigned was to capture and clear the enemy from the area southward to the O-X line.

The enemy offered stubborn resistance all along the 1st Bn front. By 1100 Co A succeeded in neutralizing the pillbox which had held up its advance the previous day and captured all of the East Road in its zone of action, except the loop in TX 152 Q. In the center of the line Co B captured the hill in TX 152 F, G and organized it for defense.

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SECRET

NGESEBUS



WEST RD.

3 5

5 1 (-)

RADAR HILL
HILL ROW

CARLSON I

1 321

EAST RD

NGABAD I.

O-x

21ST INF TRAIL

ALMEIDA I

L

I

C-K

E

TUCKERS POINT

O-x

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In the south, Co I and Co E advanced abreast with Co I on the ridge to the west and Co E, supported by tanks, along the East Road. By 1200 infantry-tank teams advanced to within 200 yards of the objective. Along the ridge troops advanced slowly systematically clearing the numerous caves which honeycombed the hills. Co L, from its position along the west rim of the ridge, assisted in the attack by swinging to the southwest beside the right flank of Co I. By late afternoon the O-X line was reached and defenses were established to contain the enemy to the south.

During the day one battalion of the Fifth Marine Regt landed on Ngesebus in a shore to shore operation from the northern tip of Peleliu. The attack was supported by the Peleliu-based Marine Air Group 11. Elements of the Fifth Marines operating on the northern tip of Peleliu moved southward along the east coast to a point approximately 400 yards northeast of Radar Hill.

At 1625 warning orders were received from the 1st Marine Division for RCT 321 to be prepared to move one battalion to Ngesebus to relieve elements of the Fifth Marine Regt on that island (*).

Incessant rainfall during the day turned roads into quagmires and made traffic circulation difficult.

29 September 1944

On 29 September RCT 321 was relieved of responsibility in the central combat zone, and began operations to relieve the Fifth Marine Regt on northern Peleliu and Ngesebus, to mop-up the entire area, and organize it for defense against Japanese counterattack.

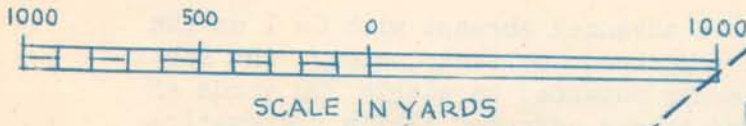
Beginning at 0700 the 3d Bn was relieved from its mission of containing the enemy in the Umurbrogal Mt area and its positions along the O-X line taken over by elements of the Seventh Marine Regt. The battalion was then ordered to proceed northward over the route followed by the 1st Bn on 27 September to comb the area for Japanese who might have been bypassed at that time. By dark the battalion had advanced 200 yards north of the 321 Inf Trail and killed a number of Japanese who were found hiding in caves. As a precautionary measure all caves encountered were blown-in to prevent their reoccupation by Japanese who managed to infiltrate through our lines in spite of all efforts to contain them.

(*) Oral orders Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, 1625, 28 September 1944.

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NGESEBUS



MOVEMENT BY LVT

WEST RD.

PATROLS

RADAR HILL
HILL ROW

CARLSON I.

EAST RD.

321ST INF TRAIL

REAR BOUNDARY

NGABAD I.

ALMEIDA I.

TUCKERS POINT

321

5 1 (-)

2

3

7 1

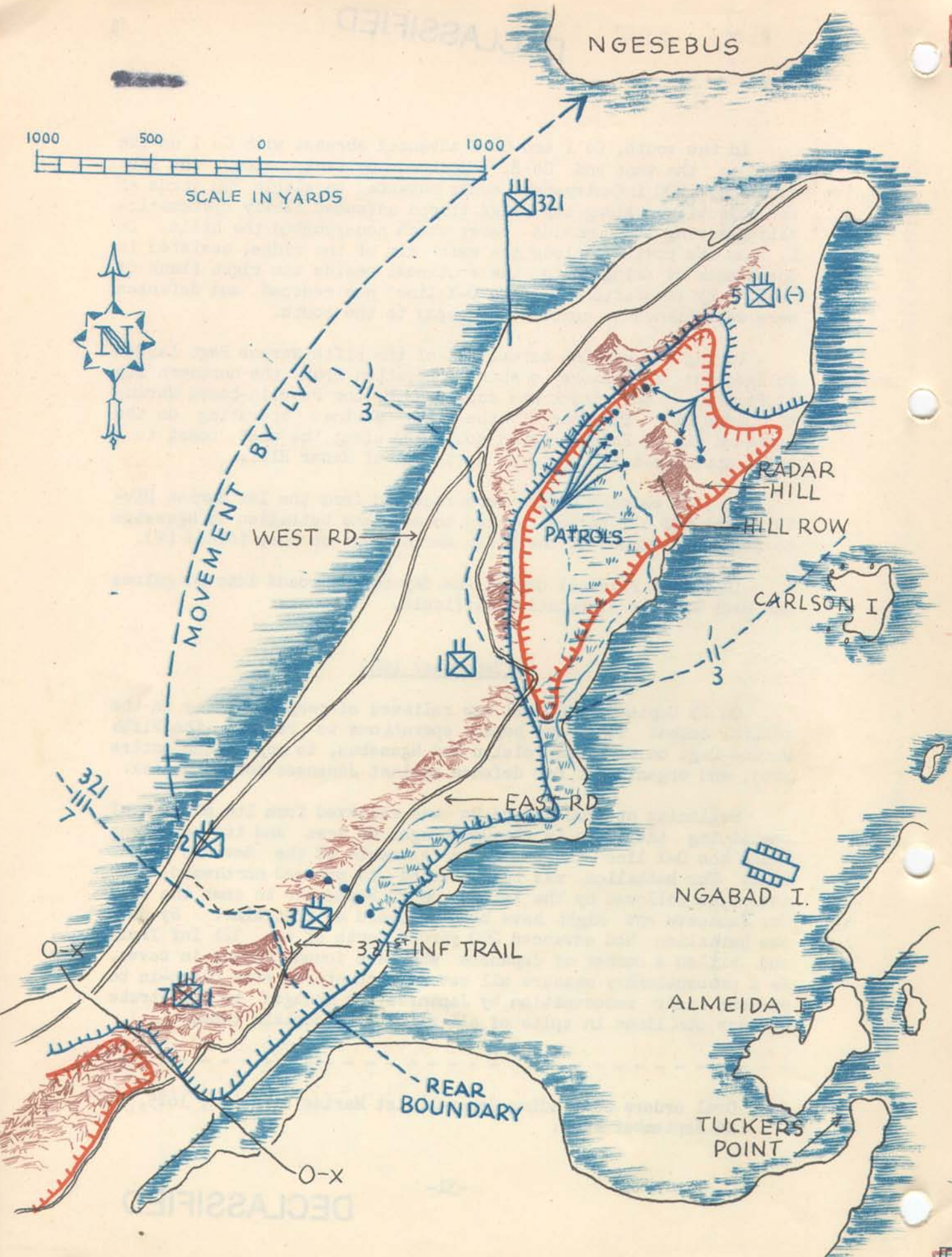
0-x

0-x

1/3

1/3

321
1/3
7



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In anticipation of relieving elements of the Fifth Marine Regt on Ngesebus, the 2d Bn was assembled in the vicinity of Garekoru Village. At 1410 orders were received to effect the relief immediately. Troops were transported from Garekoru to Ngesebus in LVTs and the movement completed by 1700. One platoon of tanks accompanied the battalion.

The 1st Bn continued strengthening its defenses along East Road and dispatched patrols to its front to search the area in vicinity of Hill Row in conjunction with elements of the Fifth Marine Regt. During the morning orders were received to relieve the two battalions of the Fifth Marine Regt remaining on northern Peleliu, the relief to begin on 30 September. The remainder of the day was spent in reconnoitering the areas to be occupied.

A detachment of Co L, embarked in LVTs, made a reconnaissance of Ngabad Island which was to be occupied by the company on the following day.

At 1115, the RCT 321 CP was established at the radio station in TX 156 G.

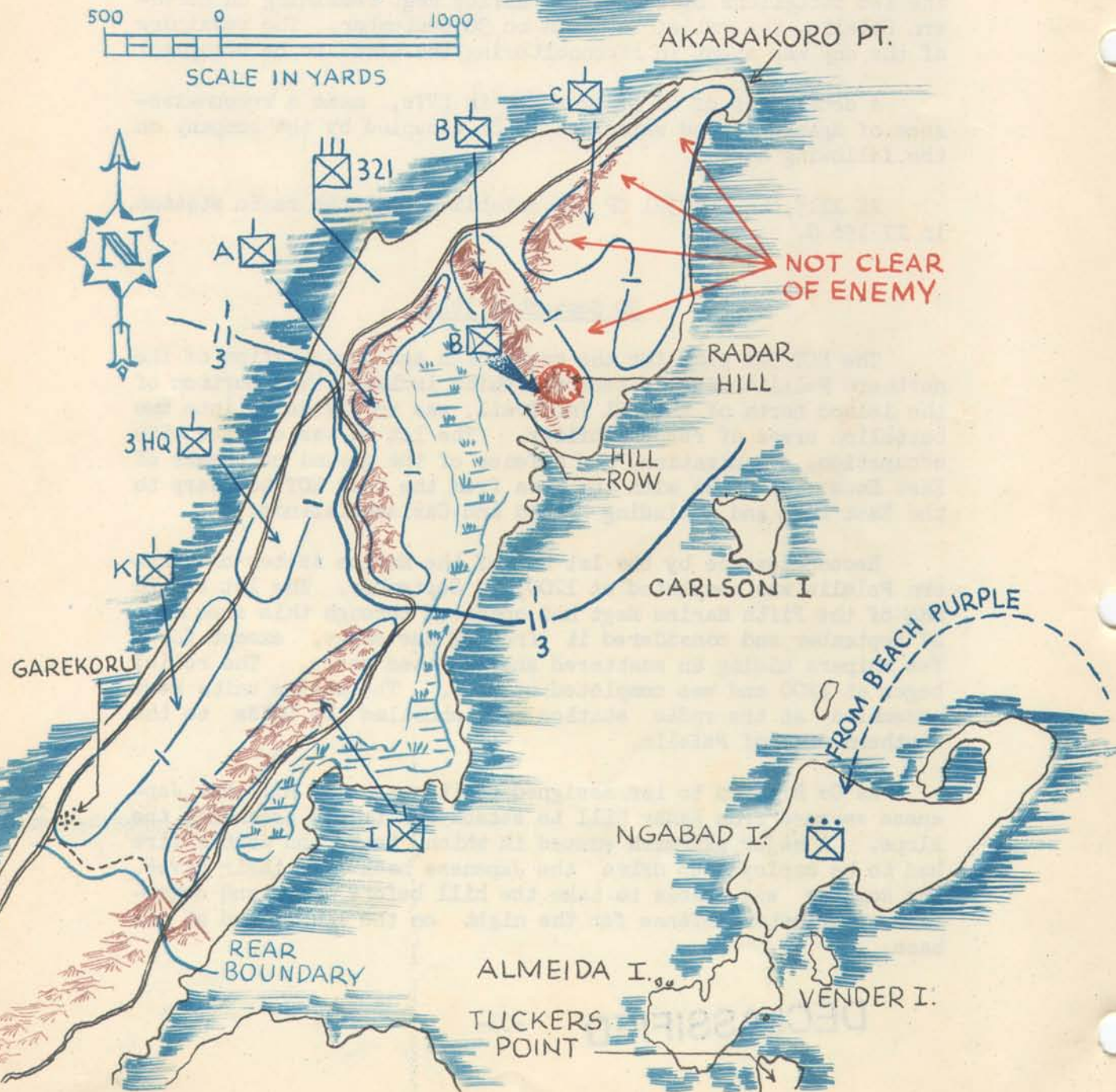
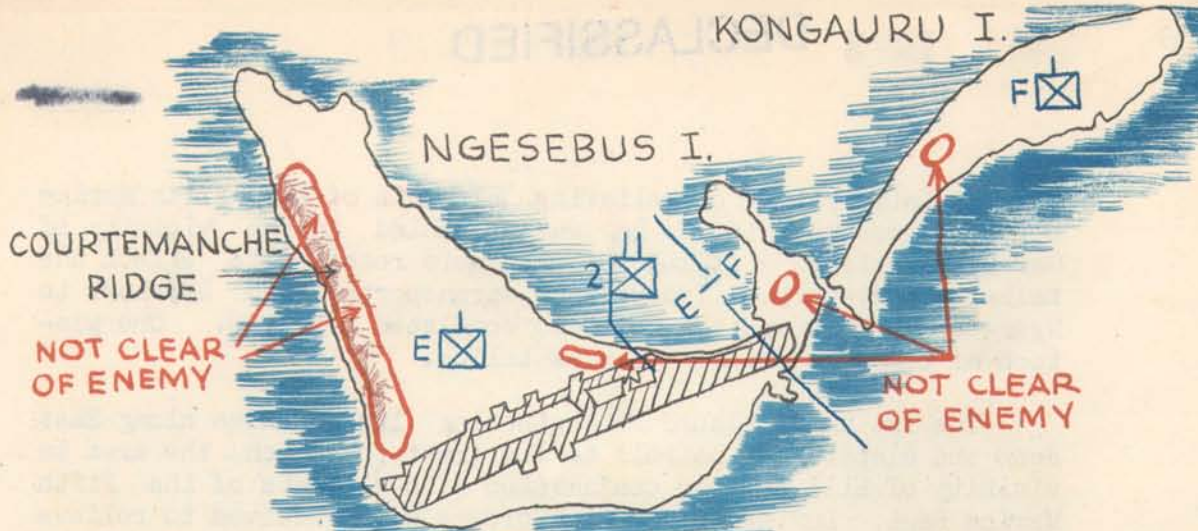
30 September 1944

The RCT 321 plan for the occupation and organization of the northern Peleliu defense sector, which included that portion of the island north of the 321 Inf Trail, was to divide it into two battalion areas of responsibility. The 1st Bn was charged with occupation, organization, and defense of the ground northeast of East Road; the 3d Bn with the area from the rear RCT boundary to the East Road and including Ngabad and Carlson Islands.

Reconnaissance by the 1st Bn of the Marine sector on northern Peleliu was completed at 1200, 30 September. The 1st and 2d Bns of the Fifth Marine Regt had operated through this area since 27 September and considered it free of the enemy, except for a few snipers hiding in scattered and isolated caves. The relief began at 1200 and was completed at 1500. The Marine units were assembled at the radio station and shuttled by DUKWs to the southern part of Peleliu.

As Co B moved to its assigned positions along Hill Row, Japanese swarmed from Radar Hill to attack our troops ascending the slope. A major skirmish ensued in which tanks and mortar fire had to be employed to drive the Japanese back into their caves. The company was unable to take the hill before dark and organized a perimeter defense for the night on the low ground at its base.

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Co A met strong resistance as it attempted to occupy a position on a low-lying ridge just to the east of the West Road, but was able to secure the ground prior to dark. Co C moving into the northernmost sector which included Akarakoro Pt and the ridge extending to the southwest met resistance from a considerable number of Japanese who had occupied undestroyed pillboxes and caves. The company killed 40 Japanese that afternoon. A later reconnaissance revealed that the enemy was present in large numbers throughout the area.

Co I, reinforced with a platoon of medium tanks and a platoon of the 154 Engr (C) Bn, occupied the ridge along the east coast of the island within the battalion sector. Co K and the 3d Bn Hq Co organized defenses along the west coast. Co L placed one platoon on Ngabad Island and was preparing to move the remainder of the company to reinforce the Ngabad garrison and occupy Carlson Island on the following day.

The 2d Bn continued organization of defensive positions on Ngesebus. In the Courtemanche Ridge area a considerable number of Japanese were discovered who offered stubborn resistance to our troops before they were overcome. Elements of the battalion occupied Kongauru Island, which was included in the Ngesebus defense plan. During the day supplies were moved to Ngesebus to build up a reserve stock. Wire communications over the channel between Ngesebus and Peleliu were also established.

RCT 321 engineers were engaged throughout the day in widening and repairing roads which had deteriorated rapidly because of the incessant rainfall since 28 September.

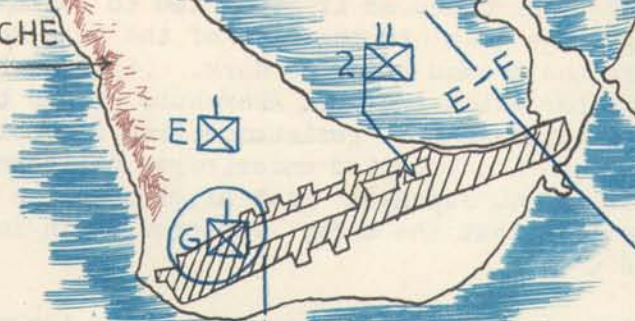
1 October 1944

Beginning at daylight 1 October, the 1st Bn continued to clear its sector of the numerous Japanese who still remained within it. By 1145, 40 Japanese were killed by Co C in the palm grove just south of Akarakoro Pt. Patrols of Co B made a systematic search of Radar Hill which resulted in the destruction of many caves along the slopes and the discovery of the cave area in which the main body of the Japanese had fortified itself. At 1600 an attack was made on this area by a rifle platoon of Co B and one engineer demolition squad. A strong counterattack by the Japanese inflicted many casualties on our troops who were driven from the hill. In view of the strong resistance encountered on Radar Hill and the extensive mopping-up that still remained to be done in the 1st Bn area, the CO RCT 321 requested

KONGAURU I.

NGESEBUS I.

COURTEMANCHE
RIDGE



AKARAKORO PT.



321

A

C

RADAR
HILL

3HQ

HILL
ROW

K

CARLSON I.

GAREKORU

I

NGABAD I.

L (-)

REAR
BOUNDARY

ALMEIDA I.

VENDER I.

TUCKERS
POINT



DECLASSIFIED

permission of Headquarters 1st Marine Division to reinforce the 1st Bn with one company of the 2d Bn on Ngesebus. The request was granted at 1830 and orders issued for CO 2d Bn to make one rifle company available to CO 1st Bn on Peleliu by 0800, 2 October.

The 2d Bn completed the mop-up of Ngesebus and Kongauru Islands. Considerable Japanese equipment, some in excellent operating condition, was found, including 75mm guns, 20mm AA guns, machine guns, and ammunition of all types. Permission was requested and secured by CO 2d Bn to utilize the 20mm rapid fire AA guns in the anti-boat defense of the islands. Organization of defensive positions continued throughout the day.

At 0700 two platoons of medium tanks were dispatched to the Seventh Marine Regt to assist in operations against the Umurbrogal Mt pocket of Japanese resistance.

At 0740 the remainder of Co L departed from Purple Beach to complete the relief of elements of the First Marine Regt still on Ngabad.

At 1950, 2 Japanese float planes made a feeble attempt to attack Peleliu. Bombs were dropped in the water about 500 yards off Purple Beach. The all clear signal came at 2145.

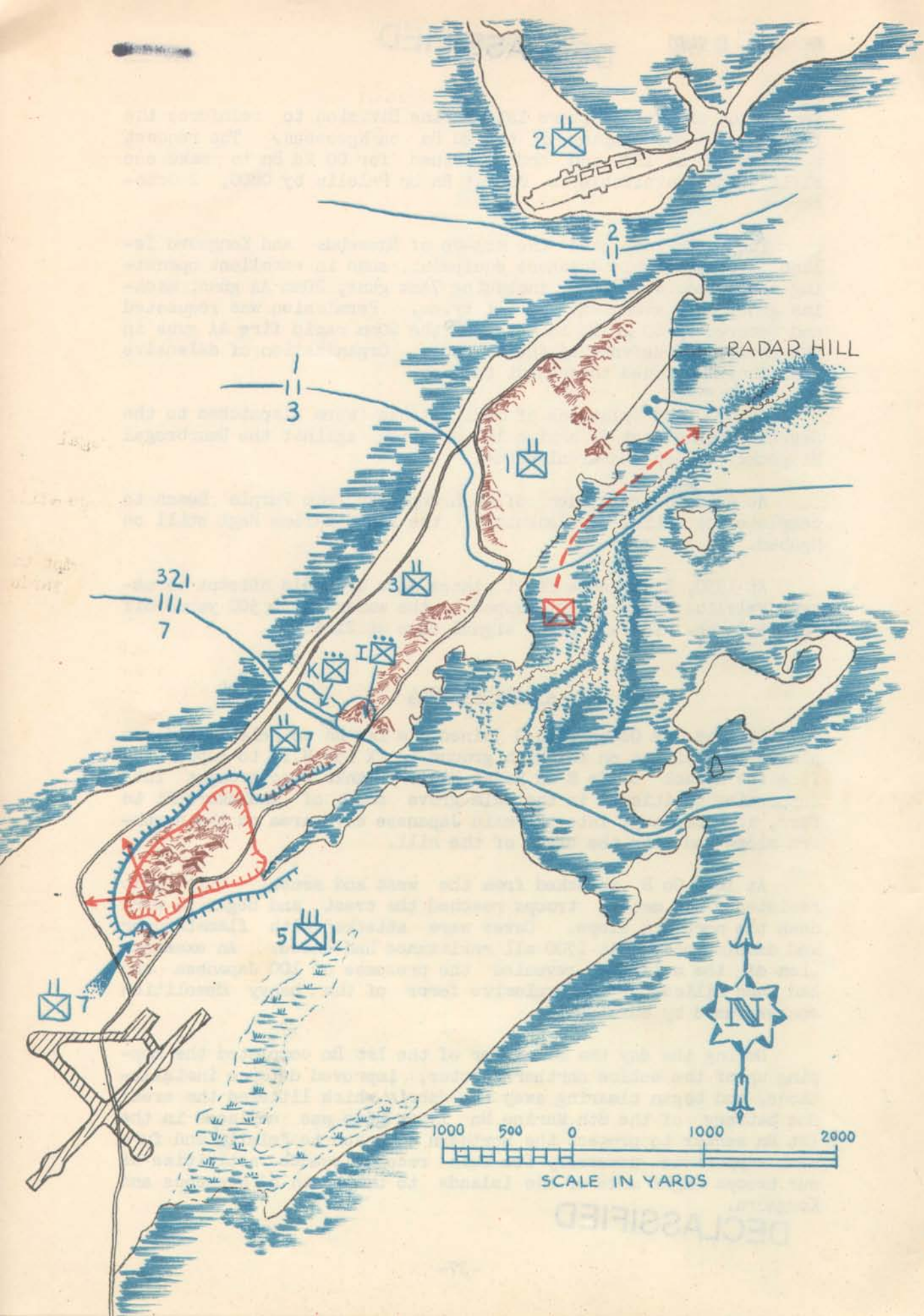
2 October 1944

At 0745, 2 October Co G joined the 1st Bn on Peleliu and was placed in position on the high ground in TX 156 N,T to support by fire the attack of Co B on Radar Hill. Tanks were brought into supporting positions in the palm grove south of Akarakoro Pt to fire, if necessary, into the main Japanese cave area on the northern slope and near the crest of the hill.

At 1000 Co B attacked from the west and south. Only light resistance was met as troops reached the crest and began to work down the northern slope. Caves were attacked with flamethrower and demolitions. At 1700 all resistance had ended. An examination of the main cave revealed the presence of 100 Japanese who had been killed by the explosive force of the heavy demolition charges used by our troops.

During the day the remainder of the 1st Bn completed the mopping up of the entire northern sector, improved defense installations, and began clearing away the debris which littered the area. One battery of the 8th Marine Bn 155mm guns was emplaced in the 1st Bn sector to protect the northern approach to Peleliu and furnish support as necessary for such reconnaissance activities as our troops might make of the islands to the north of Ngesebus and Kongauru.

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The 2d and 3d Bns continued the improvement of defenses in their sectors. Ten additional stray Japanese were killed on Nge-sebus and 8 on Carlson Island, which was now occupied by elements of Co L.

Enemy activity flared up to the south in the Umurbrogal Mt area. Japanese sniper, machine gun, and 37mm or 47mm fire made passage along the West Road a hazardous venture. It served to further complicate the problem of getting supplies to RCT 321, which was already made difficult by poor road conditions.

Heavy seas interfered with the movement of supplies to Nge-sebus, Kongauru, Ngabad, and Carlson Islands, where a shortage of food and water began to be felt.

3 October 1944

Continued bad weather curtailed the unloading of supplies from ships. The low level of food stocks made it necessary for CO RCT 321 to issue orders for the conservation of food and water, and as a result troops were placed on a two-meal-a-day basis.

During the day the Seventh Marine Regt launched an attack against the Umurbrogal Mt area. Some advances were made in the south, but strong enemy resistance in the north prevented any gains. As a precautionary measure to prevent escape to the north by the Japanese, one platoon Co I was placed on Hill 100 and one platoon Co K along the 321 Inf Trail.

Shortly before midnight, 20 Japanese walking northward along the reef fringing the east shore were killed by machine gun fire from coastal defensive positions to the north of Radar Hill.

4-8 October 1944

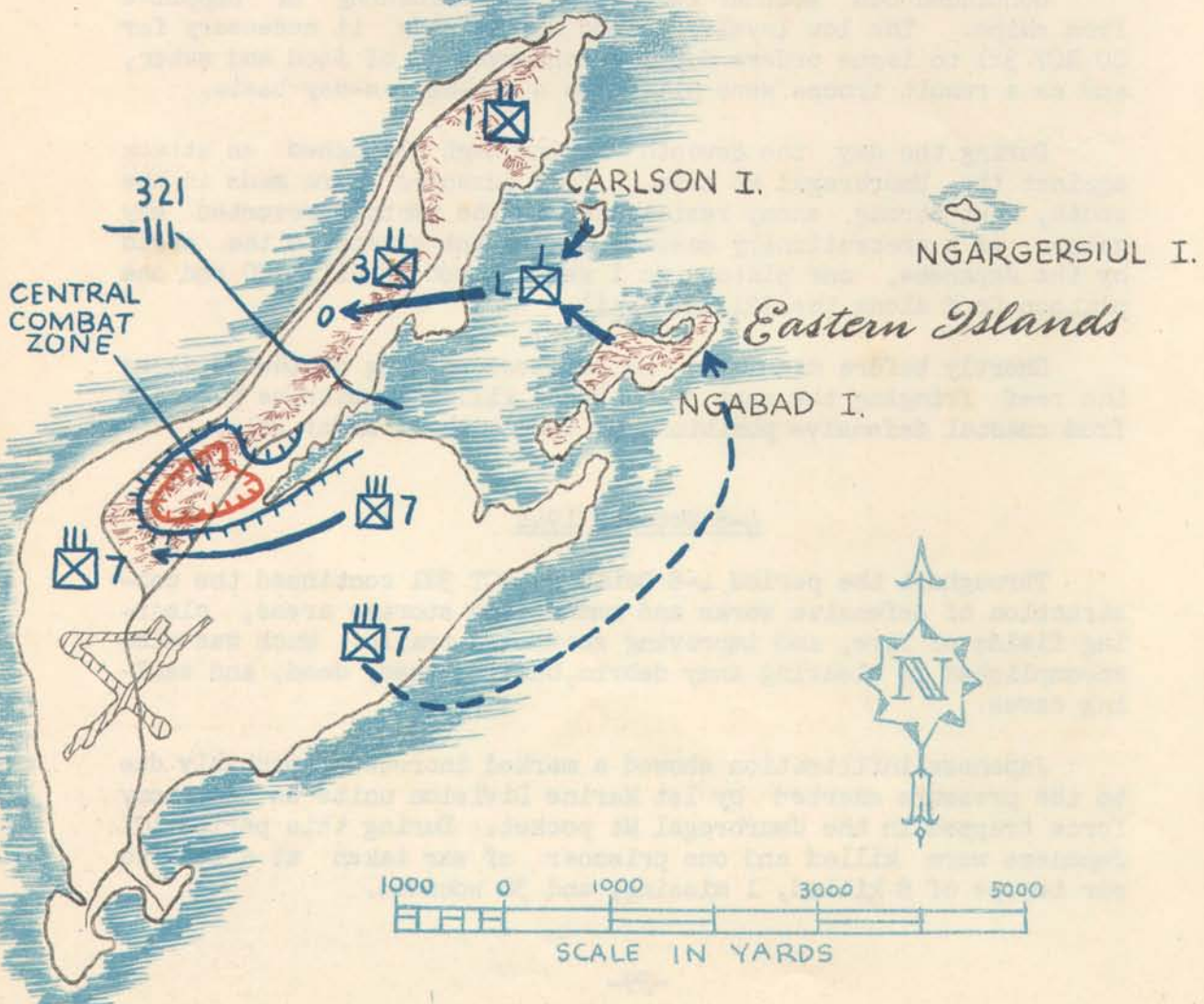
Throughout the period 4-8 October, RCT 321 continued the construction of defensive works and ammunition storage areas, clearing fields of fire, and improving roads and trails. Much was also accomplished in clearing away debris, burying enemy dead, and sealing caves.

Japanese infiltration showed a marked increase, probably due to the pressure exerted by 1st Marine Division units on the enemy force trapped in the Umurbrogal Mt pocket. During this period 171 Japanese were killed and one prisoner of war taken at a loss to our troops of 8 killed, 1 missing, and 30 wounded.

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Northern Islands



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On 5 October, RCT 321 received oral warning orders to be prepared to assume responsibility of the central combat zone, which comprised the Umurbrogal Mt pocket. Plans were made immediately for the relief of Co L on Ngabad and Carlson Islands by elements of the Seventh Marine Regt and reconstitution of the remainder of RCT 321. On 6 October the Fifth Marine Regt replaced the Seventh Marine Regt in the central combat zone. The following day Co L was relieved by troops of the Seventh Marine Regt and returned to Peleliu where it occupied an assembly area in the vicinity of Co K.

At 1310, 7 October an oral order was received directing RCT 321 to seize Garakayo and destroy the enemy garrison force and defense installations thereon, the mission to be completed prior to 1800, 10 October. It was specified that a reinforced rifle company constitute the landing force. This directive was confirmed by a written order received on the following day (*). The mission to seize Garakayo was reassigned to the 2d Bn. Co F was designated the rifle element of the task force to conduct the operation. Preparations for the assault on Garakayo were completed on 8 October. The 2d Bn shifted troops to occupy the defensive positions on Kongauru and Ngesebus which were vacated by Co F.

9 October 1944

The task force constituted for the seizure of Garakayo was under the command of the executive officer, 2d Bn, and composed of the following units:

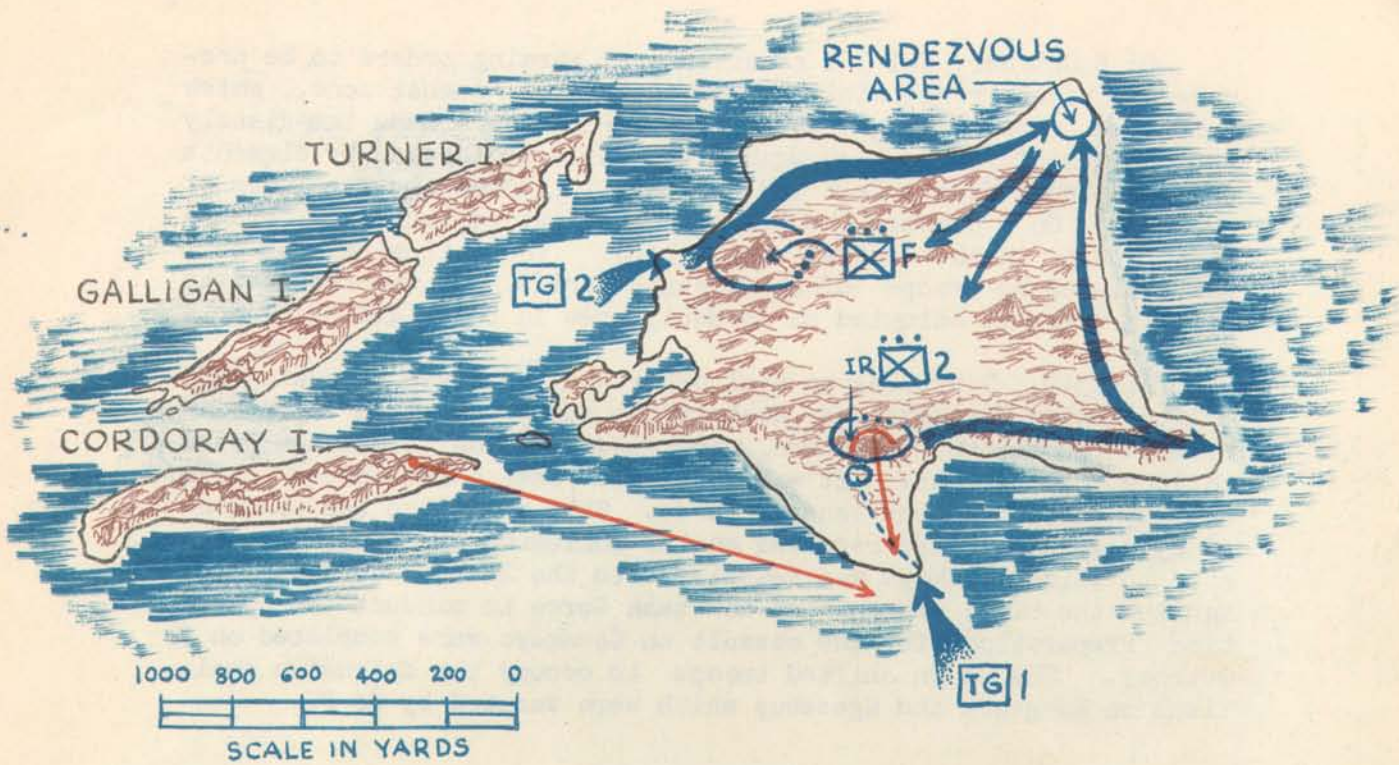
- Co F, 321 Inf
- 2d Plat Co H, 321 Inf
- Det Med Det, 321 Inf
- Det Co A, 306 Engr (C) Bn
- I&R Plat, 2d Bn, 321 Inf
- Ln Gp, 316 FA Bn
- Det Intelligence Det, 2d Bn, 321 Inf
- Det Co A, 726 Amph Tractor Bn (10 LVT4A's)
- Det 3d Armd Amph Tractor Bn (Marine)(10 LVTAL's)

The task force was divided into two task groups for simultaneous landings on the south and west beaches respectively. The plan of maneuver after landing was for Task Group 1 to advance around the eastern shore and Task Group 2 around the northern shore. After a junction between groups was effected, the interior of the island was to be mopped-up. Gunfire support for the landings was to consist of barrages fired by the LVT 37mm, 75mm and .50 caliber guns just prior to the landings.

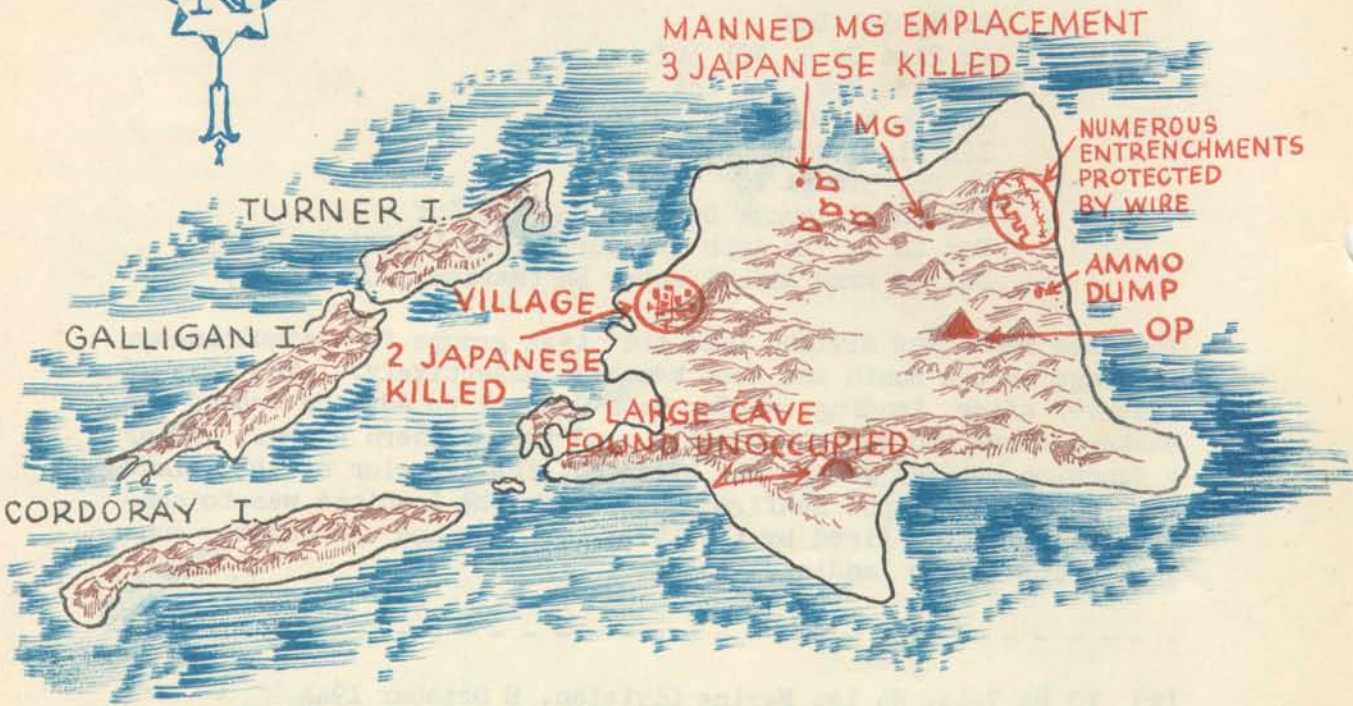
(*) FO No 7-44, Hq 1st Marine Division, 8 October 1944

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GARAKAYO I.



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Troops were embarked at 0655, 9 October and departed from the south shore of Kongauru. The attack formation for each task group was 5 amphibian tanks (LVTAL) in the first wave and 5 amphibian personnel carriers (LVT4A) in the second wave. The force moved as a unit until it reached a point approximately 500 yards from the south beach of Garakayo. Thereafter task groups proceeded separately to their assigned beaches.

Task Group 1 landed on the south beach at 0720. Enemy machine gun fire from a cave in the ridge overlooking the beach and also from Cordoray Island caused no casualties. The group advanced inland to the base of the above mentioned ridge and reorganized in preparation for continuing with the prearranged plan. The I&R platoon, which was part of the Task Group 1, ascended the ridge to establish an observation post and furnish security for the assembly and beach areas. At 0830 infantry troops, supported by amphibian tanks, began to move along the shoreline to the planned rendezvous with Task Group 2 at the northeastern tip of the island.

Task Group 2 landed on the west beach at 0730 without opposition. One platoon was dispatched to the high ground due east of the beach to establish an observation post and support the advance of the remainder of the group along the north coast. An unoccupied village was destroyed and 2 Japanese killed just north of the beach. At 0945, 3 Japanese machine gunners were killed along the north shore.

The two task groups joined forces at 1200 at the northeast tip of the island after completing a reconnaissance of the area within their zones of action to a depth of 75-300 yards from the shore line. A number of enemy installations were found, some of which showed signs of recent occupation. All were destroyed. The terrain was generally of a rugged nature similar to that in the central combat zone of Peleliu. The cliffs along the shore were honeycombed with caves. After the junction of the task groups, infantry patrols were sent to reconnoiter and mop-up the interior of the island. This was completed without incident.

Garakayo was declared secure at 1500, 9 October. Perimeter defenses for the night were established along the north and south shores. This was done in conformity with orders which changed the original plan to return to Ngesebus after securing Garakayo (*). During the night 5 Japanese were killed in the vicinity of the south beach, raising the total for the operation to 10 killed without loss to our troops.

10-11 October 1944

During the period 10-11 October, Co G (Reinf) replaced Co F as defense force for Garakayo. Co F reoccupied its positions on Kongauru Island.

(*) FO 8-44, Hq 1st Marine Division, 10 October 1944

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ARIMASUKU I.

NGEMELIS I.

GARYO I.

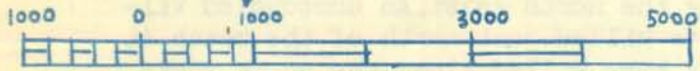
BAIRAKASERU I.

TURNER I.

GALLIGAN I.

CORDORAY I.

GARAKAYO



SCALE IN YARDS

MURPHY I. (O)

KONGARU I.

NEGESIBU I. (X)

F (X)

CARLSON I.

NGARGERSIL I. (O)

NGABAD I. (O)

ALMEIDA I.

321 XX 12

321

311 154

NGARDOLOLOK

154 (-)

XX (X)

XX

GF

GF

GF

GF

I (X)

B (X)

K (X)

L (X)

DECLASSIFIED

At 1030, 11 October one platoon of Co G, embarked in LVTs, departed from Garakayo to investigate islands to the north. At 1130 troops landed on Bairakaseru. No opposition was encountered. A thorough reconnaissance of the island revealed it to be unoccupied by the enemy, but numerous defense works indicated that the island had been occupied in force in the past. Reconnaissances were also made of Garyo, Ngemelis, and Arimasuku Islands, all of which contained abandoned Japanese installations. Several Polynesian natives were found on Arimasuku; the remaining islands were unoccupied. The platoon returned to Garakayo at 1800. Other elements of Co G reconnoitered Cordoray, Galligan, and Turner Islands, just to the west of Garakayo, with negative results.

At 1500, 11 October, RCT 321 was in receipt of orders pursuant to which it was to revert to III PhibCorps, effective 0800, 12 October (*). The mission assigned to RCT 321 was to occupy and defend the eastern shore of Peleliu from Purple Beach inclusive northward, the peninsula immediately north of Ngardololok, and Ngabad, Almeida, Carlson, and Murphy Islands in addition to those areas already occupied by the RCT. Responsibility for the southern Peleliu area was assigned to the Island Garrison Force. The 1st Marine Division was to continue in operations against the enemy in the central combat zone.

Reconnaissances of the newly assigned areas were completed by dark 11 October, and preparations made for the movement of troops which was to commence at 0800 the following day.

Progress by the 5th Marine Regt in the central combat zone was slow, due to the fanatical resistance offered by the Japanese defenders from their almost inaccessible mountain positions. Co A, 710 Tank Bn supported these operations with all available Tanks. Marine LVTs were assigned to RCT 321 for patrol purposes.

12 October 1944

At 0800, 12 October troops began to occupy the newly assigned defense sectors. Co B moved to the eastern islands, Co K to the Ngardololok area, and Co F to Murphy Island. The defense of Purple Beach was assigned to the 154 Engr (C) Bn (-) whose release from Garrison Forces to RCT 321 was to be effective at 0800, 13 October on order of Hq III PhibCorps.

A patrol of Co G returned to Arimasuku Island with Instructions to remove the natives encountered in the reconnaissance of the previous day. Eleven natives were brought back to Garakayo and subsequently sent to Peleliu.

(*) Operation Plan 12-44, Hq III PhibCorps, 10 October 1944.



321 INF TRAIL

FROM NORTHERN ISLANDS

1 ⊠ 321

3 ⊠ 321 (-)

2 ⊠ 321

U ⊠ 321

BOYD RIDGE

HILL 140

FIVE BROTHERS

GRINLINTON POND

WALT RIDGE

3 ⊠ 321

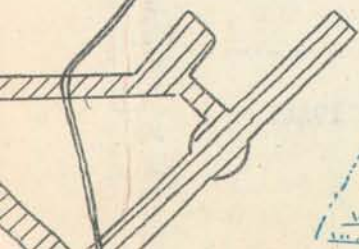
K ⊠ 321

NGARDOLOKOK

1 ⊠ 323

FROM PURPLE BEACH

PURPLE BEACH



DECLASSIFIED

The assault phase of the Palau Operation was officially declared to be terminated on 12 October. However, a considerable number of Japanese still remained in the Umurbrogal Mt area and offered fierce resistance to our forces.

13 October 1944

At 1200, 13 October, RCT 321 was released from Corps reserve and reassigned for operational control to the 1st Marine Division. (*) At 1500, orders from the 1st Marine Division directed RCT 321 to relieve the Fifth Marine Regt in the central combat zone during the period 15-16 October and launch an attack at 0700, 17 October to destroy the enemy remaining in the Umurbrogal Mt area. (**) Oral instructions from Headquarters 1st Marine Division changed the effective date for the beginning of the relief to 14 October with battalions of the 321 Inf to go into the line in the order 2d Bn, 3d Bn, and 1st Bn. Command of the central combat zone was to pass to CO RCT 321 when two infantry battalions of the RCT were committed in the line. Defense sectors vacated by RCT 321 were to be occupied by the Fifth Marine Regt, which was to pass into Corps reserve upon the completion of its relief.

The remainder of the day was spent in formulating detailed plans for the relief of the Fifth Marine Regt and the conduct of impending operations, to include supply and evacuation. Elements of the 2d Bn conducted reconnaissances of the areas to be occupied by them beginning at 0800 the following day. Preparations were also made for aerial reconnaissances of the entire combat zone. Marine units were acquainted with the RCT 321 plan for the defense of the northern sector and the outlying islands.

14 October 1944

By 1212, 14 October the 2d Bn was withdrawn from Ngesebus, Kongauru, Murphy, and Garakayo Islands and moved to an assembly area just north of 321st Inf Trail preparatory to relieving the 3d Bn Fifth Marine Regt on the north-northeast flank of the pocket. Co B was relieved on Ngabad, Almeida, and Carlson Islands, but did not rejoin the 1st Bn until the following day.

During the morning, the 1st Bn 323 Inf, which had returned from the Ulithi Atoll operation, arrived in Peleliu and was attached by III PhibCorps to RCT 321. At 1300 it occupied an assembly area in the vicinity of Ngardololok and began preparations to relieve Marine units on the west-southwest flank of the pocket.

(*) Operation Plan 12-44, Hq III PhibCorps, 13 October 1944.
(**) FO 9-44, Hq 1st Marine Division, 13 October 1944.

DECLASSIFIED -47-

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AID STATION → ⊕

321 INF TRAIL

1 ⊕ 321

3 ⊕ 321 (C)

2 ⊕

11 ⊕

2 ⊕ 321

BOYD RIDGE

HILL 140

FIVE BROTHERS

GRINLINTON POND

3 ⊕ 321

WALT RIDGE

K ⊕

NGARDOLOKOK

1 ⊕ 323

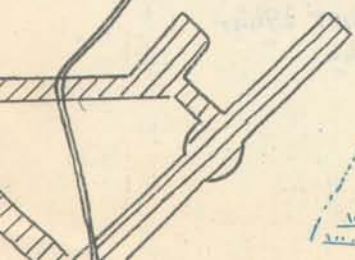
3 ⊕ 321

⊕ 321

⊕ 88

PURPLE BEACH

DECLASSIFIED



DECLASSIFIED

Troops on northern Peleliu continued a systematic search for small groups of Japanese who managed to infiltrate into the area from the south. During the afternoon, a patrol of the 1st Bn 321 Inf discovered a cleverly hidden Japanese medical aid station in Hill Row at TX 156 Tl. The aid station was a large cave partitioned into two rooms, each approximately 50' x 15' x 10'. Of the three entrances into the cave one was protected by a Lewis Gun with anti-aircraft mount. A lighting system and radio station were in one room. Fifty dead Japanese were found in the aid station, the majority of whom had gun shot wounds in the head. Very few medical supplies and no bandages or medical records were found.

15 October 1944

At 0800, 15 October the 2d Bn was committed in the line along Hill 140 and the ridge to the west thereof. Active reconnaissance of the combat zone was initiated immediately.

At 1500 the 3d Bn was withdrawn from its defense sector and moved to an assembly area in rear of the southeast flank of the pocket in preparation for relieving elements of the 1st Bn Fifth Marine Regt along the east flank of the pocket.

16 October 1944

On the morning of 16 October the remaining elements of RCT 321 began their movement to complete the relief of Marine units in the central combat zone.

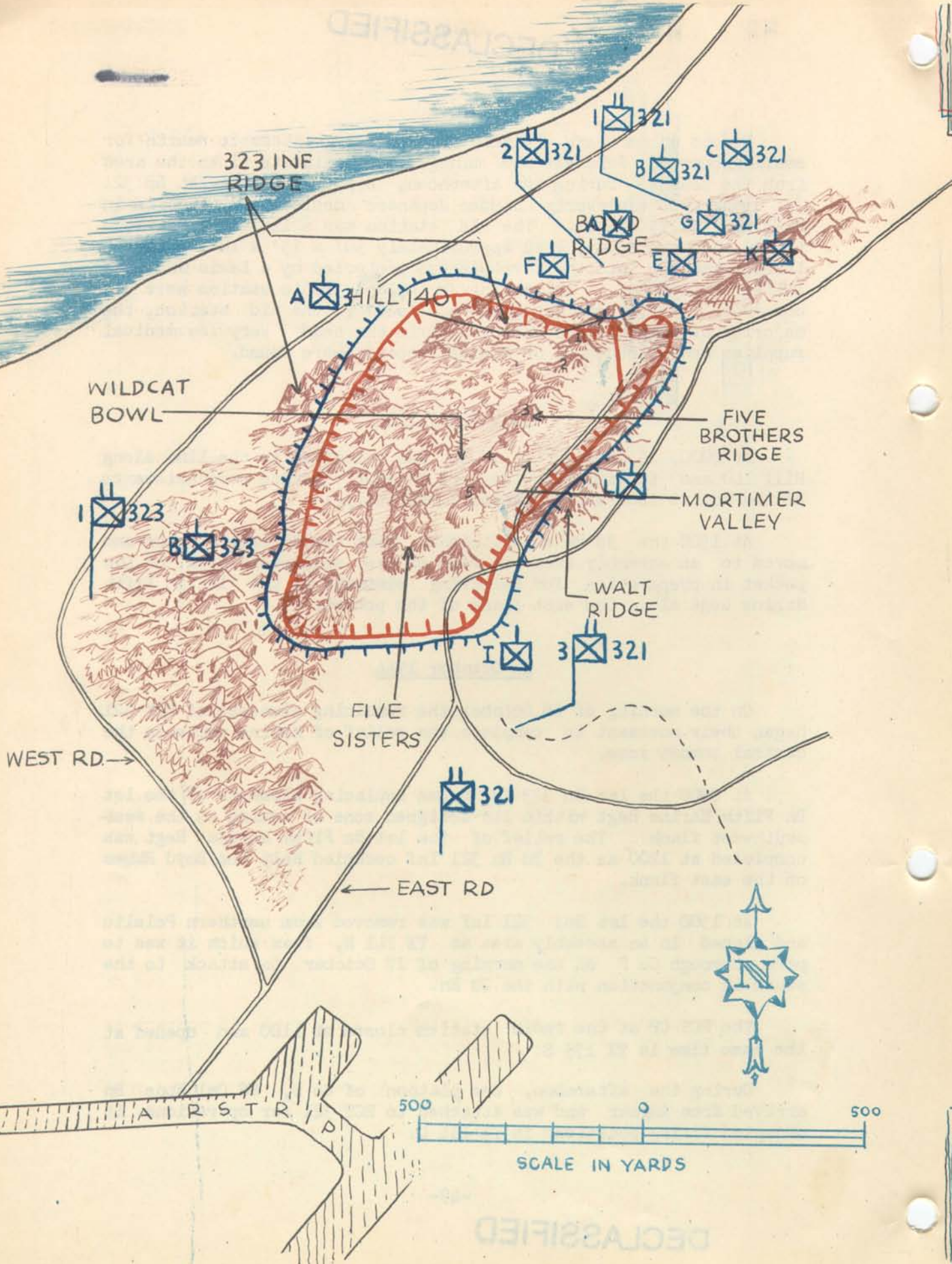
At 0800 the 1st Bn 323 Inf began replacing elements of the 1st Bn Fifth Marine Regt within its assigned zone of action on the west-southwest flank. The relief of the 1st Bn Fifth Marine Regt was completed at 1200 as the 3d Bn 321 Inf occupied Walt and Boyd Ridges on the east flank.

At 1500 the 1st Bn, 321 Inf was removed from northern Peleliu and placed in an assembly area at TX 141 H, from which it was to pass through Co F on the morning of 17 October to attack to the south in conjunction with the 2d Bn.

The RCT CP at the radio station closed at 1100 and opened at the same time in TX 135 S.

During the afternoon, one platoon of Co D, 88 Cml Wpns Bn arrived from Angaur and was attached to RCT 321 for operations. It occupied firing positions in TX 134 Q.

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323 INF RIDGE

1 321
2 321
3 321
A 321
B 321
C 321

BOOD RIDGE

D 321
E 321
F 321
G 321
K 321

A 321 HILL 140

WILDCAT BOWL

FIVE BROTHERS RIDGE

MORTIMER VALLEY

1 323
B 323

WALT RIDGE

I 321
3 321

FIVE SISTERS

WEST RD.

321

EAST RD



DECLASSIFIED

At 1500 the 2d Bn attempted to seize Brother No. 1, the northernmost peak of the Five Brothers ridge lying immediately to the south of Hill 140, in order to gain observation and position areas for supporting weapons for the attack to be launched the following morning. The mission was assigned to a platoon of Co G, which was to be supported by fire from Co F in position on the ridge to the west of Hill 140. To seize the objective it was necessary for the platoon of Co G to descend the south slope of Hill 140 and cross a deep ravine before ascending the north slope of Brother No. 1. As troops reached the floor of the ravine they were met by intense Japanese machine gun fire from positions defiladed from the supporting fires of Co F. Heavy casualties were suffered, including the CO Co G, and troops were forced to withdraw. Our dead and wounded had to be removed under cover of darkness.

Enemy activity during the hours of darkness was widespread throughout the RCT zone. Enemy patrols, apparently foraging for food and water, made repeated attempts to raid installations of the 1st Bn 323 Inf, but without success. Continual machine gun and rifle fire came from the vicinity of the Five Brothers and the area in front of the 1st Bn 321 Inf.

Our artillery and 4.2" mortars delivered harrassing fires throughout the night on enemy positions on the Five Brothers ridge and the northern wall of Wildcat Bowl.

17 October 1944

No accurate information was available as to the number of Japanese who were making their final stand in the fastnesses of the Umurbrogal Mt. That it was considerable was evident from the fierce resistance which the 1st Marine Division met in attempting to reduce the area. No appreciable diminution of this resistance was noticeable in spite of the considerable number of the enemy who were killed in day to day combat and night infiltration. Reconnaissance of the northern islands by the 2d Bn clearly indicated that the forces which had garrisoned them had moved south for the defense of Peleliu when our intentions to seize it became known.

The attack by RCT 321 to destroy this enemy was launched at 0700, 17 October. Artillery and 4.2" mortars delivered a 10 minute preparation to precede the assault. The plan of operations was for the 1st and 2d Bns to advance due south along the 323d Inf and Five Brothers ridges respectively, while the 3d Bn and 1st Bn 323 Inf held to their positions and delivered such supporting fires as was possible to assist the attack by the assault battalions.

DECLASSIFIED -51-

CLASSIFIED

323 INF
RIDGE



WILDCAT
BOWL

A HILLY 40

FIVE
BROTHERS
RIDGE

B 323

MORTIMER
VALLEY

WALT
RIDGE

WEST RD. →

C 323

FIVE
SISTERS

INFILTRATION
INTO THIS AREA

← EAST RD



SCALE IN YARDS

AIR STR P

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

The 1st Bn attacked in column of companies. At 0700 Co A, the leading element, passed through Co F. Initial resistance was light and consisted mainly of enemy sniper fire. The exceedingly rugged terrain offered the greatest difficulty. At 1400, after advancing approximately 200 yards, Co A was subjected to intense machine gun fire from a strongly fortified pillbox supported by fire from the many caves which abounded in the area. Co B was committed along the ridge to the east of Co A in an effort to out-flank the strongpoints in front of Co A. However, automatic fire from enemy positions on the Five Brothers Ridge struck the flank and rear of Co B. To avoid excessive casualties, Cos A and B were withdrawn 25-75 yards to covered positions which they prepared for the night's defense.

On the east, the 2d Bn attacked in column of companies with Co E the leading element. Intense mortar, machine gun, and rifle fire from Brother No. 1 was directed at Co E immediately upon initiation of the assault, in the face of which no advance could be made. At 1400 an armored patrol of tanks and infantry was sent along the East Road and into the saddle between Walt and Boyd Ridges to neutralize caves in the north slope of Brother No. 1 and the west wall of Walt Ridge. Many Japanese were driven from their caves out into the open where they were taken under fire by our troops. At 1600 the patrol returned without loss to personnel or equipment.

At 1745 an undetermined number of Japanese infiltrated or moved through a series of caves to the south and were able to lay mortar and automatic fire on the area occupied by the 4.2" chemical mortar platoon and Provisional Mortar Platoon of the 710 Tank Bn. Weapons and ammunition were removed to new positions, but registration firing could not be completed prior to dark.

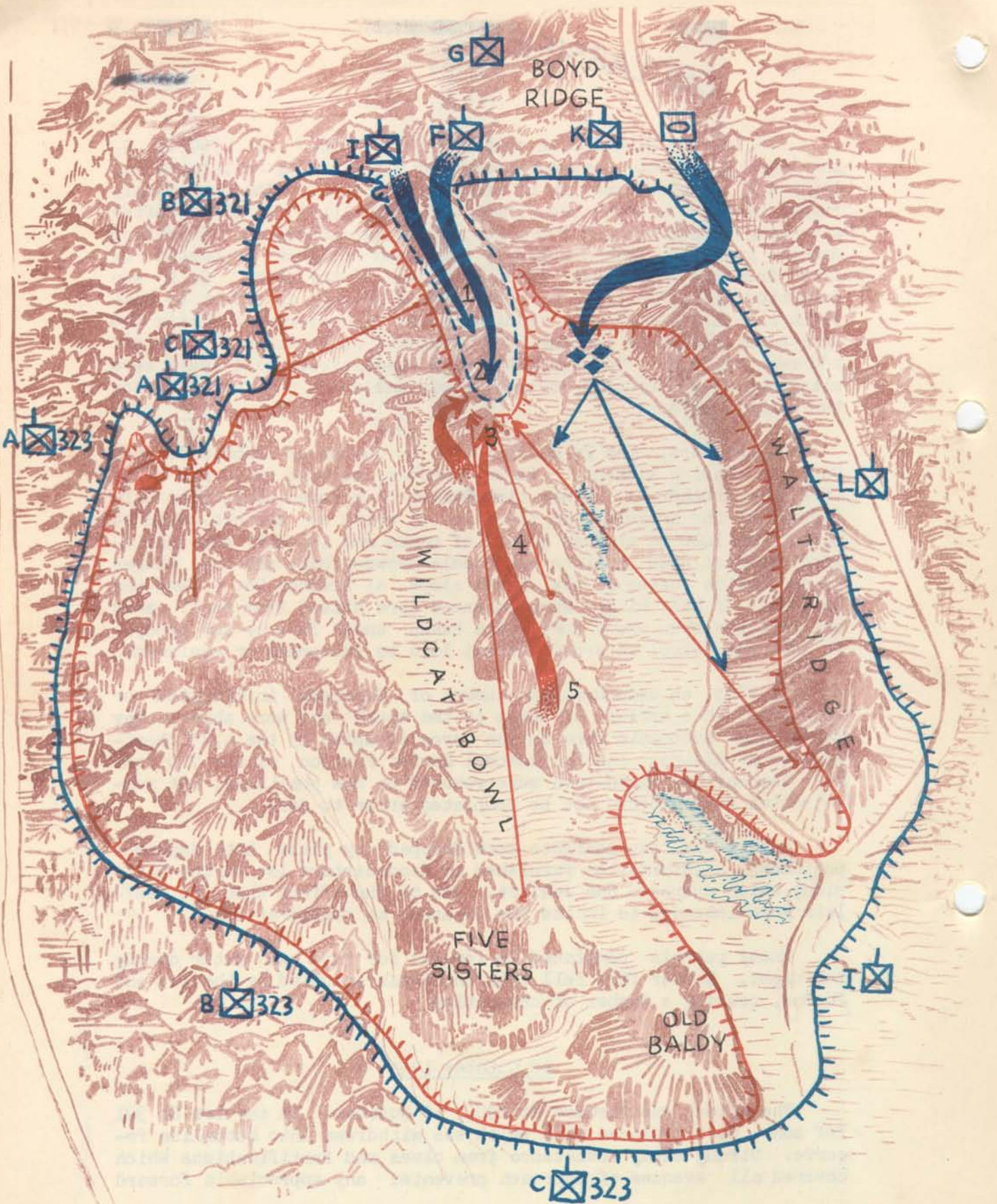
During the day leaflets were dropped by plane into Japanese positions. Information furnished by Headquarters 1st Marine Division, which prepared the leaflet, was to the effect that the leaflets were intended to incite the Japanese to counterattack.

Enemy patrols continued to forage for food and water during the night. Mortar fire fell into the areas occupied by the 1st and 2d Bns, causing a number of casualties.

18 October 1944

The attack was resumed at 0900, 18 October. In the 1st Bn 321 Inf zone, Co C replaced Co B which was withdrawn into battalion reserve. Strong enemy resistance from caves and fortifications which covered all avenues of approach prevented any appreciable forward

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OVERLAY SKETCH MAP
 Peleliu Island Central Sector
 SCALE 1:3,000

DECLASSIFIED

movement by our troops. The day was spent in constructing sand bag emplacements to protect troops on exposed forward positions and emplacing 75mm pack howitzers for direct fire at caves holding up the advance. Co A succeeded in breaking down the steel door which protected one cave that was evidently a communications center, since much radio equipment was observed to be in it.

At 0900 the 2d Bn made its third attempt to seize Brother No. 1. Tanks and LVT flamethrowers were sent over the saddle to the north of Walt Ridge and into the northern end of Mortimer Valley. Their fire effectively neutralized the caves along the west wall of Walt Ridge and the eastern and northern slopes of the Five Brothers Ridge. Heavy concentrations of 4.2" and 81mm mortar fire were placed along the top of the Five Brothers Ridge to soften defenses. Under cover of this supporting fire, Co E succeeded in scaling Brother No. 1 at 1115. At 1200 Brother No. 2 was taken. In an attempt to occupy as much of the ridge as possible, Co F bypassed Co E and captured Brother No. 3 at 1330. Immediately thereafter intense machine gun and mortar fire from enemy positions on Brothers No. 4 and 5, the southwestern tip of Walt Ridge, and the Five Sisters pinned Co F to the ground. At 1450 a Japanese counterattack began taking shape as enemy troops were observed advancing northward from Brothers No. 4 and 5. Reinforcements to Co F were dispatched immediately, but could not reach the area in time. At 1600 the enemy counterattacked in strength and forced our troops to withdraw from the entire ridge. Defenses for the night were established at the base of Brother No. 1.

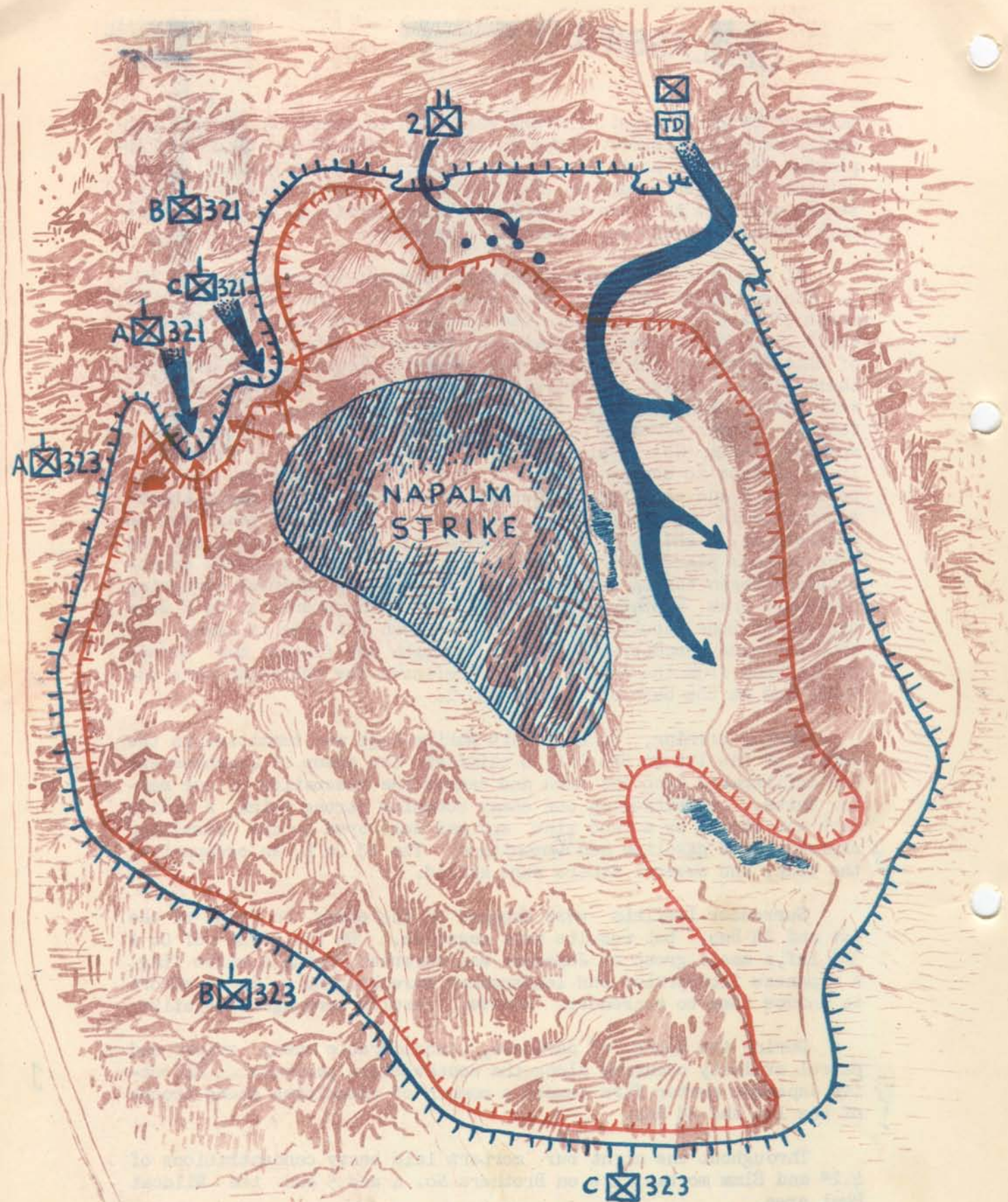
During morning, Co L Seventh Marine Regt was committed in the sector of the 1st Bn 323 Inf to eliminate the group of Japanese who had infiltrated into the area and caused the evacuation of our mortar units. In attacking one enemy occupied strong point, a medium tank was struck by a land mine and was destroyed by the resulting explosions of gasoline and ammunition. The CO Co L, an occupant of the tank, and several others were killed.

Surrender leaflets were dropped on the enemy in front of the 1st and 2d Bns, but results were negative. On the front of Co A 321 Inf, a small group of Japanese was observed waving a white flag. A Japanese interpreter and loudspeaker were brought up in an effort to induce them to surrender. However, results were again negative.

During the hours of darkness, considerable enemy sniper and patrol activity occurred along the southwestern perimeter. Effective Japanese mortar fire caused a number of casualties among troops of the 1st and 2d Bns.

Throughout the night our mortars laid heavy concentrations of 4.2" and 81mm mortar fire on Brothers No. 4 and 5 and the Wildcat Bowl area.

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OVERLAY SKETCH MAP
Peleliu Island Central Sector
SCALE 1:3000

DECLASSIFIED

19 October 1944

On the morning of 19 October one company of the 154 Engr (C) Bn was attached to the 1st Bn 323 Inf to relieve Co L Seventh Marine Regt and destroy the group of Japanese troops who had become firmly entrenched along the southern slope of Umurbrogal Mt along the southwestern perimeter. Artillery was moved into position at 1000 to assist the engineers in their mission.

With the aid of 75mm pack howitzers, the 1st Bn succeeded in clearing and sealing several caves within its zone of action. At 1525 it renewed its advance, but after gaining 25-50 yards it was stopped by intense machine gun and rifle fire to its front and flanks.

Activities of the 2d Bn were confined to patrolling in the vicinity of Brother No. 1 and reorganizing and replenishing supplies in preparation for another attempt to take the Five Brothers Ridge, which more and more seemed to be the key to an advance along the entire northern front. A napalm bomb strike requested by the 2d Bn was delivered at 1400 by 16 Corsairs each carrying one 30 gallon napalm bomb without igniter. Immediately after the planes had cleared the area, 4.2" mortar HE shells were used to ignite the napalm. Many of the enemy were driven into the open in the vicinity of Brothers No. 3 and 4 and along the front of the 1st Bn and shot by our troops. The napalm was very effective against Japanese snipers hiding in trees.

A patrol of the 3d Bn, supported by M-10 tank destroyers, entered Mortimer Valley by way of the saddle to the north of Walt Ridge and attacked caves along the west wall of Walt Ridge from which the enemy could support positions on the Five Brothers Ridge.

Headquarters 81st Infantry Division left Angaur and arrived on Peleliu Island this date. It occupied an administrative bivouac area in the vicinity of Purple Beach and prepared a battle command post in the Japanese headquarters building adjacent to the Peleliu airstrip.

20 October 1944

At 0800, 20 October the responsibility for the ground defense of the Southern Palau Islands and the continuation of operations to destroy the enemy remaining on Peleliu passed from Headquarters III PhibCorps to Headquarters 81st Infantry Division (*). Fifth Marine Regt (Reinf), which was to remain on Peleliu temporarily after the

(*) Operation Plan 14-44, Hq III PhibCorps, 18 October 1944

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321 INF TRAIL

5 [Symbol]

321 [Symbol]

[Symbol] 321

[Symbol] 321

BOYD RIDGE

HILL 140

FIVE BROTHERS

GRINLINTON POND

BEACH DEFENSE

[Symbol] 321

WALT RIDGE

NGARDOLOKOK

[Symbol] 726 (AMPH)

321 [Symbol]

726

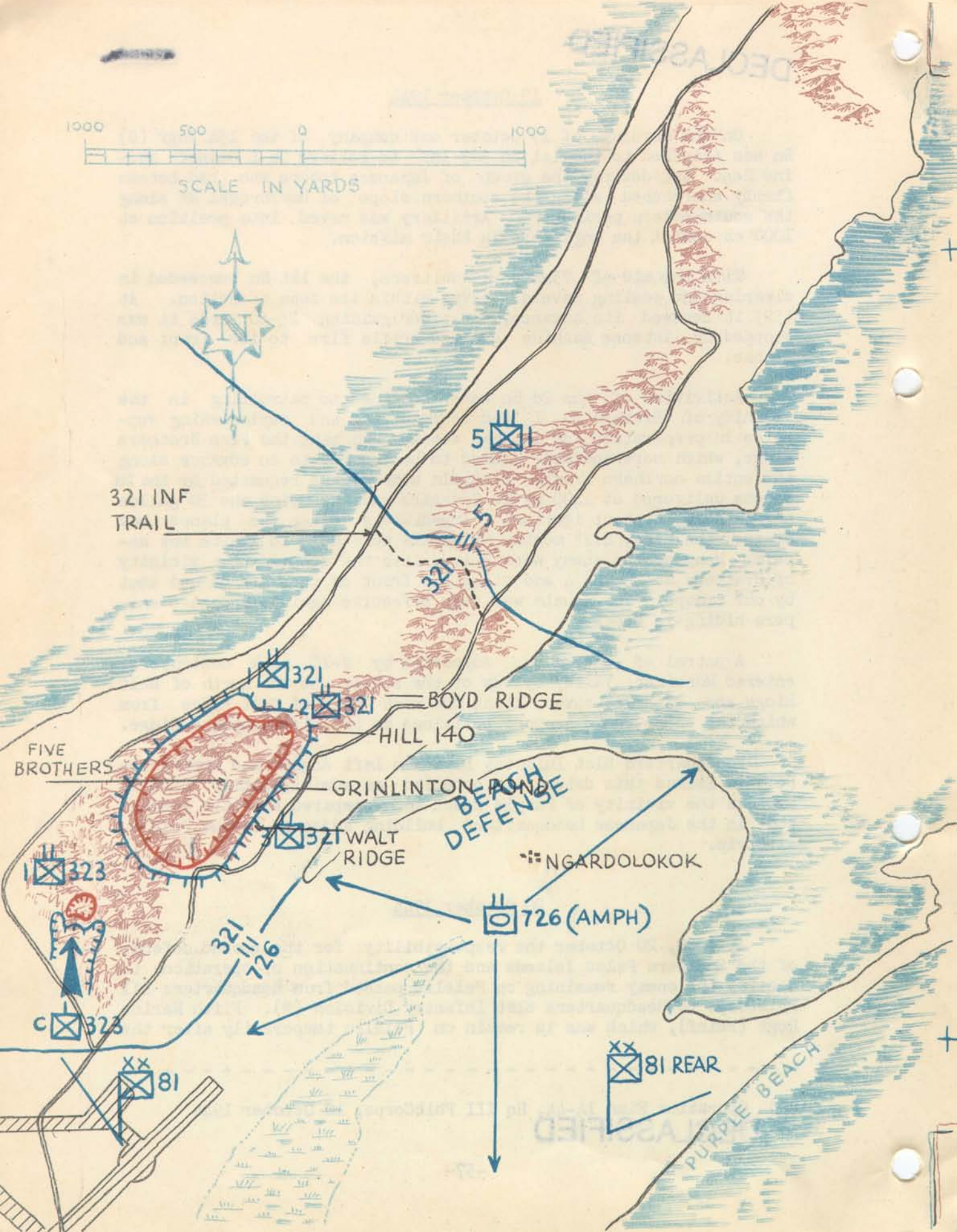
[Symbol] 323

C [Symbol] 323

[Symbol] 81

[Symbol] 81 REAR

PURPLE BEACH



DECLASSIFIED

departure of other elements of the 1st Marine Division, was attached to the 81st Infantry Division (*).

Orders issued by the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division charged the 321st Inf (Reinf) with the mission of continuing offensive action to destroy the enemy remaining in the central combat zone. Responsibility for the defense of the northern sector, including all islands previously garrisoned by our troops, was assigned to the Fifth Marine Regt. The beach defense of the southern sector was assigned to the 726th Amph Tractor Bn. The 81st Division Artillery with operational control over the 4th Bn, 11 Marines, 3d FA Bn (155 Hows) Marines, and 8th FA Bn (155 guns) Marines was assigned the mission of supporting the 321st Inf and the defense of Peleliu and adjacent islands (**).

During the early morning of 20 October, Co C 323 Inf was withdrawn from the perimeter for the purpose of clearing the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt of the enemy who continued a stubborn defense from a series of caves and strongpoints. The presence of Japanese in that area interfered greatly with our use of West Road, which was still the only supply route to the north. Co C, reinforced with engineer demolition teams, attacked at 0900 and advanced 200 yards without serious opposition. Shortly after 1200, mortar and machine gun fire pinned troops to the ground. Tanks were dispatched to assist in the attack and with their support, the company advanced another 100 yards. At 1400 Co B 321 Inf was moved to the south perimeter to occupy the positions vacated by Co C 323 Inf.

During the night, Co L repulsed an attack by the enemy who had scaled the west wall of Walt Ridge from caves at the base of the ridge. An unknown number of the enemy were killed by 3d Bn mortar fire in the vicinity of Grinlinton Pond to the west of Walt Ridge. Forward observers had reported a number of Japanese milling around in the area.

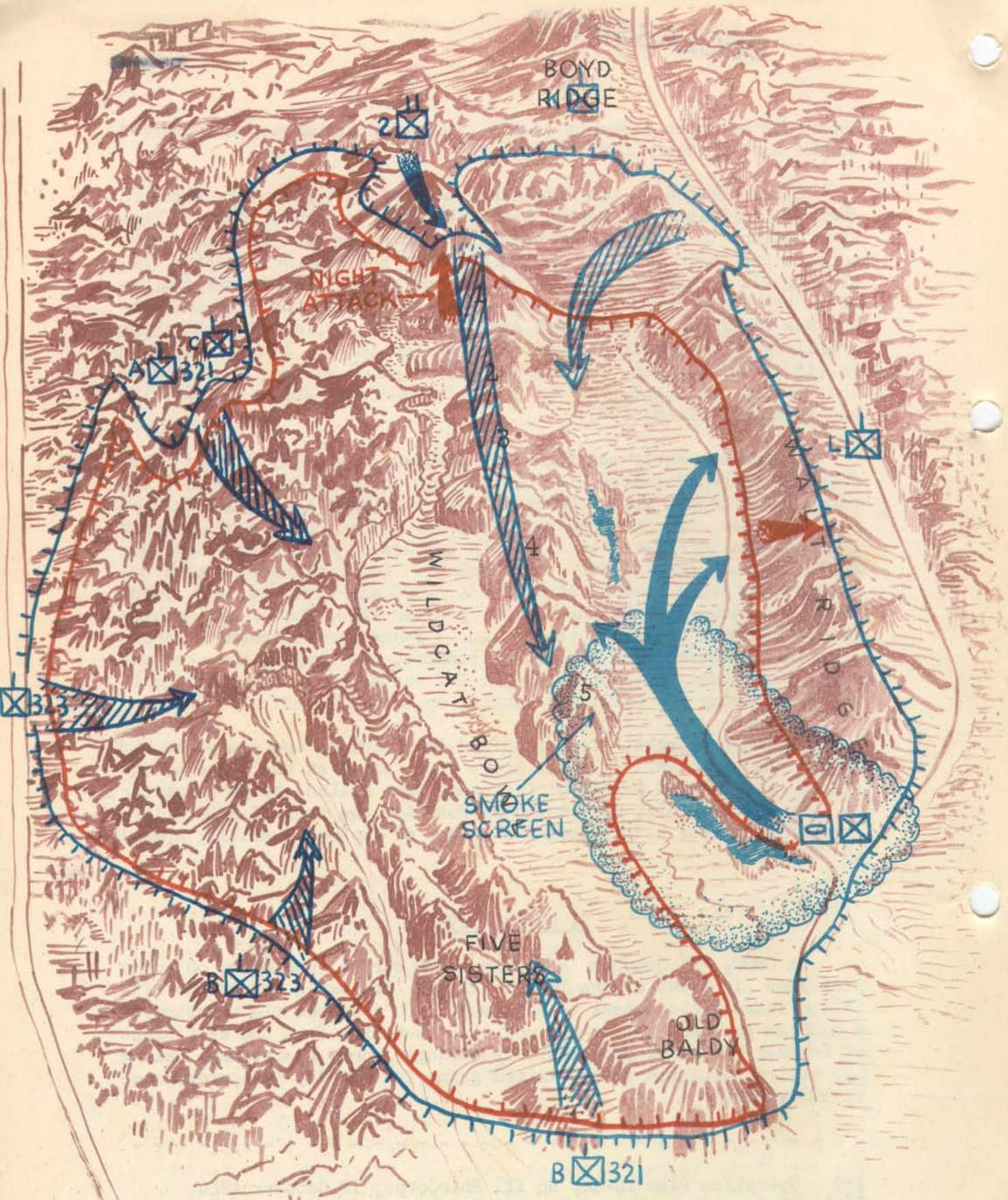
21 October 1944

At 0800, 21 October a napalm bomb strike was made on enemy positions in front of the 1st Bn 321 Inf following which the battalion renewed its attack to the south. Co A on the right destroyed a machine gun nest and mortar position, but fire from the west slope of Brother No. 3 and progressively stronger enemy resistance along the entire battalion front limited gains for the day to approximately 100 yards.

(*) Operation Plan 14-44, Hq III PhibCorps, 18 October 1944.

(**) FO No. 22, Hq 81 Inf Div, 20 October 1944.

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OVERLAY SKETCH MAP
 Peleliu Island Central Sector
 SCALE 1:3,000

DECLASSIFIED

The 2d Bn continued patrolling activities in vicinity of Brother No. 1. One patrol sent out during the morning was dispersed by strong enemy fire from the east slope of the hill. Direct 75mm pack howitzer and 37mm fire were placed on the area from which the firing came and two caves were uncovered and destroyed. At 1300 a combat patrol consisting of volunteers heavily armed with grenades, set out on a mission to reach the top of Brother No. 1. The enemy retaliated by hurling grenades on our troops as they fought their way up the slope. At 1700 the patrol was in command of the northern portion of Brother No. 1. Co E was immediately rushed to the position to fortify it against an expected Japanese counterattack. Sandbags were passed from hand to hand by troops who formed a chain from the base to the top of the hill. By dark the position was organized and our troops prepared to hold it.

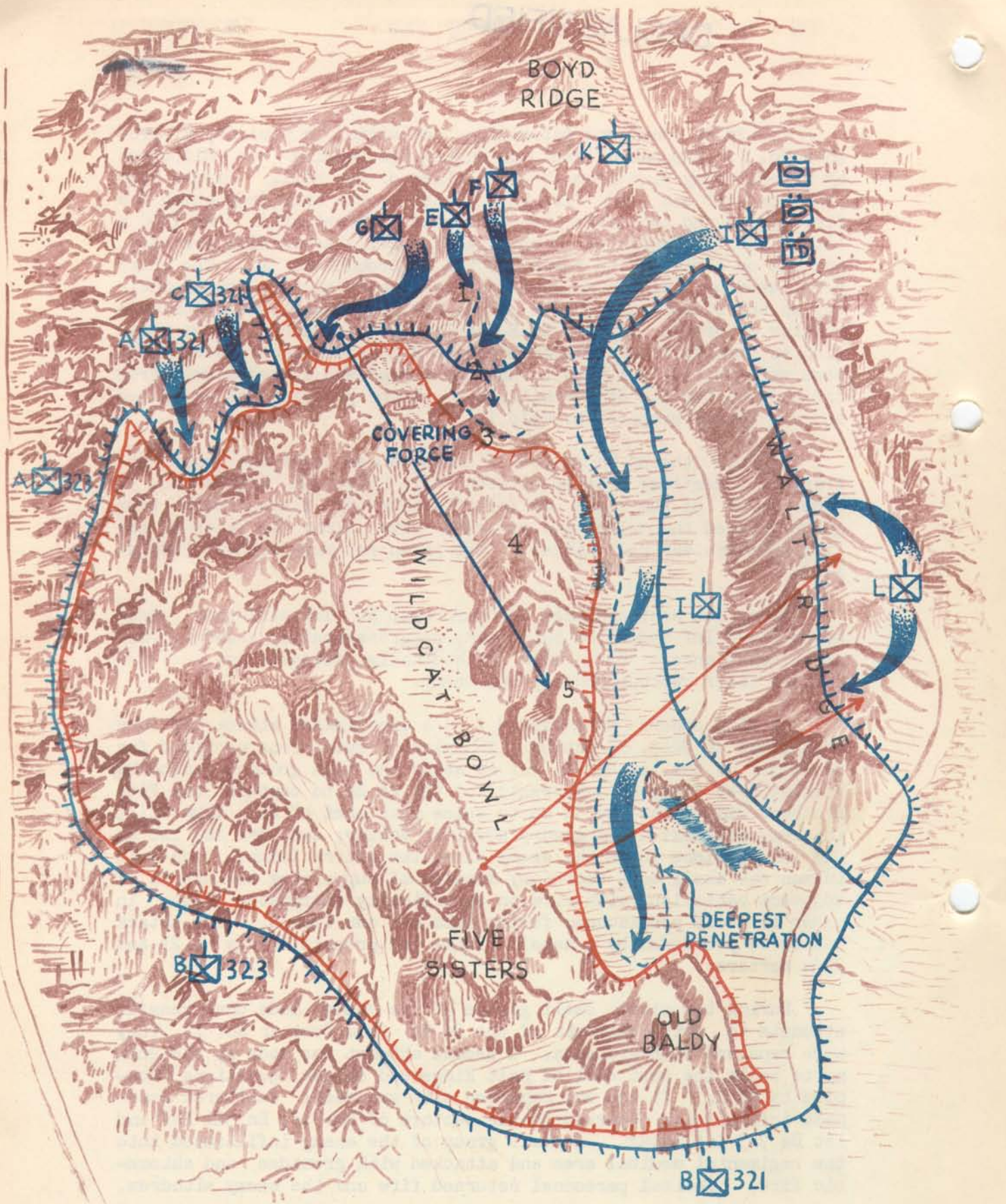
At 1145 the 3d Bn placed a smoke screen over the south entrance to Mortimer Valley between Walt Ridge and Brother No. 5. Under cover of the smoke an infantry-tank-LVT flamethrower task group entered the valley and attacked caves along the bases of the Five Brothers and Walt Ridges. The group returned without loss at 1500.

Along the southern edge of Umurbrogol Mt infantry-tank teams of Co C 323 Inf made slow but steady progress against stubborn Japanese resistance. Caves were methodically attacked and sealed to prevent their reoccupation by the enemy.

At 1600 orders were issued for a coordinated attack by four battalions at 0645, 22 October. The plan of operations provided for an attack by the 1st Bn 321 Inf to seize the high ground overlooking Wildcat Bowl from the northwest; for the 2d Bn to capture the Five Brothers Ridge; for the 3d Bn to seize that part of Walt Ridge still in enemy possession and occupy Mortimer Valley; and for the 1st Bn 323 Inf to close in on the enemy along its entire front. Each battalion was assigned a secondary mission of supporting the attack of adjacent battalions with fire on specifically designated areas in order to avoid promiscuous firing into our own troops. The attack was to be preceded by a napalm strike and preparation by 4.2" and 81mm mortars.

During the night small groups of the enemy made unsuccessful attempts to drive elements of the 2d Bn from Brother No. 1. They were repulsed with grenades. A second attempt was made by the enemy to scale the west wall of Walt Ridge and attack positions occupied by Co L. It too was repulsed with grenades. Scattered Japanese infiltration occurred in the sectors of the 1st Bn 321 Inf and 1st Bn 323 Inf areas. A small group of the enemy infiltrated into the regimental medical area and attacked with grenades and automatic fire. Medical personnel returned fire and the enemy withdrew.

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OVERLAY SKETCH MAP
 Peleliu Island Central Sector
 SCALE 1:3,000

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22 October 1944

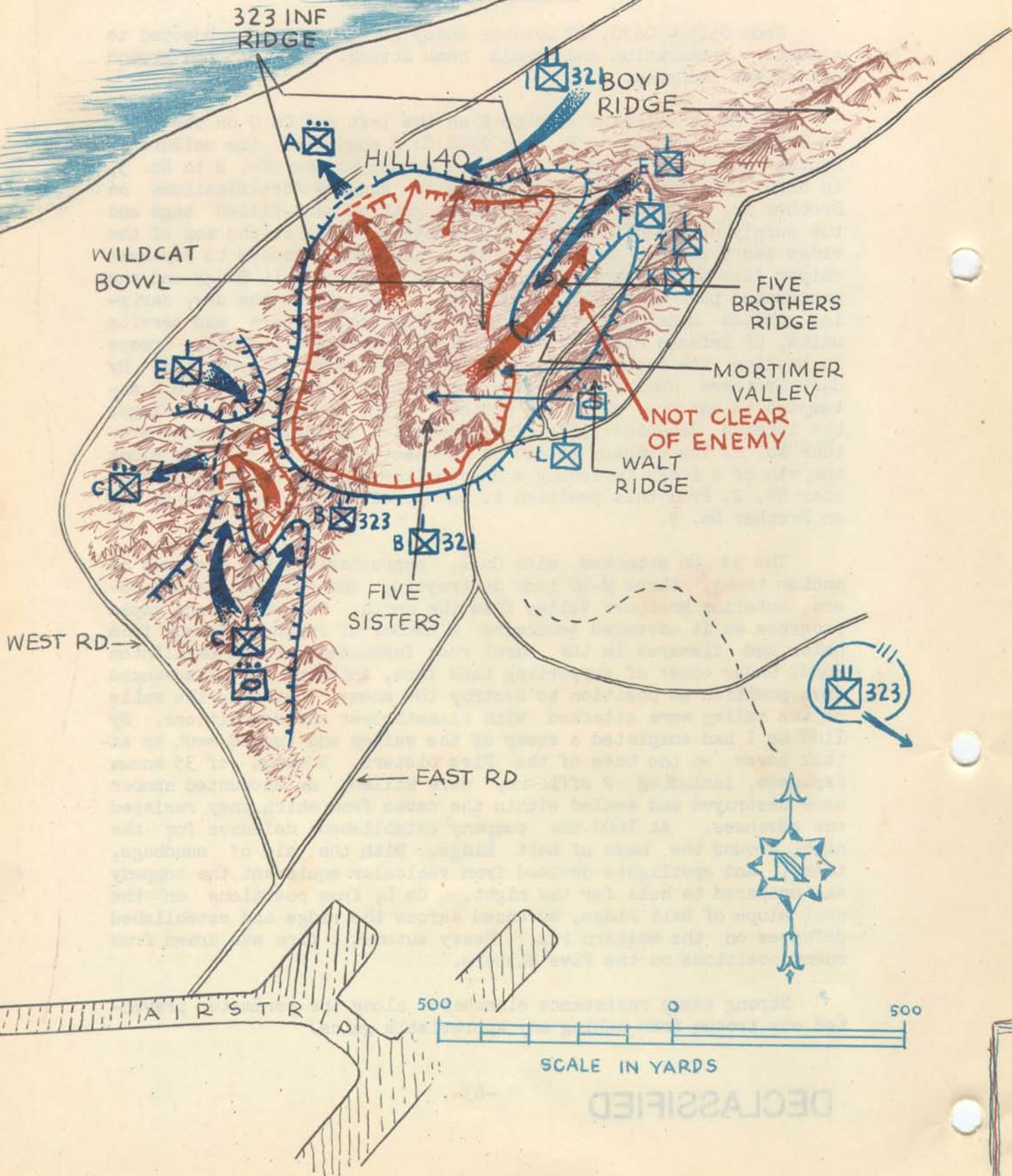
From 0515 - 0630, 22 October enemy positions were subjected to a mortar preparation and napalm bomb attack. At 0645 the ground attack was launched.

The 2d Bn attacked with Co E on the left and Co G on the right. Co F followed behind Co E. By 0900 Co E completed the seizure of Brother No. 1 and advanced a platoon across Brother No. 2 to No. 3, in order to cover the construction of sandbag fortifications on Brother No. 2 by Co F. The task of getting sand-filled bags and the supply of ammunition up the precipitous slope to the top of the ridge was a tedious one. Moreover, troops were exposed to Japanese sniper fire which came from the western slope of Walt Ridge and the unoccupied part of the Brothers Ridge. Throughout the day, carrying parties made up of technicians from headquarters and service units, CP Defense Platoon, and engineers assisted infantry troops in hauling the material to consolidate the newly won position. By dark Brothers Nos. 1 and 2 were completely fortified. Co G attempted to advance along the western slope of the Brothers Ridge, but intense Japanese rifle fire prevented an advance beyond Brother No. 2. The company turned to the west and moved 75 yards along the rim of a ledge inclosing a deep hollow just to the west of Brother No. 2. From this position it was possible to bring fire to bear on Brother No. 5.

The 3d Bn attacked with Co I, supported by two platoons of medium tanks, three M-10 tank destroyers, and two LVT flamethrowers, entering Mortimer Valley from the north. The force made rapid progress as it advanced southward. A number of Japanese fought from holes and fissures in the coral rock formation around Grinlinton Pond. Under cover of supporting tank fire, infantry troops advanced from position to position to destroy the enemy. Caves in the walls of the valley were attacked with flamethrower and demolitions. By 1100 Co I had completed a sweep of the valley and turned west to attack caves at the base of the Five Sisters. A total of 35 known Japanese, including 2 officers, were killed; an uncounted number were destroyed and sealed within the caves from which they resisted our advances. At 1600 the company established defenses for the night around the base of Walt Ridge. With the aid of sandbags, tanks, and spotlights devised from vehicular equipment the company was prepared to hold for the night. Co L, from positions on the east slope of Walt Ridge, advanced across the ridge and established defenses on the western rim. Heavy automatic fire was drawn from enemy positions on the Five Sisters.

Strong enemy resistance elsewhere along the perimeter prevented our troops from making any appreciable gains.

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During the day the remainder of RCT 323 (less the 155th Engr (C) Bn), which had arrived from Ulithi on 21 October, completed the unloading of personnel and occupied a bivouac area 600 yards inland from Purple Beach.

The enemy was particularly active during the hours of darkness. At 2000 a counterattack on the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt forced one platoon of Co C 323 Inf to withdraw approximately 100 yards. Co E 323 Inf was moved from its bivouac area to reinforce Co C. At the same time, a counterattack against the left flank of Co A 323 Inf caused troops to withdraw from their ridge positions, leaving a gap between the 1st Bn 323 Inf and 1st Bn 321 Inf. Shortly before daylight Co F repulsed a determined enemy attempt to retake Brother No. 2 and killed 20 Japanese.

23 October 1944

At daybreak, 23 October the left flank platoon of Co A 323 Inf reoccupied its positions on the ridge, closing the perimeter.

The 2d Bn spent the morning strengthening positions on Brothers No. 1 and No. 2 and making preparations for an attack on Brother No. 4 that afternoon. Fire support for the attack was to be furnished by the 3d Bn from Walt Ridge and medium tanks at the south end of Mortimer Valley in order to neutralize enemy positions on Brother No. 5 and the Five Sisters. The attack was launched at 1500 by Co E from its position on Brother No. 1. By dark Brother No. 4 was secure and fortified with sandbag emplacements.

In the 3d Bn sector, Co K was moved from Boyd Ridge to Walt Ridge and Co L occupied positions to block the south exit from Mortimer Valley, thus tightening the perimeter on the east flank. Co I remained in position around Grinlinton Pond.

Undiminished enemy resistance continued along the front of the 1st Bn 321 Inf. The strength of Japanese defensive positions and the limited avenues of approach thereto made it necessary to construct sandbag fortifications along the route of advance to enable our troops to hold on to what was gained. Without such protection our troops were open to deadly enemy sniper fire from a myriad of crags, fissures, and caves. At times it became necessary to push sandbags forward with poles in order to emplace the first layer and afford protection for those who crawled forward to complete the work. The conventional method of covering such activities with fire could not be employed, since the terrain was such that sandbag emplacements had first to be constructed for the base of fire itself.

In the south, Co C and Co E 323 Inf, supported by a platoon of tanks, succeeded in forcing the Japanese on the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt to withdraw approximately 200 yards northward towards the main enemy area of resistance.

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GARAKAYO I.
TURNER I.
GALLIGAN I.
CORDORAY

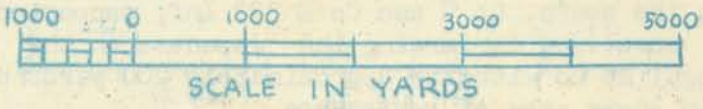
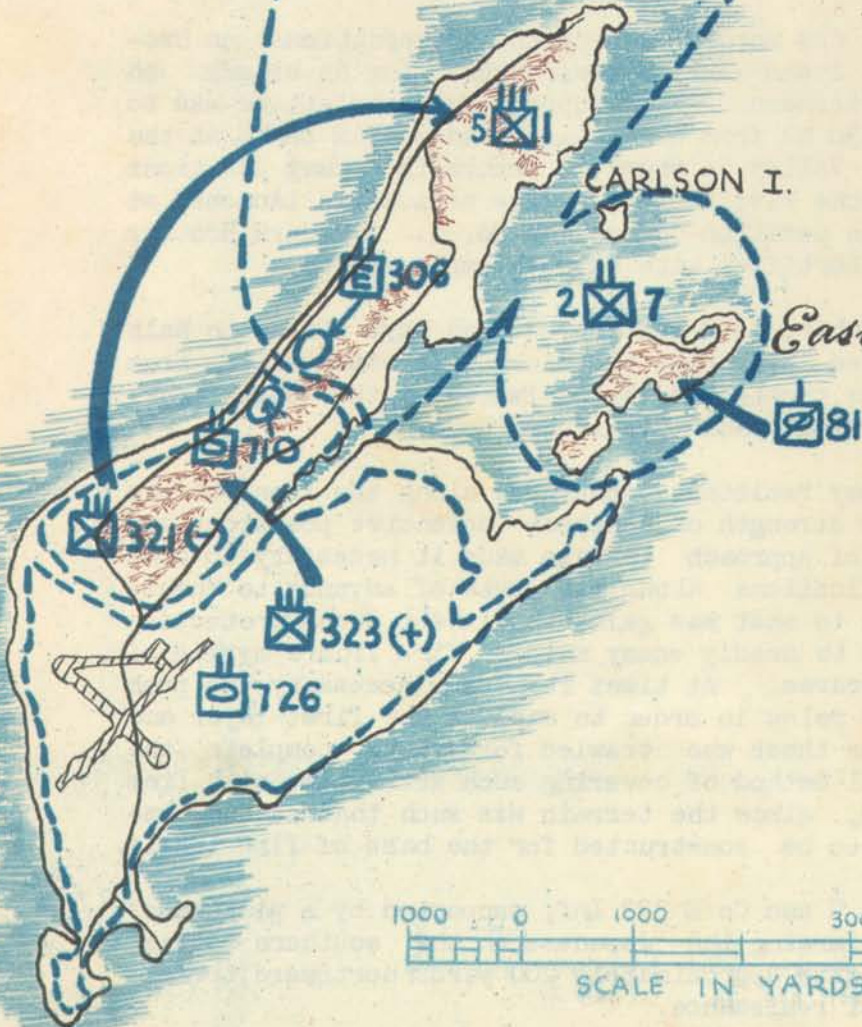
Northern Islands

KONGAURU I.
MURPHY I.
NEGESEBUS I.

CARLSON I.

NGARGERSIUL I.

Eastern Islands



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During the hours of darkness the enemy twice attempted to drive Co E from Brother No. 4, but were repulsed with grenades. Twenty Japanese were killed in the vicinity of Grinlinton Pond as they were apparently trying to replenish their water supply.

24 October 1944

The 2d Bn spent 24 October in strengthening its positions along the Five Brothers Ridge. The 3d Bn continued clearing and sealing caves in Mortimer Valley. The 1st Bn made slight gains in its zone of action and destroyed a strongly fortified cave protected by 4 machine guns. At the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt Co C 323 Inf continued driving the enemy to the north. Elements of the company made contact with troops on the right flank of Co A 323 Inf, thus blocking an escape route to the West Road.

At 1700 the Division issued orders directing the 323 Inf to relieve the 1st and 2d Bns 321st Inf with one battalion of the 323d Inf prior to dark on 25 October and for CO 323d Inf to assume command of the central combat zone at 0800, 26 October. The 3d Bn 321st Inf, Co D 88th Cml Wpns Bn, and Co C 306 Med Bn were attached to the 323d Inf. Direct support of impending operations by the 323d Inf was to be furnished by the 906th FA Bn, 316th FA Bn upon its arrival from Angaur, 306th Engr (C) Bn, and the equivalent of one company of the 710th Tank Bn. The orders further directed the 321st Inf, with the 81st Cav Rcn Tp attached, to effect the relief of the 2d Bn Seventh Marine Regt on the eastern islands with the 81st Cav Rcn Tp by 0900, 26 October and to relieve the Fifth Marine Regt in the northern defense sector by 1200 the same day. The 81st Division Artillery was ordered to relieve the 4th Bn 11th Marine Regt by 1200, 25 October and to support the operations of the 323d Inf and defense of Peleliu and adjacent islands. Beach defense in the southern sector remained with the 726th Amph Tractor Bn (*).

During the night, a number of Japanese were heard talking in the southern part of Mortimer Valley, which had become somewhat of a no man's land since Co I's infantry-tank-LVT sweep of it on 22 October. In the belief that the Japanese were trying to surrender, interpreter personnel were brought forward to broadcast via a loud-speaker. Results were negative.

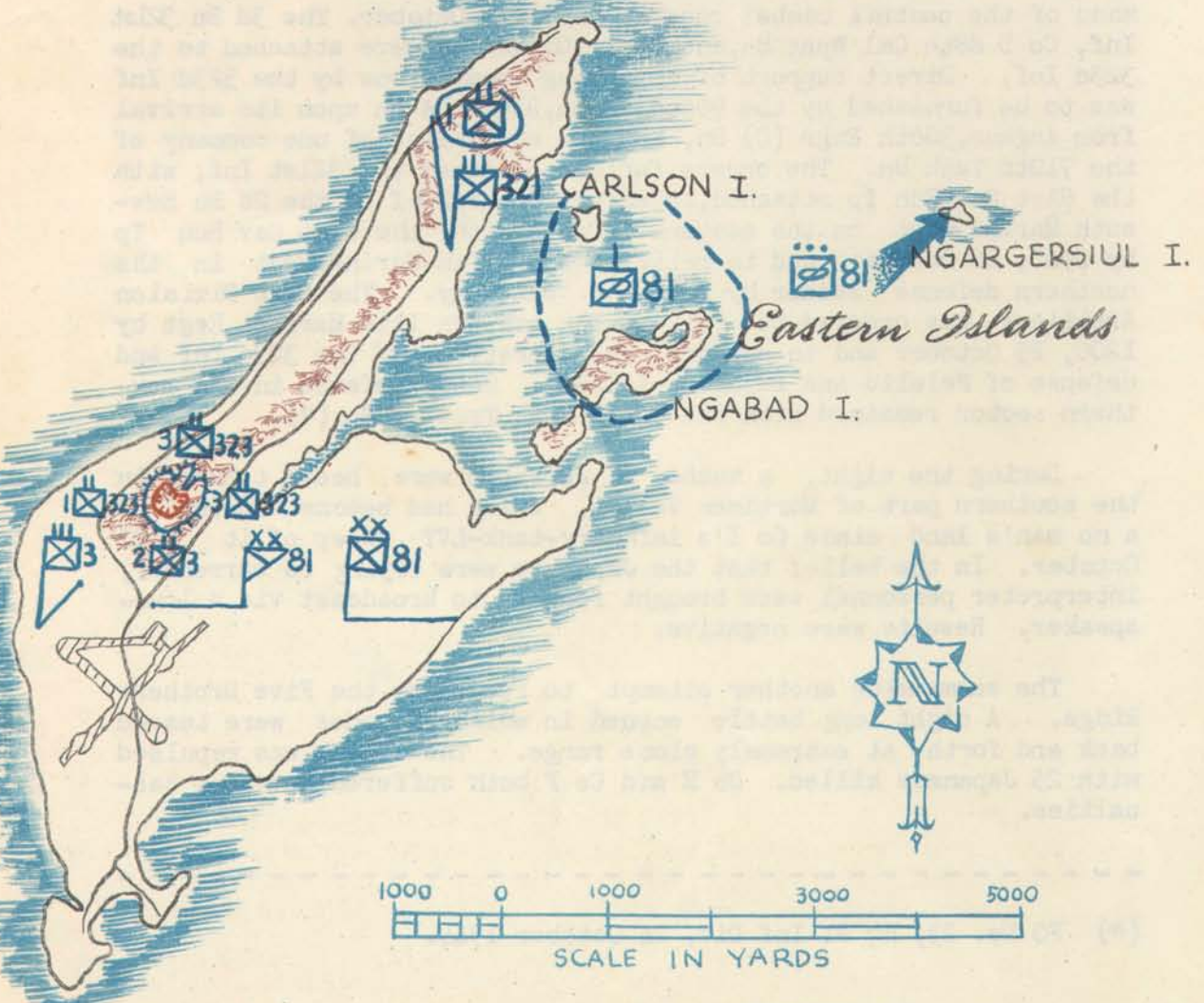
The enemy made another attempt to recapture the Five Brothers Ridge. A night long battle ensued in which grenades were tossed back and forth at extremely close range. The attack was repulsed with 25 Japanese killed. Co E and Co F both suffered numerous casualties.

(*) FO No. 23, Hq 81 Inf Div, 24 October 1944.

GARAKAYO I.
 TURNER I.
 GALLIGAN I.
 CORDORAY

Northern Islands

KONGAURU I.
 MURPHY I.
 NEGESEBUS I.



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25 October 1944

The relief of the 321st Inf began at 0600, 25 October as Co I 323d Inf replaced Co E and Co F on the Five Brothers Ridge. The remainder of the 3d Bn 323d Inf relieved the 1st Bn 321st Inf along the northwest perimeter. Co B 321st Inf was relieved by elements of the 2d Bn 323d Inf in the sector just south of Old Baldy and the Five Sisters. The relief of the 321st Inf was completed by 1400. The remainder of the day was spent by the 323d Inf in familiarizing itself with the terrain over which it was to operate, hauling supplies forward, and strengthening defensive positions along the perimeter.

At 1400 the 2d Bn 321st Inf was assembled on Ngesebus and made preparations to relieve the Fifth Marine Regt on the northern islands. The 1st Bn occupied an assembly area in vicinity of the radio station for a brief rest period prior to assuming the defense of northern Peleliu.

During the night two prisoners of war were captured. Interrogation of them indicated that 500-600 Japanese still remained in the area, of whom approximately half were sick or wounded and without medical care; the remainder were under orders to fight to the death.

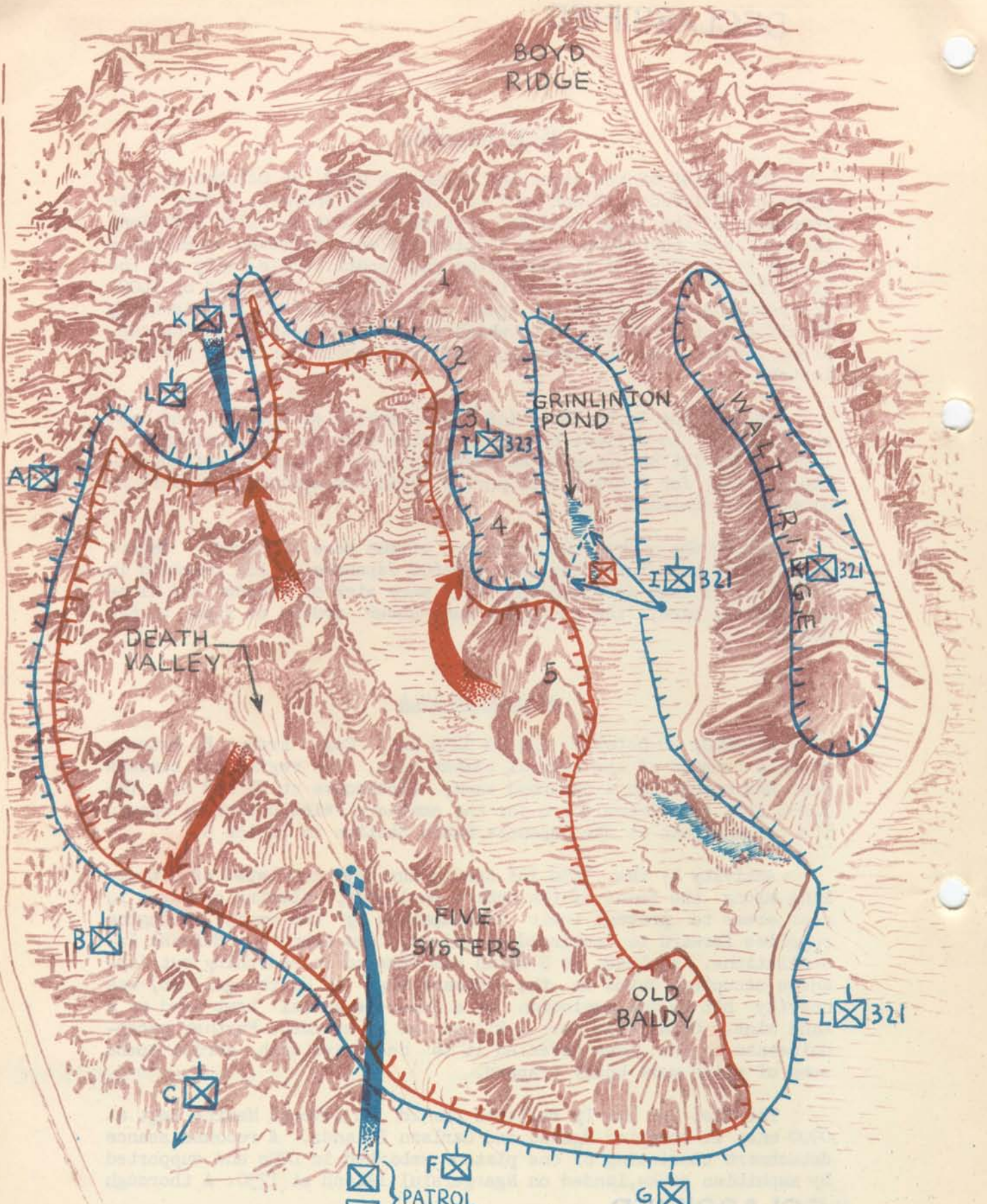
26 October 1944

At 0800, 26 October The CO 323d Inf, Col. Arthur P. Watson, assumed command of the central combat zone. The regimental command post was opened in a captured enemy blockhouse at TX 133 S. The 321st Inf, as defense force for the northern Peleliu sector, opened its command post at the Japanese Radio Station in TX 156 G.

Activity by the 323d Inf during the day consisted of patrolling along the front of the entire perimeter, blowing of caves in rear areas to prevent their reoccupation by the enemy, bringing supplies forward to advanced positions, and improving defense installations. At 1240, Co E which was engaged in searching out Japanese occupied caves on the southern edge of Umurbrogal Mt, was heavily hit by the explosion of a Japanese aerial bomb used as a land mine. Casualties were 4 killed and 29 wounded. Further reconnaissance of the area revealed it to be strewn with aerial bombs, some of which were booby trapped.

The 81st Cav Rcn Tp relieved the 2d Bn Seventh Marine Regt at 0900 when it occupied Ngabad and Carlson Islands. A reconnaissance detachment consisting of one platoon embarked in LVTs and supported by amphibian tanks, landed on Ngargersiul Island at 1730. A thorough

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OVERLAY SKETCH MAP
 Peleliu Island Central Sector
 SCALE 1:3,000

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search of the island was made, but it was found to be unoccupied. A defense and observation post were established on the island.

By 1200 the 321st Inf completed the relief of Marine units on northern Peleliu and outlying islands and the Fifth Marine Regt (Reinf) was relieved of further duty with the Division.

Considerable enemy activity occurred during the hours of darkness. Three successive attacks were made on positions occupied by Co B along the western perimeter. All were repulsed with the aid of heavy mortar barrages. At midnight Co K repulsed a strong attack on its position on the north of the perimeter. Shortly before daylight the Japanese made another determined effort to dislodge Co I from Brother No. 4. A furious battle ensued in which our troops and the enemy attacked each other with grenades. A shortage of ammunition caused Co I to withdraw from its most advanced positions along the ridge, but these were reoccupied at daybreak. Thirty Japanese were killed. A water carrying party of 7 Japanese was wiped out as Co I 321st Inf suddenly illuminated the Grinlinton Pond area with a spotlight and opened fire with machine guns.

27-31 October 1944

During the period 27-31 October the 323d Inf continued to improve its defenses, as heavy rains and poor visibility reduced operations to a minimum. Pack howitzers were emplaced on high ground and sandbagged to protect crews from enemy sniper fire. Slight daily gains were made on the northwest by Co K which succeeded in advancing its front on line with Co L to its right. Co C continued operations to clear the area in rear of the southwestern perimeter. A number of aerial bombs were discovered and detonated. In several instances it was discovered that the Japanese replaced mines in areas which had been previously reconnoitered and cleared by our troops. During the morning 29 October Co L 321 Inf relieved Co I 321 Inf in the Mortimer Valley at the base of Walt Ridge. On 29 October a 2d Bn tank-infantry patrol advanced 200 yards northward along Death Valley. One tank detonated a land mine and lost a track, but only light enemy sniper fire was encountered.

Enemy reaction to our seizure of the commanding terrain on the Five Brothers Ridge and the high ground in Co K's zone to the west continued unabated. During the night 27-28 October a strong attack was directed against Co K, forcing it to withdraw slightly from its forward positions. Thirty-five Japanese were killed and the ground reoccupied by Co K shortly after daylight. During the nights 27-28 and 28-29 October two more unsuccessful attempts were made by the enemy to recapture Brother No. 4.

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