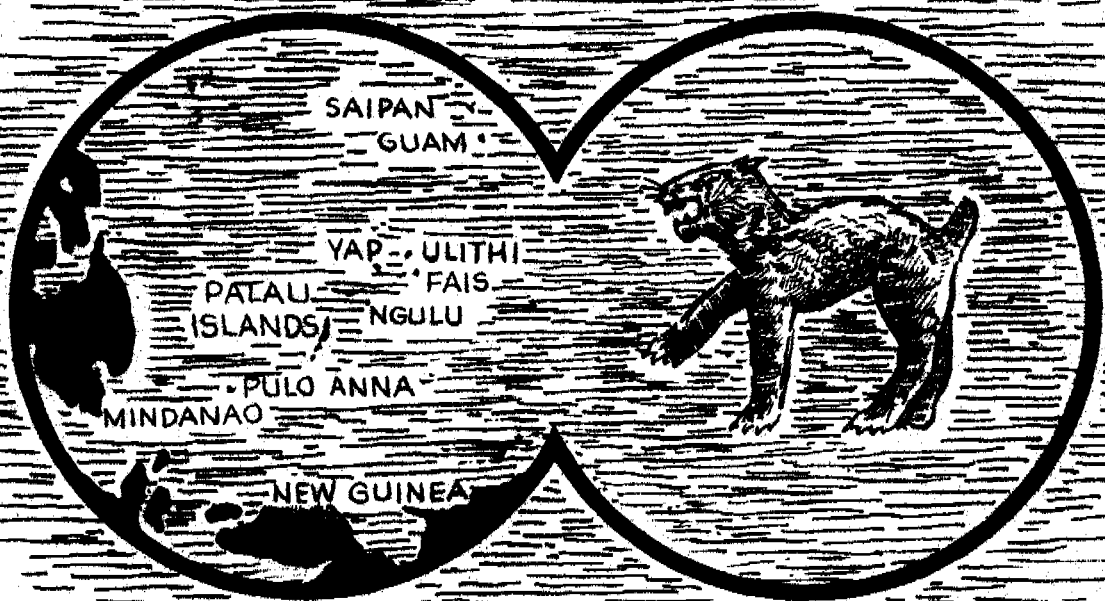


2-78-9

RESTRICTED OPERATION REPORT 81ST INFANTRY DIVISION



OSD REVIEWED 16-Nov-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

ULITHI ATOLL AND OTHER WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS

21 SEPT 1944 • 4 JAN 1945

RESTRICTED



INTRODUCTION

SECRET

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 Carolines Islands.

The reports covering Phases I and II have been published and distributed. This final report covers Phase III, the operations on Ulithi Atoll, Ngulu Atoll, Pulo Anna Island, Kayangel Atoll, and Fais Island. This report also includes the activities of the Division on Peleliu during the final weeks of occupation, to include the date of departure of the last element on 8 February 1945.

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.

SECRET

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.
6 Dec	- 27 Dec	322 Inf departs for New Caledonia during period.
	1 Jan	Elements of RCT 321 seize Fais Island.
3 Jan	- 7 Jan	Division troops depart for New Caledonia during period.
7 Jan	- 20 Jan	323 Inf departs for New Caledonia during period.
1800	- 13 Jan	81st Infantry Division relieved of Ground Defense of Southern Palau Islands.
0800	- 14 Jan	Division Command Post on Peleliu closed; Commanding General departs for New Caledonia.
	18 Jan	RCT 321 destroys Japanese landing force on Peleliu.
	8 Feb	RCT 321 departs for New Caledonia.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

ULITHI AND OTHER WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS

The employment of the 323d Regimental Combat Team to seize Ulithi Atoll was contingent on the success of operations by the III PhibCorps in the Southern Palau Islands. On 20 September 1944, the fourth day of the operation on Angaur, the island was declared secure by the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division, as the enemy was driven into two isolated pockets of resistance which could be reduced without interference with the development of the base; on Peleliu, the 1st Marine Division had captured the southern half of the island including the airfield. In view of this favorable situation, RCT 323 was released from III PhibCorps reserve and assigned to Task Group 33.19, Ulithi Attack Group and Group ONE, PhibsPac, Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, USN, commanding, for independent action at Ulithi.

A prelanding reconnaissance of several islands of Ulithi Atoll was made by elements of RCT 323 on 21-22 September, which indicated the absence of enemy forces in the area. On 23 September the atoll was occupied by the remainder of RCT 323 without opposition. The combat team remained at Ulithi as the ground defense force until 18 October 1944, at which time it departed to rejoin the Division on Peleliu. During this period, elements of the combat team landed on Ngulu Atoll and destroyed all Japanese personnel and installations encountered there.

SECRET

Other operations by elements of the 81st Infantry Division (Reinforced) in the Western Caroline Islands included the seizure of Pulo Anna Island, Kayangel Atoll, and Fais Island at intervals during the period 4 November 1944 - 1 January 1945. These operations were conducted at the direction of the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area, Rear Admiral J. W. Reeves, Jr., USN, and were for the purpose of eliminating enemy observation and weather stations or the procurement of sites for necessary naval installations. Except for a few Japanese nationals and military personnel encountered on Ngulu Atoll and Fais Island, all objectives were free of the enemy.

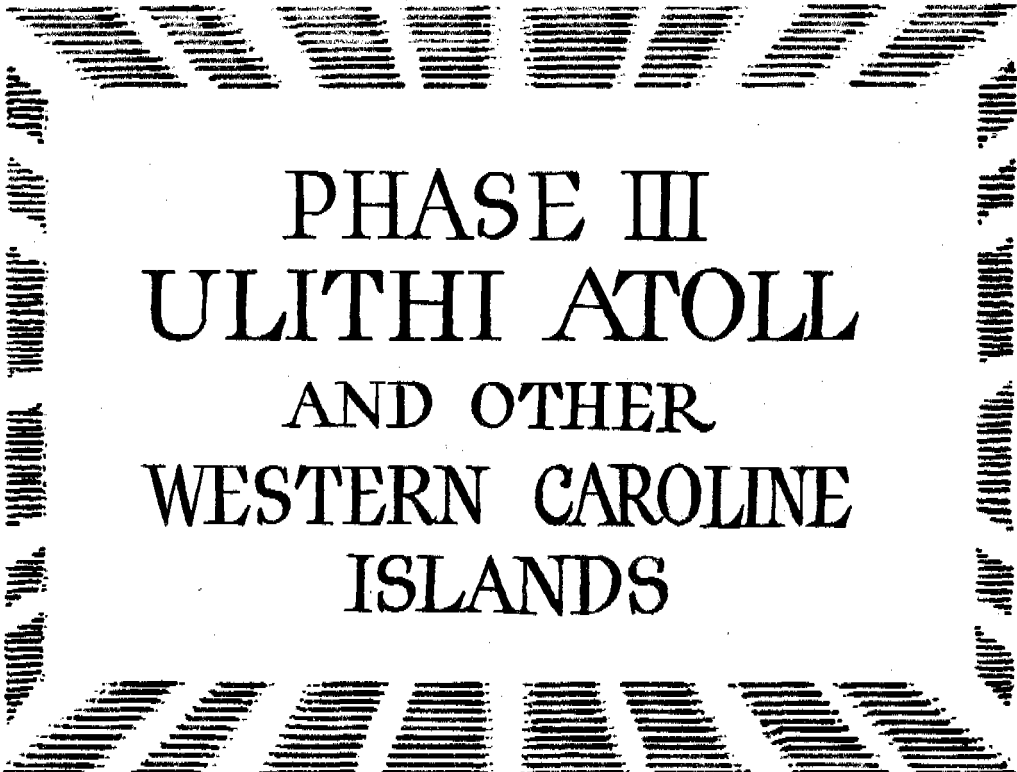
The 81st Infantry Division departed from the Palau Islands for a rehabilitation area in New Caledonia during December 1944 - January 1945, leaving RCT 321 as the ground defense force until relieved by the 111th Infantry Regiment. The Division Command Post on Peleliu was closed on 14 January 1945.

The final chapter in the history of the combat operations of 81st Infantry Division troops in the Western Caroline Islands was written on 18 January when RCT 321 destroyed or captured all of a force of approximately 70 Japanese who landed on Peleliu in an attempt to destroy American installations. On 8 February, RCT 321 departed from Peleliu to join the remainder of the Division in New Caledonia.

As a result of all operations by the 81st Infantry Division (Reinforced) in the Western Caroline Islands, including Angaur, Peleliu, and the islands immediately to the north thereof, 5676 Japanese were killed and 344 prisoners of war captured.



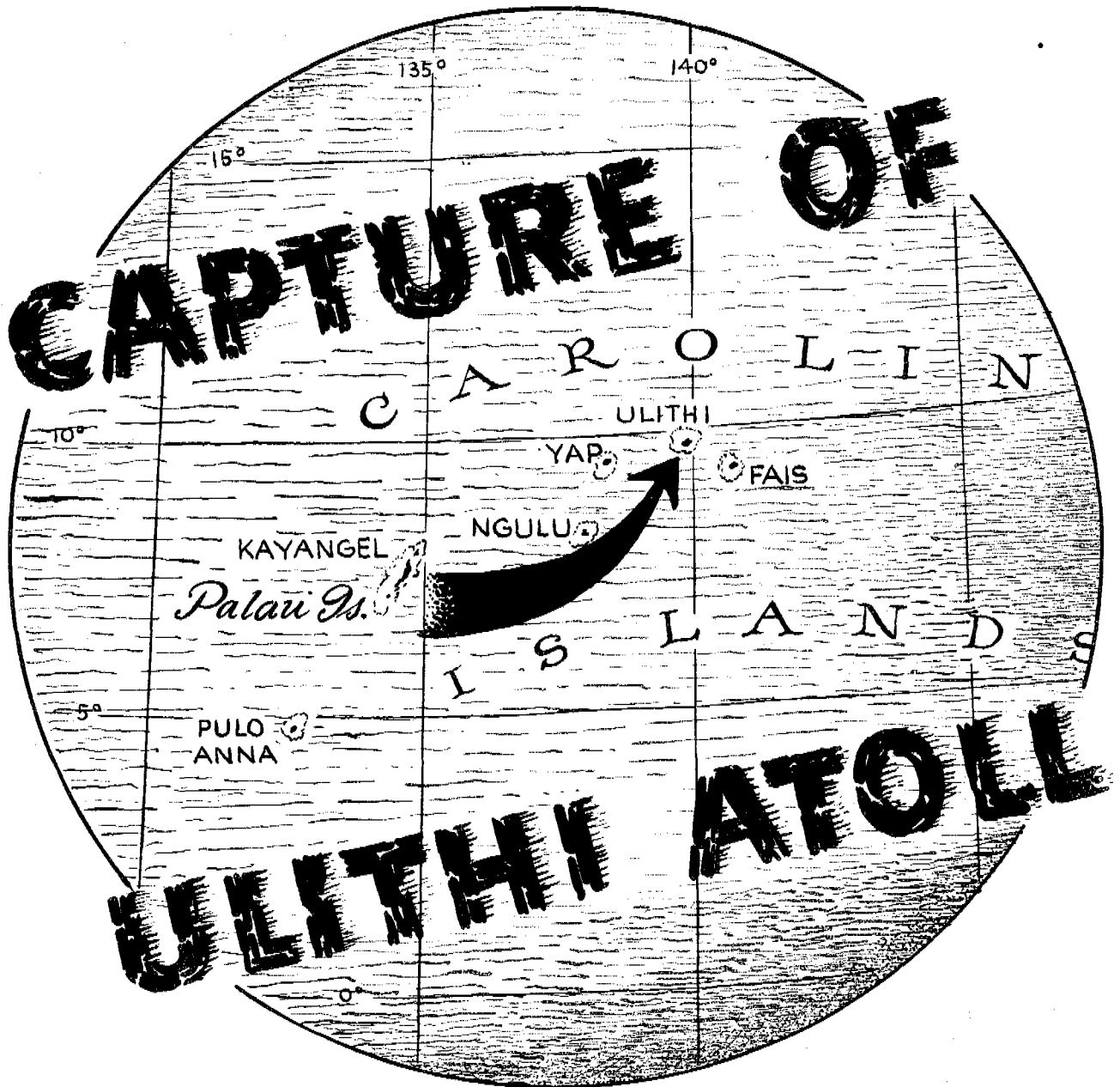
PAUL J. MUELLER
Major General, U. S.A.
Commanding



PHASE III
ULITHI ATOLL
AND OTHER
WESTERN CAROLINE
ISLANDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Capture of Ulithi Atoll	3
Capture of Ngulu Atoll	33
Capture of Pulo Anna Island	43
Capture of Kayangel Atoll	53
Capture of Fais Island	61
Supplementary	79
Distribution List	85



SECRET

I - PLANNING PHASE

A - PRELIMINARY PLANS

The original concept of the Stalemate II Operation envisioned the employment of the 81st Infantry Division (Reinforced) in the seizure of Angaur Island in the Palau Group. Following the successful completion of this mission, it was planned that the Division be further employed in operations against Yap, with one RCT to be engaged in independent action against Ulithi under control of the Navy. (*)

Preliminary planning by the Division for the consummation of this mission provided for the employment of RCT 322 on Angaur Island and RCT 321 on Ulithi Atoll. As revised estimates of enemy strength made it necessary to plan for the commitment of two RCTs on Angaur, RCT 321 was removed from consideration as the landing force to seize Ulithi and the mission was tentatively assigned to RCT 323. Detailed planning for the Ulithi Operation was initiated on 1 August 1944 pursuant to instructions received from XXIV Corps. (**)

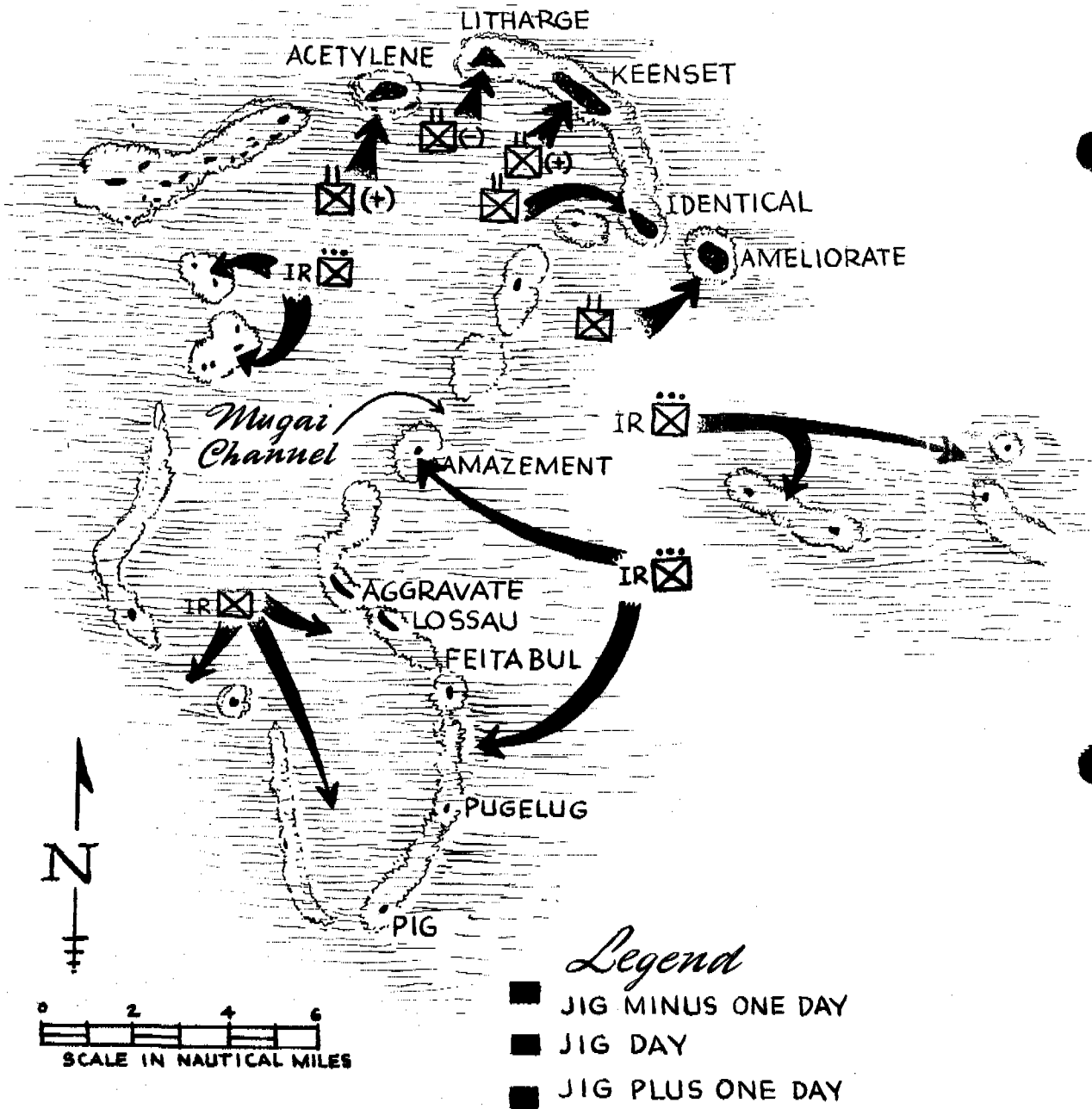
As additional information of the enemy strength in the Southern Palaus became available, it was apparent that the continued presence of elements of the Division would be required in that area. As a consequence, on 22 August, the Division was relieved of participation in operations against Yap and Ulithi and the mission of seizing the latter assigned to a combat team of the 96th Infantry Division. (***) Planning by the Division for the Ulithi Operation ceased on that date.

Further developments in the concept of the Stalemate II Operation involved abandoning the plan to capture the Yap Island Group and assigning the mission of seizing Ulithi to a combat team of the 77th Infantry Division. (***)

On 16 September the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division was advised that one combat team of the Division would constitute the landing force to capture Ulithi, and that previous plans to employ other Central Pacific Army units for the mission were finally abandoned. (****) RCT 323 was designated as the landing force.

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- (*) Top Secret Ltr, Hq XXIV Corps, 12 July 1944, Serial 000211
 - (**) Top Secret Ltr, Hq XXIV Corps, 1 August 1944, Serial 000294
 - (***) Errata No. 3, Operation Plan 1-44, Hq TF 36, 22 August 1944
 - (****) Oral orders CTF 36.

PLAN OF OPERATIONS



SECRET

Requests made for the employment of certain elements of RCT 323 for operations on Angaur were favorably considered by the Commanding General III PhibCorps and the following units were landed: 906 FA Bn, Det 81 QM Co, and Co C 306 Engr (C) Bn.

B - FINAL PLANS

On 18 September RCT 323 was assigned the mission to capture, occupy, and defend Ulithi Atoll in order to establish a fleet anchorage, seaplane base, and airbase thereat to support further operations against the enemy, and to commence development of the base until relieved. (*)

Detailed planning for the assault on Ulithi was based on Attack Order No. A268-44, ComGroupONE, PhibsPac. The final plan of operations presented to and approved by the Navy provided for the landing of the reconnaissance detachment of RCT 323 on Amazement Island prior to dawn of Jig minus one Day for the purpose of establishing a minor defense post thereon in order to protect the Mugai Channel entrance into the Ulithi Lagoon which was to serve as the transport area for the Attack Force. During the same day a reconnaissance detachment was to be landed on one of the undefended southern islands to remove a few natives for intelligence purposes.

On Jig Day a reinforced rifle company was to capture Keenset Island to permit the emplacement of the combat team artillery in support of subsequent ship to shore operations against the main northern islands of the atoll. The remainder of the BLT furnishing troops for the capture of Keenset was to be prepared to capture Litharge Island. Upon completion of artillery registration firing, and on order, a second BLT was to capture and defend Identical Island. During these operations, reconnaissance detachments were to reconnoiter and mop-up the small islands in the west central portion of the atoll.

On Jig plus one Day artillery and infantry cannon supported shore to shore operations were to be made against Ameliorate and Acetylene Islands. Reconnaissance detachments were to be prepared to assist, on order, in reconnoitering and mopping-up Aggravate, Lossau, the remaining small islands to the south, and the islets eastward of the main atoll.

Naval gunfire support for the operations was to be furnished as follows: (**)

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- (*) Attack Order No. A268-44, ComGroupONE, PhibsPac, 15 Sept 1945
 - (**) Annex E, Attack Order No. A268-44, ComGroupONE, PhibsPac.

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(1) Jig minus one Day: To afford covering fire for reconnaissance elements; to destroy enemy shore batteries and other installations attempting interference with reconnaissance activities; to maintain harrassing fire throughout the day and night on islands containing enemy troops; to prevent movement of the enemy among the islands from Acetylene to Ameliorate inclusive, and prevent escape from these islands.

(2) Jig Day: To deliver supporting fires prior to and during ship to shore movement; to deliver call fires as directed after the landing of assault troops; to maintain harrassing fires on islands not yet attacked.

(3) Jig plus one Day: Same as for Jig Day.

Naval air support for the operation was to be furnished as follows: (*)

(1) Prelanding bombing and strafing attacks by 12 VFs to commence 30 minutes prior to the scheduled times of landing and to continue until leading assault waves were 100 yards from shore.

(2) Direct support of ground troops by 12 VTs on station daily from 0615 to 1715.

(3) Artillery Spotters (2 VT), Smokers (3 VT), and Air Observer planes (2 VT) to be furnished as directed by Commander Support Aircraft. Observer planes were to carry trained observers to be furnished by RCT 323.

C - TASK ORGANIZATION

RCT 323 (Reinf), Colonel Arthur P. Watson, U.S.A. commanding, constituted the Ulithi Landing Force and was composed of the following units: (**)

323 Inf
906 FA Bn (***)
Co C plus 2d Plat Co D and Det Hq 306 Med Bn
Det 781 Ord (IM) Co
Det Traf Sqd 81 MP Plat
Det 592 JAS Co
155 Engr (C) Bn plus Det Hq & Hq Co 1138 Engr (C) Gp
483 AAA (AW) Bn (****)

(*) Annex D, Attack Order No. A268-44, ComGroupONE, PhibsPac.

(**) Co C 306 Engr (C) Bn and Det 81 QM Co normally assigned to RCT 323, employed on Angaur Island and not reembarked for Ulithi Operation.

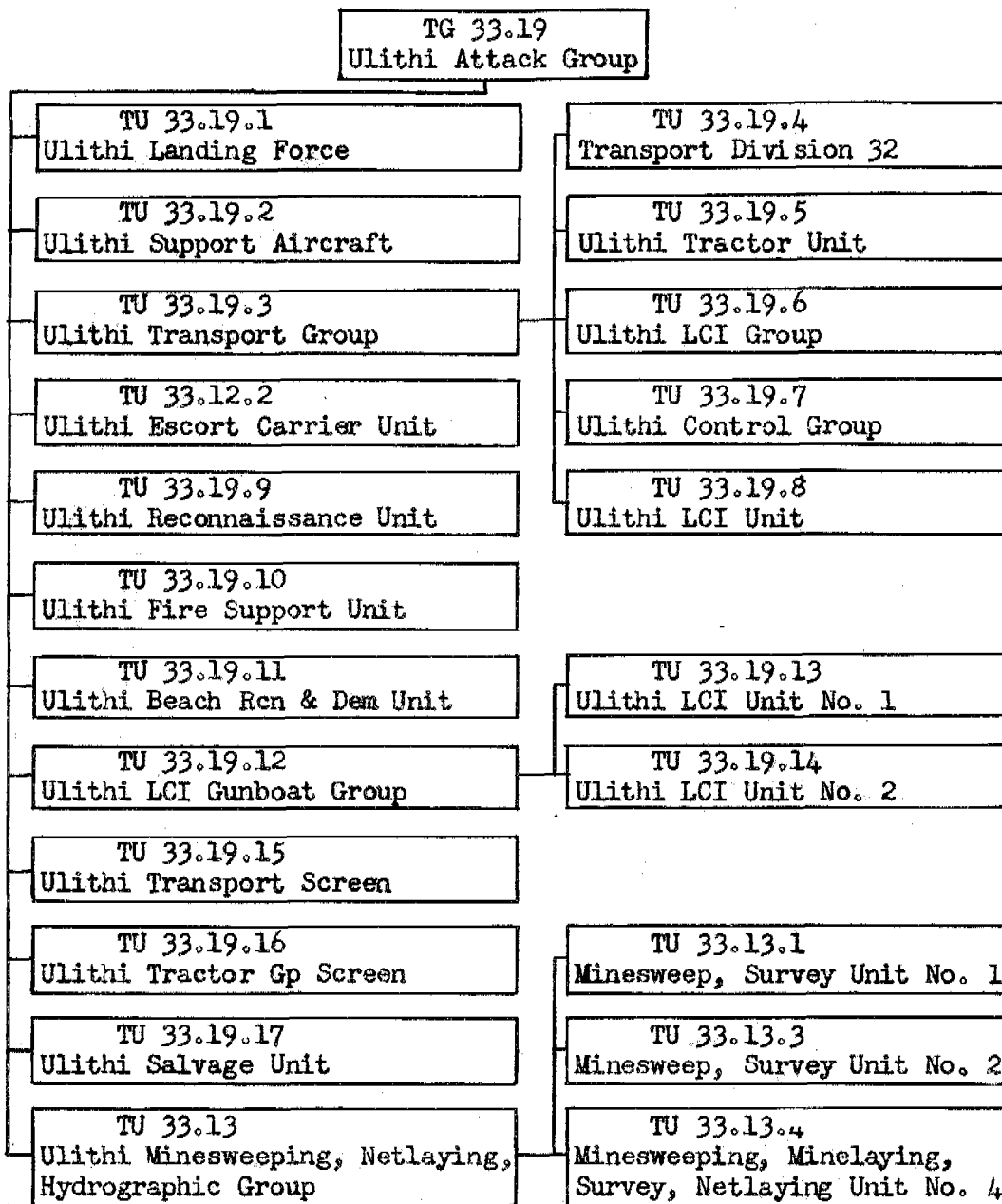
(***) Employed on Angaur; reembarked on 20 September for Ulithi.

(****) Left at Ulithi after departure of RCT 323.

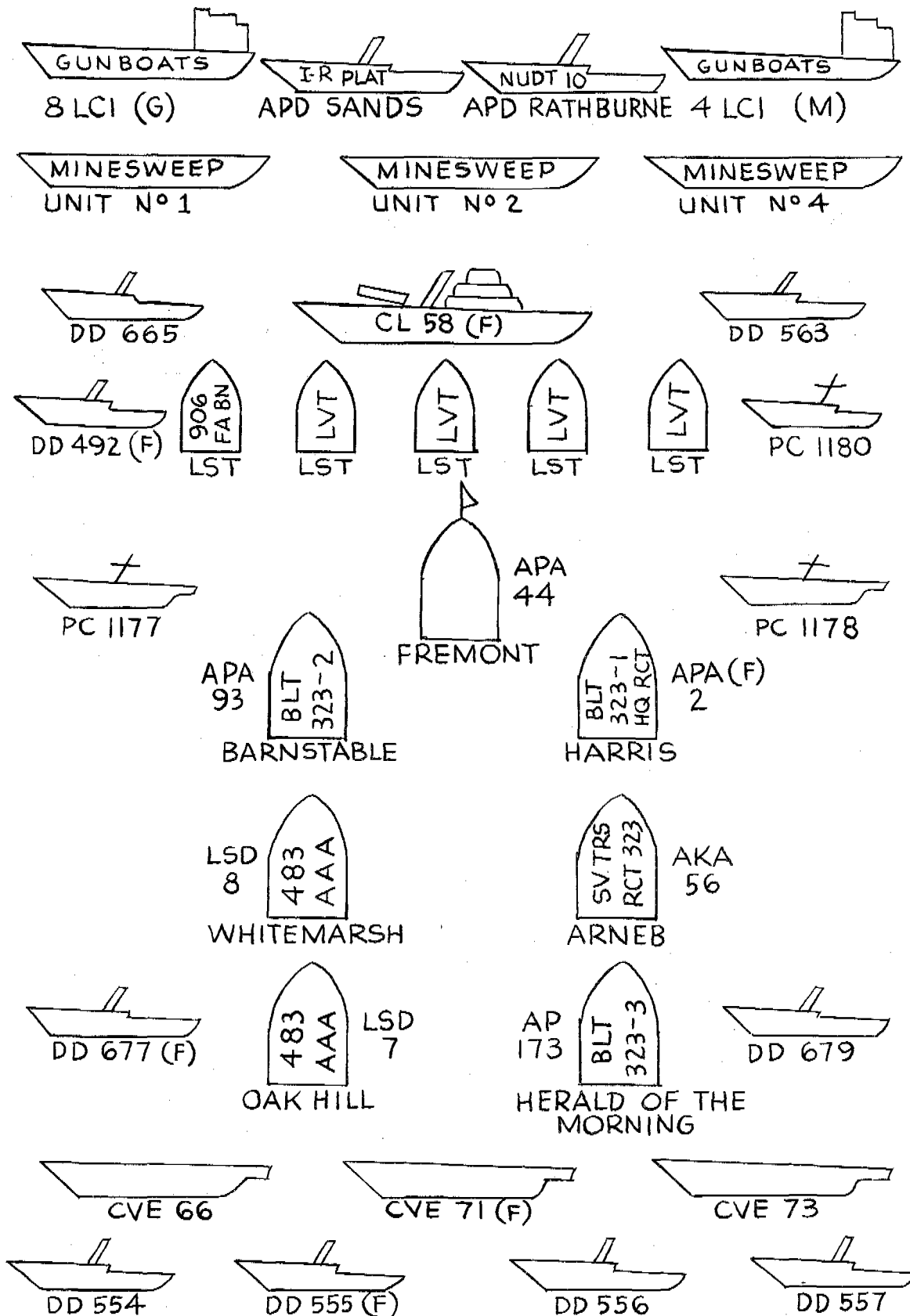
SECRET

Det Prov QM Gr Reg Co
Det Translator-Interpreter Team A Hq Co POA
Co A 726 Amph Tractor Bn
Det Co D 776 Amph Tank Bn

The organization of the Ulithi Attack Group, Rear Admiral W.H. P. Blandy, U. S. N., commanding, was as shown below:



SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM ULITHI ATTACK GROUP



SECRET

II - LOADING AND EMBARKATION

Troops, equipment, and supplies had been combat loaded at Oahu, T. H. in anticipation that RCT 323 would be employed as reserve in the Palau Operation or in an assault landing on Ulithi. The combat team, less firing batteries of the 906th FA Bn, were embarked on TransDiv 32 which consisted of 2 APAs, 1 AP, and 1 AKA. Artillery howitzers were DUKW-loaded on an LST.

On 19 September the I & R Platoon, 323 Infantry, which was to conduct the prelanding reconnaissance of Ulithi, was transferred from the USS Harris to the APD Sands. The Platoon was reinforced for operations with 24 EM from Co I, 323 Infantry.

On 19 and 20 September the 906 FA Bn, 483 AAA(AW) Bn, and Co A 726 Amph Tractor Bn were relieved of operations on Angaur, resupplied, and embarked for movement to Ulithi. TransDiv 32 was augmented with 2 LSDs for movement of the 483 AAA(AW) Bn.

III - MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE AREA

Movement to the objective area was made in two echelons. The reconnaissance detachment departed from the Palau area at 1330, 19 September. It arrived off Ulithi during the early morning of 21 September and lay to awaiting orders from the Commander Ulithi Fire Support Group under whose command the reconnaissance was to be effected. The remainder of the force departed at 1000, 21 September and arrived in the Ulithi Transport Area within the lagoon at 0600, 23 September.

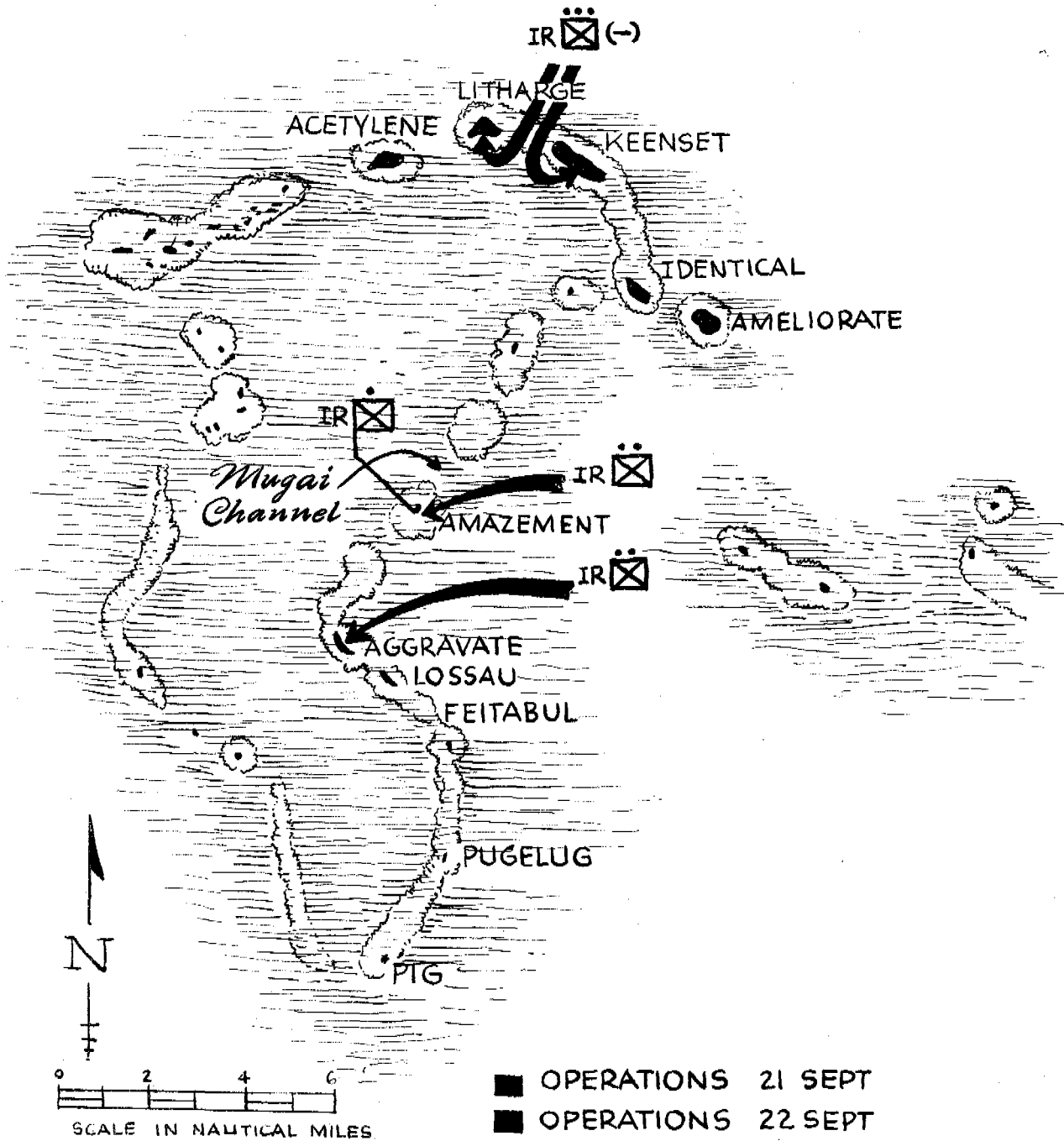
Movement by both echelons was made without incident. During the voyage all troops were oriented on the plan of operations.

IV - NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS

A - PRELANDING RECONNAISSANCE

Early in the afternoon of 21 September the Captain and Boat Officer of the APD Sands and the CO I & R Platoon, 323 Infantry, were ordered aboard the USS Denver, flagship of the Ulithi Fire Support Group. At the conference which followed plans were discussed for the landing of a reconnaissance detachment on Amazement Island prior to dawn of 22 September to secure Mugai Passage for minesweeping and underwater demolition units which were to operate in the lagoon on that date. It was decided that a preliminary

PRELANDING RECONNAISSANCE



SECRET

close-in offshore reconnaissance of the island be conducted that afternoon to determine the best beach for a landing. In event the reconnaissance was made without interference, it was further planned to land troops and secure the Island that afternoon.

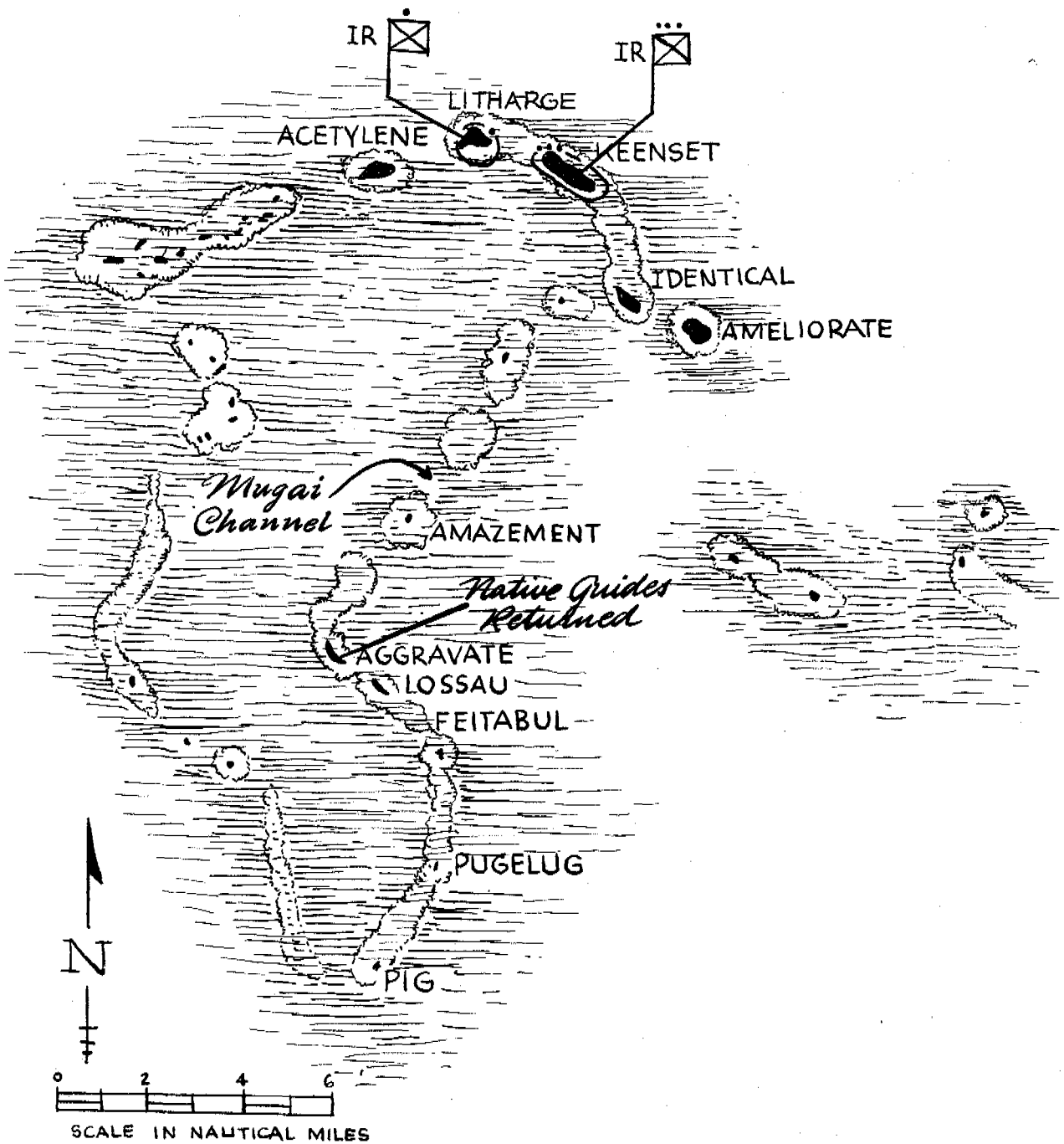
The reconnaissance was made as planned. It was found that the northeast beach was best for a landing and that the island gave no evidence of being occupied. Based on these findings the I & R Platoon was ordered by the Commander Ulithi Fire Support Group to land on the island, complete a thorough reconnaissance, and establish a minor defense post thereon. Troops landed unopposed at 1515. A thorough search was made which revealed no signs of recent habitation. Thirteen men were left on the island and the remaining troops returned to the ship.

During the early morning of 22 September, orders were issued to effect a landing on Aggravate Island for the purpose of removing a few natives for questioning. A detachment of the I & R Platoon debarked in two rubber boats and proceeded to the seaward side of the island. The entire shore was fringed with coral reef extending out from the beach for approximately 150 yards. After one unsuccessful attempt to land, troops managed to reach the shore where they were met by two natives who acted in a very friendly manner. The natives agreed to accompany troops back to ship. Interrogation of the natives revealed that there were no Japanese throughout the atoll except for a crippled one on Ameliorate Island, and that the Japanese garrison force had been removed by ship a few months previously. The natives were quite willing to assist in further reconnaissance of other islands of the atoll.

Based on the above information orders were issued for a reconnaissance of Keenset Island. A landing in rubber boats was made that afternoon by traversing the shallow water between Keenset and Litharge Islands and approaching from the lagoon side. A thorough search revealed no signs of recent occupation. Graves of six Japanese naval personnel were found. From information furnished by the native guides and inscriptions on the grave markers these had been killed in an engagement with six American planes off Ameliorate Island on 30 March 1944. No coastal defense gun was found as reported previously in intelligence data.

Orders were then issued to reconnoiter Litharge Island. A landing was made without difficulty. There was some destruction in the native village, a result of the naval bombardment delivered earlier in the day to cover activities of the minesweeping and underwater demolition units. The inhabitants had apparently fled to the interior of the island on approach of our troops. The inhabitants were found by the native guides who assured them that our

PRELANDING RECONNAISSANCE



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troops were friends, whereupon the inhabitants came out of hiding and awaited the arrival of our troops.

Upon completion of the reconnaissance of Litharge, orders were received to establish defense posts on Litharge and Keenset Islands, to replenish supplies for troops on Amazement, and to return the native guides to Aggravate. These were accomplished prior to darkness that day. Eleven men were left on Litharge and the remainder of the I & R Platoon established on Keenset.

B - OCCUPATION PHASE

At 0130, 23 September, while enroute to Ulithi, CO RCT 323 received a dispatch from Commander Ulithi Attack Force setting the times of landings as follows:

Keenset	- 0830, 23 September
Ameliorate	- 0930, 23 September
Identical	- 1230, 23 September
Litharge	- 1330, 23 September
Acetylene	- 1500, 23 September

The above schedule was confirmed in orders issued by Commander Ulithi Transport Group. (*) The new schedule changed the original plan which provided for Jig Day landings on Keenset, Identical, and Litharge and Jig plus one day landings on Ameliorate and Acetylene.

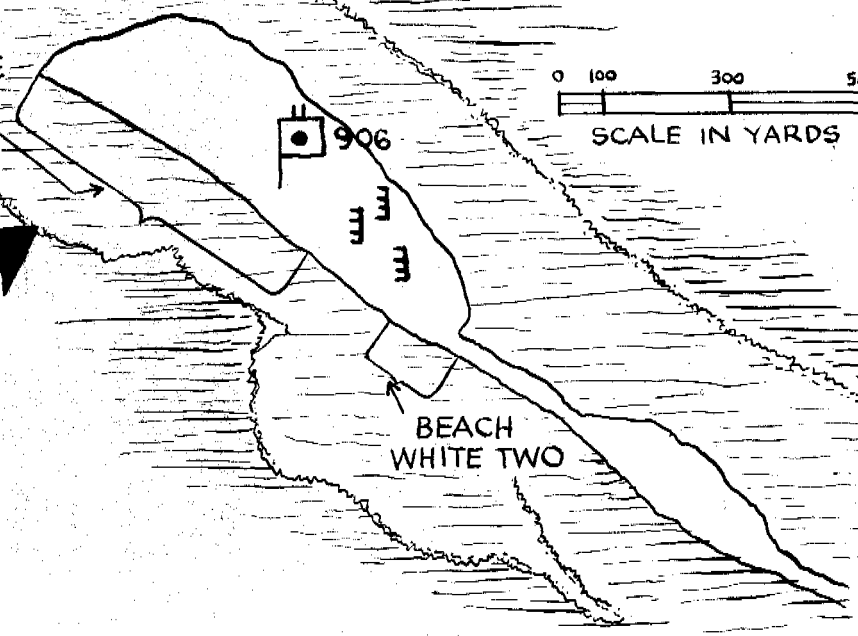
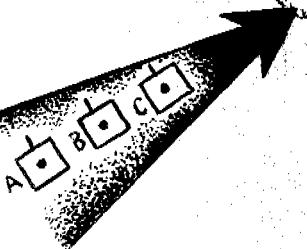
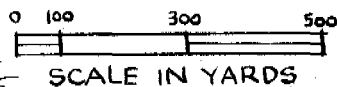
As results of the prelanding reconnaissance confirmed the absence of enemy forces in Ulithi, CO RCT 323 recommended to Commander Ulithi Attack Force that only one BLT be employed in the occupation of the atoll and the remainder of the RCT returned to control of CG 81st Infantry Division in the Palau area. This recommendation was not favorably considered in view of the limited time available before the ships in which RCT 323 was embarked were due to arrive elsewhere on another mission.

At 0720 a message from the I & R Platoon reported one wounded native on Litharge. At 0735 CO RCT 323 ordered all BLT commanders to establish straggler lines to keep natives in their villages during the occupational phase.

(*) Landing Attack Order No. A16-44, Ulithi Transport Group, Serial 00011, 22 September 1944.

KEENSET ISLAND

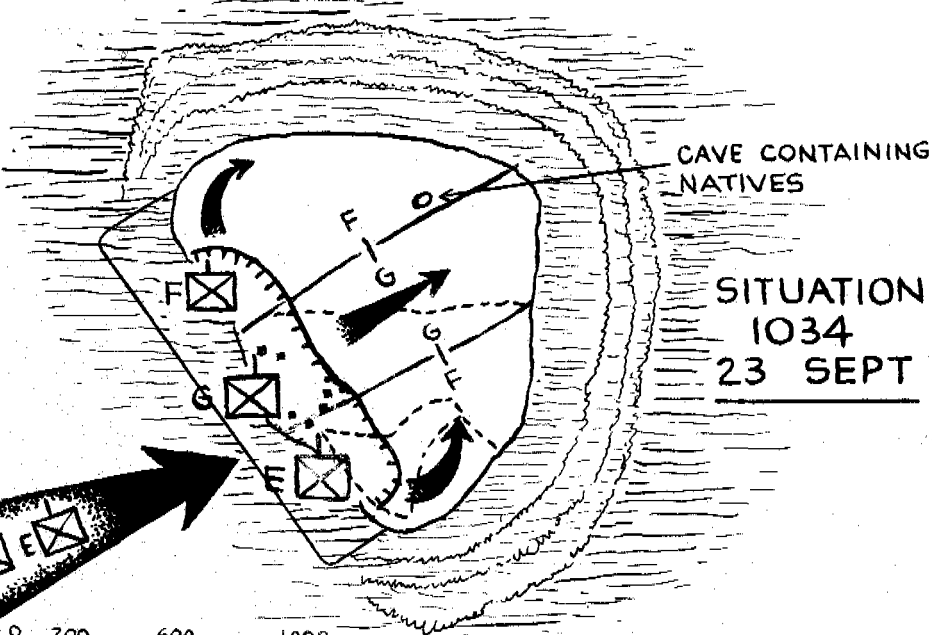
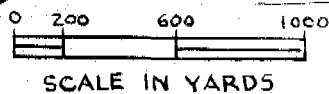
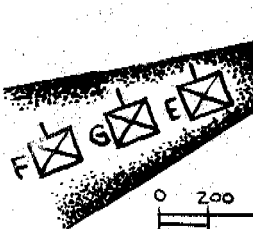
BEACH
WHITE ONE



AMELIORATE ISLAND

CAVE CONTAINING
NATIVES

SITUATION
1034
23 SEPT



SECRET

Occupation of Keenset Island

At 0830 a dispatch from Commander Ulithi Attack Force directed the immediate landing of the 906 FA Bn on Keenset Island, without infantry support. It had been planned to secure the island with Co K, reinforced, prior to the landing of the artillery.

Reconnaissance elements of the 906 FA Bn landed on Keenset at 0840. The remainder of the Battalion was landed on White I Beach beginning shortly thereafter. By 1155 the Battalion was in position and ready to fire on all targets within range. At 1235 the Battalion commenced registration firing on the reef between Litharge and Acetylene Islands.

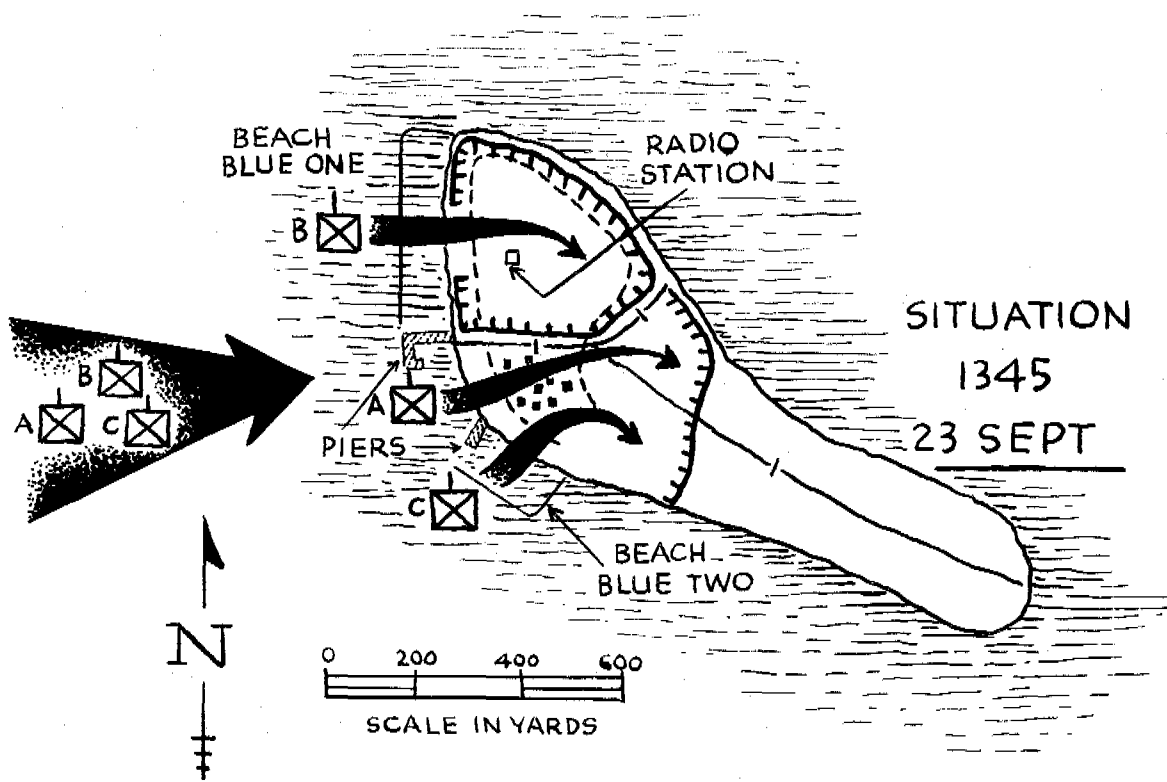
Occupation of Ameliorate Island

Debarcation of BLT 323-2 commenced at 0800 in preparation for a landing on Ameliorate Island which had not been reconnoitered the previous day. Assault troops were boated in seven waves, the first two of which were composed of LVTs and the remaining five of LCVPs. The first two waves were supported by a reinforced platoon of amphibian tanks. On order of the Commander Ulithi Attack Force naval gunfire and air support were to be dispensed with. LCIs were ordered to bring 20mm and 40mm gunfire to bear only in event the first waves of LVTs were fired upon before reaching shore.

Assault waves landed unopposed on Ameliorate between 1016 and 1041. At 1034 our troops were reported to be all through the town and approximately 150 yards inland along the entire western side of the island without encountering enemy or natives. The village was found to be partially destroyed by the naval bombardment which had covered the minesweeping activities of the previous day. By 1257 troops reached the eastern shore, having completed a thorough search of the island as they advanced. At 1315 Ameliorate was officially declared to be secure.

No Japanese were found on Ameliorate. A considerable number of inhabitants were found to have taken refuge in a shallow cave in the northwestern part of the island. After much coaxing, 30 of their number were prevailed upon to return to their homes in the village. Natives came out of hiding at intervals throughout the remainder of that day and the next. In all approximately 100 returned to the village where they were confined until they were removed to another island in the atoll.

IDENTICAL ISLAND



SECRET

Occupation of Identical Island

Debarkation of BLT 323-1 commenced at 1230 in preparation for a landing on Identical Island. The first two waves of assault troops were boated in LVTs, the remaining five in LCVPs. The first two waves were supported by a reinforced platoon of amphibian tanks. The landing had been scheduled for 1330, but was advanced in time as much as possible consistent with proper control and coordination. Naval gunfire and air support were dispensed with. LCIs were directed to withhold their fire unless assault waves were fired upon.

Assault waves landed unopposed between 1303 and 1322 on Blue One and Two Beaches. Formation for the landing was two companies abreast with one company in reserve and in the rear of the right assault company. Co B on the left landed on Blue Beach One opposite the weather and radio station, advanced rapidly across the island and reached the opposite shore at 1318. It established a temporary defense position and awaited the occupation of the remainder of the island by other troops of the battalion.

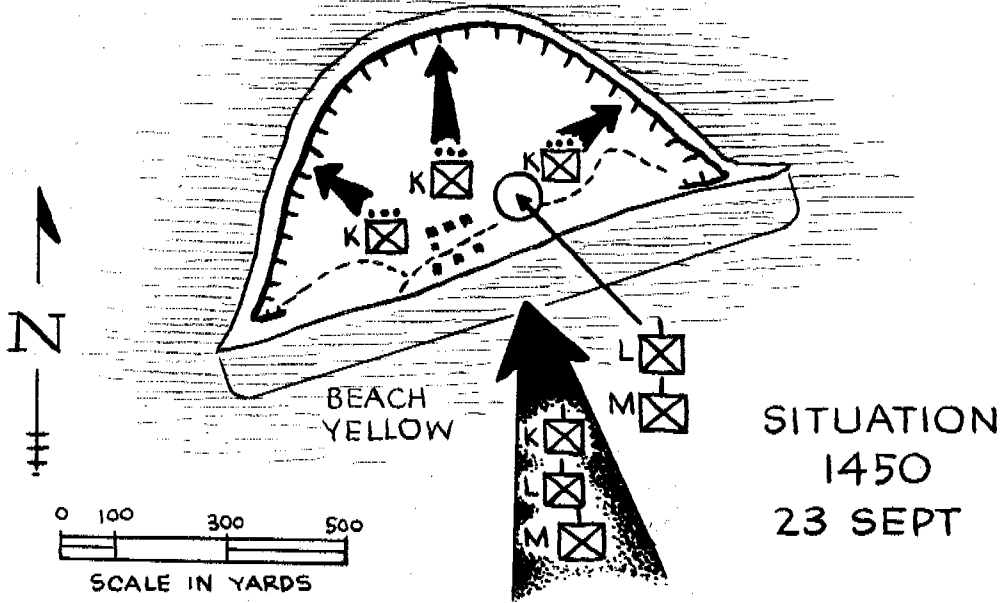
Co C on the right landed on Blue Two Beach. The broken coral rock and niggerheads which lay offshore made landings difficult and dangerous. Several landing craft were hung up on the reef and troops had to wade ashore. Troops advanced inland through the native village and then turned to the southeast to complete the occupation of the island within their zone of action.

Because of the difficulty in landing on Blue Two Beach, Co A landed on the north of it between the two finger piers. Troops advanced across the island and moved to a position on the left of Co C. Moving abreast of each other, Co A and Co C then completed the occupation of the southeast part of the island. At 1620 Identical Island was officially declared to be secure.

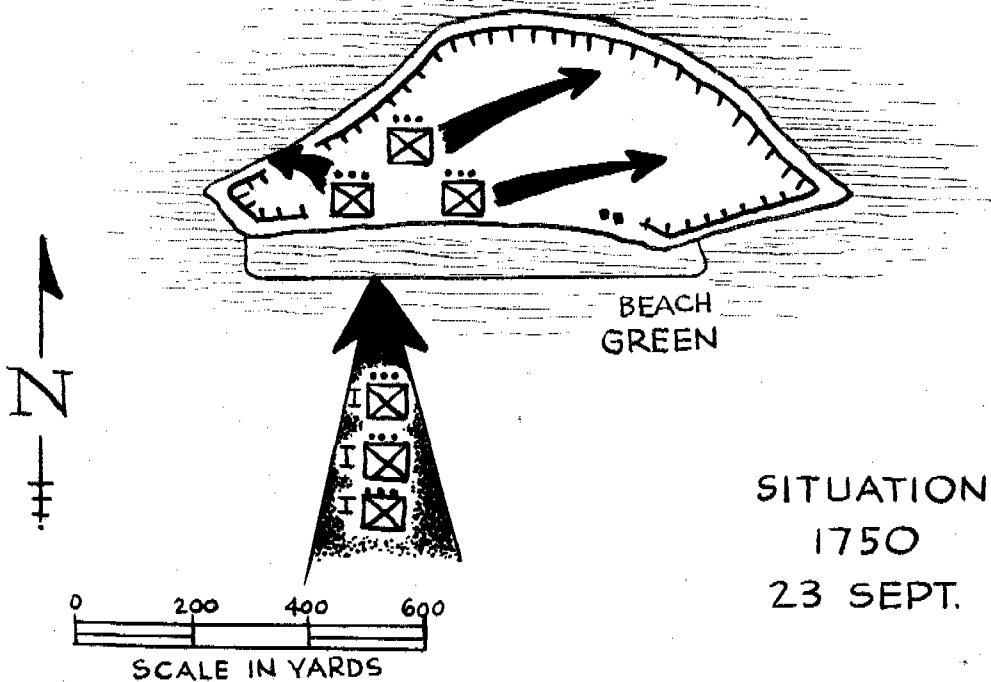
No enemy or natives were found on the island. The bodies of two Japanese, which appeared to have been dead for two or three days, were found in the water alongside the pier just north of Blue Two Beach. The radio and weather station were found to have been badly damaged in the 30 March 1944 carrier plane strike against the island. One radio tower which remained intact was later used as a signal light tower by our troops.

Identical Island had been previously selected as a site for the RCT Command Post and regimental troop area. At 1205 orders were issued for the embarkation of all regimental troops. At 1430 they began landing on Blue One Beach. At 1700 the RCT Command Post was established ashore.

LITHARGE ISLAND



ACETYLENE ISLAND



SECRET

Occupation of Litharge Island

Debarkation of BLT 323-3, less Co I, commenced at 1245 in preparation for a landing on Litharge Island which had been reconnoitered and occupied on the previous day by elements of the I & R platoon. Co K, which in the original plan had been scheduled to land on Keenset Island to secure it for the emplacement of artillery, was boated in the LVTs it would have used for that action, although no opposition to the landing was anticipated. This was done in order to avoid last minute changes in the debarkation plans. The remainder of troops were boated in LCVPs and LCMs.

The landing was made at 1420 in the center of Yellow Beach and opposite the native village. The BLT landed in column of companies. The leading unit, Co K, landed with three platoons abreast. Troops fanned out and advanced to the opposite shore to make certain that no part of the island remained unsearched. Co I and Co M each landed in a column of platoons and proceeded directly to a previously assigned assembly area north of the village.

Litharge Island was declared secure at 1450 after troops had reached the opposite shore without encountering the enemy. Organization for the defense was begun immediately. Guards were placed about the village to prevent our troops and the natives from interfering with each other.

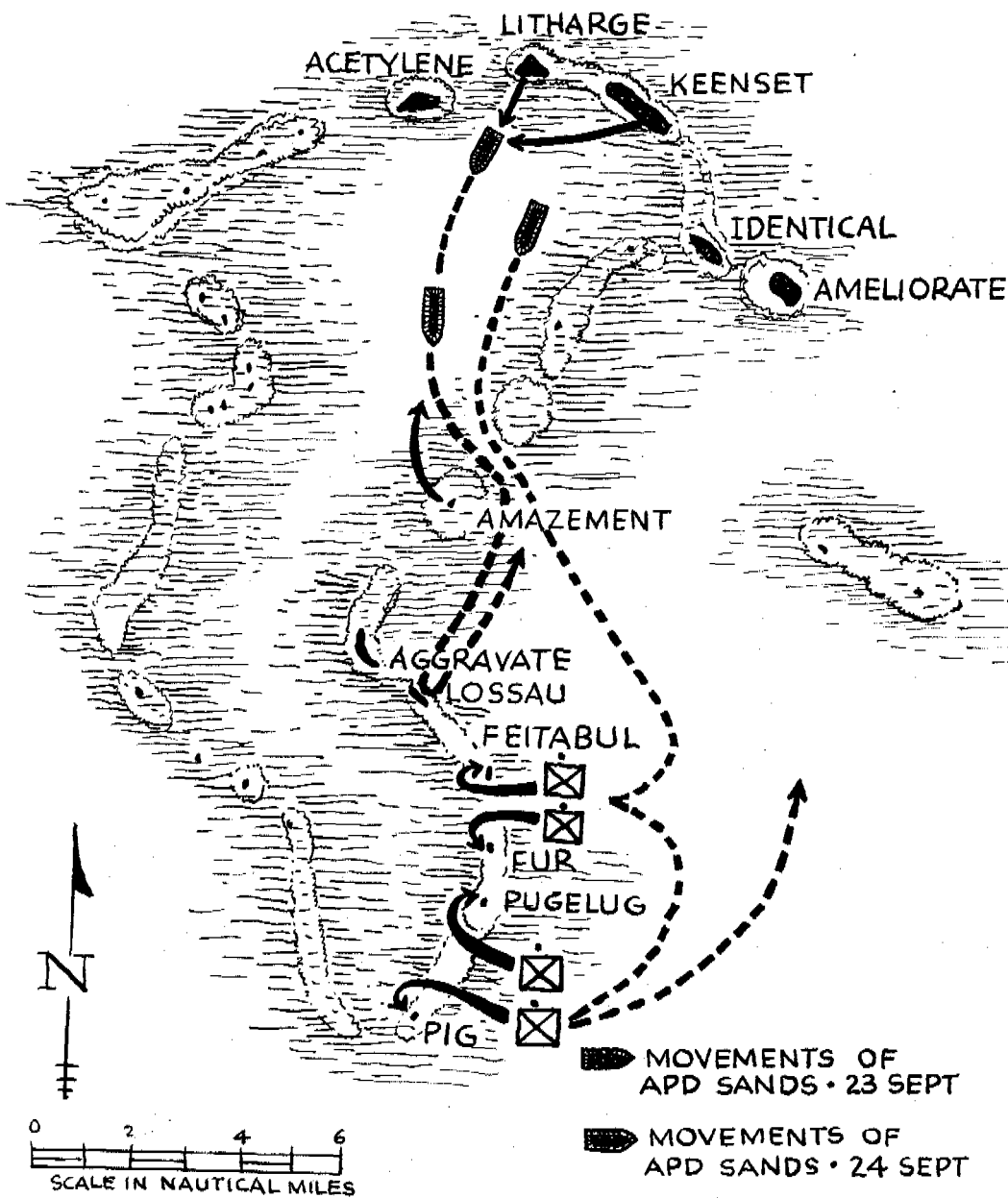
Occupation of Acetylene Island

Co I, reinforced with one heavy machine gun platoon, one 37mm AT Gun squad, and a detachment of amphibian tanks, landed unopposed on the left of Green Beach at 1500. The landing was effected with the greatest difficulty. LCVPs were hung up on the coral rock which lay offshore and troops had to wade or swim in to the beach.

The company landed in column of platoons. The leading platoon secured the west tip of the island. The two succeeding platoons turned eastward immediately after landing and advanced abreast of each other to complete the occupation of the remainder of the island. Acetylene Island was declared secure at 1750.

No enemy was encountered. Eighteen natives were found on the island and these were confined under guard pending their removal to a permanent native location.

RECONNAISSANCE OF FEITABUL FUR, PUGELUG AND PIG ISLANDS



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Reconnaissance of Feitabul, Fur, Pugelug, Pig Islands

During the morning of 23 September the I & R Platoon was ordered to withdraw from Amazement, Litharge, and Keenset Islands and reembark aboard the APD Sands to conduct reconnaissance of the southern islands of the atoll. Reembarkation was completed at 1400. The APD Sands left the Ulithi lagoon via the Mugai Channel and proceeded to Lossau Island.

It was planned to make a landing near the center of the seaward shore of Lossau. In attempting to approach close enough to launch rubber boats, the APD Sands struck her side on the reef shelf which extended several hundred yards out from the shore. The APD Sands withdrew to make a second attempt at the southern end of the island. However, a close enough approach was not possible and the APD Sands withdrew to avoid further damage to her hull. Other landings were not attempted that afternoon and the APD Sands returned to the Ulithi lagoon for inspection of her damage.

During the morning 24 September necessary repairs were made to the APD Sands. In the afternoon of the same day the Sands proceeded to the seaward side of Feitabul. Two rubber boats were launched. Entrance into the lagoon was made through the break in the reef between Feitabul and Fur Islands. One boat crew landed on each of these islands, completed a reconnaissance without finding any enemy, and returned to the ship.

The Sands then moved southward off Pugalug and Pig Islands. Two crews in rubber boats crossed the reef, entered the lagoon, and conducted a reconnaissance of each of the islands. Results were negative. Boat crews were reembarked and the APD Sands returned to the Ulithi lagoon.

The planned reconnaissance and mop-up of the islands in the west central portion of the atoll and those eastward of the main atoll were not carried out.

V - OPERATIONAL FEATURES

A - ESTIMATED RESULTS OF OPERATION

The occupation of Ulithi Atoll secured a base from which further operations against the enemy can be supported by providing a 300 berth anchorage and seaplane base on the western fringe of the Caroline Islands. The construction of an airstrip on Ameliorate

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Island makes possible fighter plane protection for the anchorage and affords a base from which our planes can continue the neutralization of the nearby Japanese bases on Yap. Together with Angaur and Peleliu Islands to the southwest and Guam, Tinian, and Saipan Islands to the northeast, Ulithi Atoll completes a line of American bases which isolates Japanese holdings in the Central and South Pacific.

The occupation of Ulithi Atoll has deprived the Japanese of its use as a fleet anchorage, weather and radio station, and possible air and submarine base. It also deprives the enemy of the opportunity to observe and report the activities of our forces in the sector.

B - INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Original estimates of enemy strength on Ulithi Atoll listed a garrison force of 300 Japanese naval personnel and 500 natives of unknown loyalty. Actually 2 Japanese, both dead, and 325 friendly natives were found on the islands.

Information gathered from the natives indicated that at the time of the 30 March 1944 carrier plane strike against Ulithi there were eight Japanese on Identical Island who manned the radio and weather station. One was killed by the bombing and the remainder evacuated during the month of May. However, this does not account for the discovery by our troops of two recently dead Japanese bodies alongside the southern finger pier on Identical Islands. Upon their departure, the Japanese removed 84 native men and 15 native women.

No apparent attempts were made by the Japanese to repair the damage to the radio and weather station caused by the carrier plane strike of 30 March.

To facilitate pronunciation of island names and for counter-intelligence purposes, the following code names were assigned:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Geographical Name</u>	<u>Beach Color</u>
Ameliorate	Falalop	Red
Identical	Asor	Blue
Keenset	Sorlen	White
Litharge	Mogmog	Yellow
Acetylene	Potangeras	Green
Aggravate	Fassarai	Brown
Amazement	Mangejang	---

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C - SUPPLY

On 18 September, when RCT 323 was assigned the mission to seize Ulithi Atoll, the supplies on hand were as follows:

Class I

<u>Days</u>	<u>Type</u>
20	10-in-1
7	C
3	K
2	D
2	Assault

10 gallons of water per man
5 - 5,000 GPD distillation units
3 - 2,500 GPD distillation units

Class III

Diesel	41,200 gallons
80 Octane	39,165 "
73 Octane	5,880 "
67 Octane	19,400 "
Kerosene	100 "
SAE No 10 Oil	200 "
SAE No 30 Oil	2,060 "
SAE No 50 Oil	760 "

Class V

5 U/F's for all types ammunition,
except following: 10 U/F's for
57mm AT Gun; 4,000 rds 60mm
Mortar Illuminating Shell. (*)

During the period 18-20 September, the 906th FA Bn and Co A 726th Amph Tractor Bn were removed from participation in the Angaur Operation and resupplied from Division resupply stocks.

Supplies from BLT transports were unloaded and stored in battalion dumps on Identical, Ameliorate, and Litharge Islands for

(*) CPA Unit of Fire.

SECRET

BLTs 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The RCT re-supply dump was established on Identical Island. Artillery ammunition was placed in dumps on Keenset Island where the 906th FA Bn had established battery positions.

All available canvas was used for the initial storage of supplies. As natives were evacuated from their villages to Aggravate Island, their buildings were used as storage warehouses.

D - SHORE PARTY

The landings on Ulithi Atoll were unopposed; consequently, shore party work was conducted very much in the manner of a training exercise. Elements of the 155th Engr (C) Bn landed according to plan, with Co A on Identical, Co B on Ameliorate, Co C, less 3d Platoon, on Litharge, and 3d Platoon Co C on Keenset. The latter was assigned to assist the 906th FA Bn in the unloading of its equipment.

General unloading of cargo commenced immediately after troops landed and continued uninterrupted until completed. Combat infantry detachments were used to supplement shore party personnel of the 155th Engr (C) Bn to speed up unloading and release assault shipping which was needed elsewhere on another mission. The deadline for the completion of the unloading of supplies and equipment of the RCT was set at 28 September.

The total cargo which had to be unloaded consisted of the following:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cu Ft</u>	<u>Tons</u>
Water	14,517	248
Rations	28,126	366
Gas & Oil	29,095	424
Medical Supplies	2,005	20
Misc Ammunition	78,435	1021
Misc Supplies	16,570	216

<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
	Wheeled	165
	Tracked	44
	Trailers	87

The total tonnage of equipment loaded in RCT 323 shipping and the date of completion of unloading were as follows:

SECRET

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Date & Hour Unloaded</u>
APA 2	807.3	250600
APA 93	880.5	241230
AP 173	611.3	241545
AKA 56	1809.7	251600
LST	517.5	231500
APA 44 (F)	45.0	231800

Supplies were unloaded on the five major islands of the atoll. Periodic percentages of the unloading of supplies scheduled for each of these five islands are as follows:

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Ameliorate</u>	<u>Identical</u>	<u>Keenset</u>	<u>Litharge</u>	<u>Acetylene</u>
231800	25%	28%	10%	10%	15%
241200	87%	95%	48%	50%	98%
250600	95%	98%	98%	87%	100%
251600	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Only about 50% of the cargo was tagged and control boats picked up a small number of these tags. The result was that much unnecessary time was later spent in locating equipment.

E - COMMUNICATIONS

Normal means of communication between units were employed in the landings. An SCR 300 net, manned by Indian communicators, was used to supplement the regular SCR 284 command net between BLT and RCT headquarters and served as a direct person-to-person command liaison net between RCT and BLT Commanders.

Ship-to-shore and interisland communications were maintained by SCR 284. Antennae were shortened to reduce range for security purposes. This net was opened immediately after each island was secured.

The RCT Message Center operated an interisland messenger service using LCVP or DUKW. Two complete messenger runs were made daily.

Communication personnel of the 323d Inf manned shore based blinker lights to communicate with ships in the lagoon and the Headquarters of the Ulithi Atoll Command. With a little practice these men exchanged messages at the rate of 20 words per minute, which is far in excess of the Army requirement for such transmissions. During the heavy storms of 30 September - 2 October, the

SECRET

island blinker system was damaged. Communicators of the 323d Inf maintained communications with ships in the lagoon by means of hand flashlight.

The Harbor Control Circuit was manned by RCT 323 communication personnel acting under the supervision of the Navy Communications Officer.

F - CIVIL AFFAIRS

Prior to the landings orders were issued by the CO RCT 323 for the establishment of straggler lines and posting of guards to prevent the reentry of troops into native villages after the initial search for Japanese was made. These steps proved effective in eliminating molestation of natives by our troops.

It had been estimated that 500 natives were on the islands of the atoll, distributed as follows:

Identical	64
Ameliorate	139
Aggravate	100
Litharge	154
Lossau	43

Actually only 325 natives were found. Each of the islands listed above had a proportionate share of the over all reduction in numbers.

The natives showed a timid attitude on first contact with our troops. As soon as they were convinced that we were friends they were willing to assist in whatever way they could and furnished information relative to the former garrison force on Ulithi as well as Ngulu Atoll and Fais Island. Some volunteered to accompany American troops on expeditions to Ngulu and Fais, if such were contemplated.

On 28 September orders from the Ulithi Atoll Commander directed the removal of natives from the northern islands and their relocation on Aggravate Island. The matter was presented to the native chieftain who was advised that such a measure was necessary to facilitate the construction of military installations and to keep our troops and the natives from interfering with each other. The Navy agreed to transport all personnel and their effects, to include houses, if desired. At first the natives were loathe to leave their homes and villages. This was particularly true of those residing on Identical Island, where there was a swamp suit-

SECRET

able for the raising of taro, a food staple of the native population. The native chieftain finally agreed to the segregation order with the stipulation that the natives be provided with medical care and food to make up for the loss of their taro patch. Civil affairs personnel of the Navy handled the removal of the natives and their personal effects, but medical care and feeding continued to be the responsibility of RCT 323.

G - BASE DEVELOPMENT

During movement from Angaur to Ulithi, tentative plans were made for the employment of the 155th Engr (C) Bn in the construction of an airfield as soon as its principal shore party functions were discharged. Consequently the bulk of its heavy equipment was unloaded on Ameliorate Island, the site selected for the airfield.

A reconnaissance of Ameliorate Island revealed it to be cupped in the center like a saucer. A swamp covered a large section of the north central part of the island. Since the swamp bottom was two feet lower than low tide level and rainfall in the Ulithi area quite heavy, the problem of proper drainage caused some concern. The swamp bottom was coral, topped with about 5 feet of mushy undergrowth. The depth of the water varied from 1-2 ft. The rim of the so-called saucer was a ridge approximately 20 ft high which completely encircled the depression. Half of this ridge was composed of loose coral rubble and required no blasting. The remainder was composed of sand.

The initial survey of the project was initiated on Jig plus 2 days and revealed that the original map which had been made from aerial photographs was in error by approximately 6%. The map had indicated that there was ample space for a 3500 ft runway, but in order to obtain this length it was necessary to plan for the construction of part of the runway over the eastern and western beaches.

All trees, brush, stumps, and other obstructions were to be cleared for a width of 332 ft which included a 150 ft runway width, two 75 ft shoulders, two 12 ft ditches, and two 4 ft cleared widths beyond the ditch line. Taxiways and hard stands were to be cleared to a width of 100 ft. Runways and taxiways were cleared along the center line and proposed surface area first and then extended to full width.

To make the swamp trees accessible for cutting and to aid in the establishment of a permanent center line, a narrow road was cut through the center of the swamp. Trees were cut by a gasoline power saw. The stumps remaining were blown out with demolitions,

SECRET

winched out to the road, and hauled to the cleared areas between taxiways.

Where the ground was firm enough for bulldozers to operate, the D-7 was used to clear larger trees ranging in diameter from 8-18 inches with an average height of 35 ft., the D-6 for light cleaning; and the D-4 for dragging out logs. The trees were pushed out into the open where they were topped and butted. Trees and stumps were then placed in cleared areas between the runway and taxiways. Later the good timber was used for cribbing at the east end of the runway.

After the western end of the runway was cleared, the rough grading was begun. Since the end was high to begin with, the cut and fill balanced up to the 900 ft station. Earth was pushed on an average of 300 ft. The fill for the center portion of the runway was obtained from three coral pits located on the northeastern rim of the island. The eastern end of the runway and warm up aprons were brought down to subgrade.

A zero grade was established over the swamp and at both ends of the field at an elevation to insure that the runway was free of water at all times. At no place was it less than 4 ft above the ground water table. A longitudinal grade of 0.75% was used from end of field to swamp. The transverse grade was held to a minimum to reduce the hazard of ground loop to aircraft operation. It was found that 1% of grade on coral pavement drained all surface water quickly and efficiently even after heavy rains. This grade was therefore adopted for all transverse slopes.

Runway shoulders were not developed to the standard of construction of the runway. Where made of sand, the surface was stabilized with six inches of coral and rolled to prevent wind and water erosion and to afford reasonable support for a plane which might ground loop off the runway.

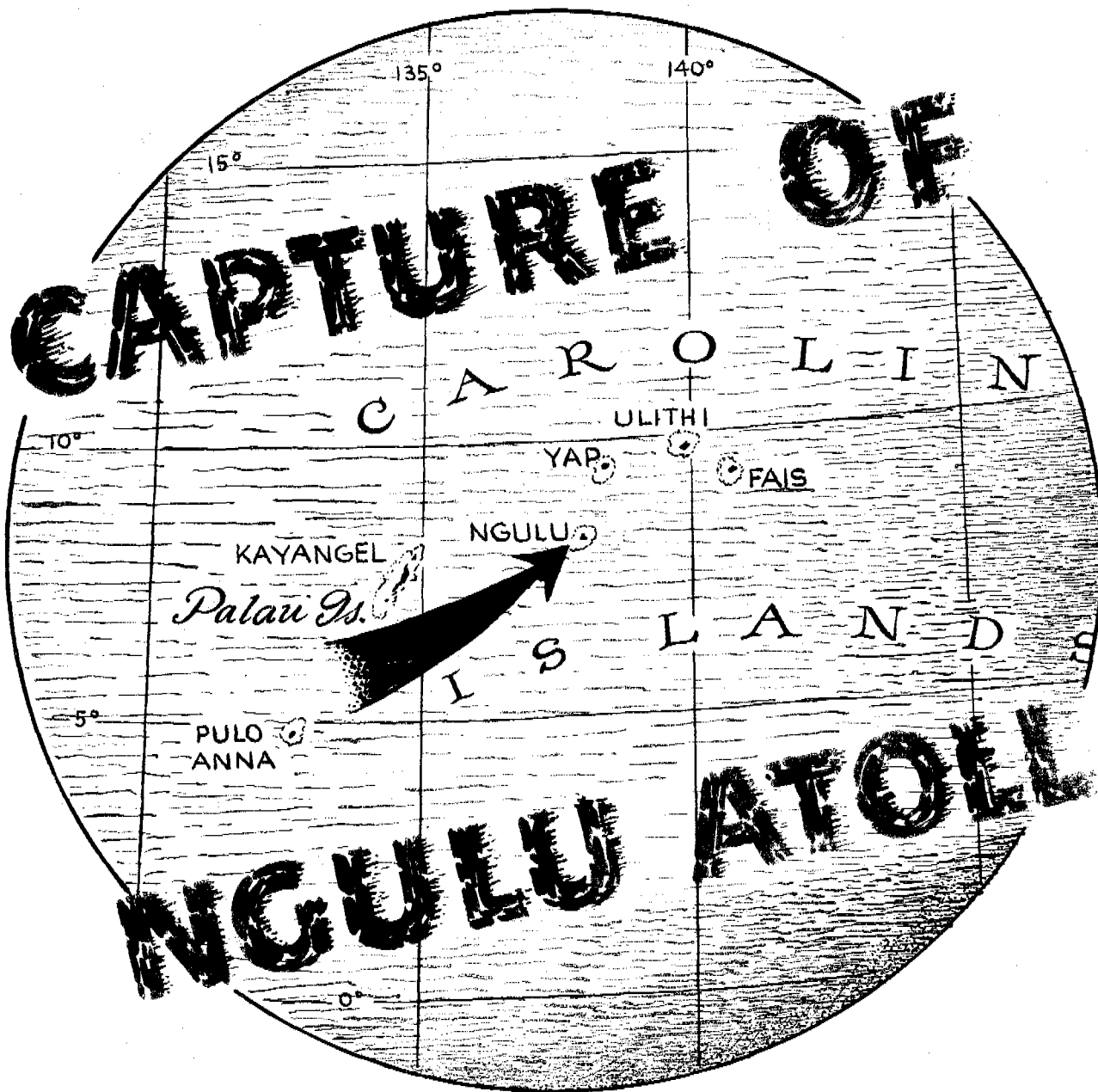
Considerable construction was necessary to extend the runway and northeast warm up apron over the eastern reef which was awash at high tide. The severe wave action at high tide made it necessary to construct a retaining wall. Materials at hand were used and included coconut logs built into a series of cribs and filled with large coral rock for ballast.

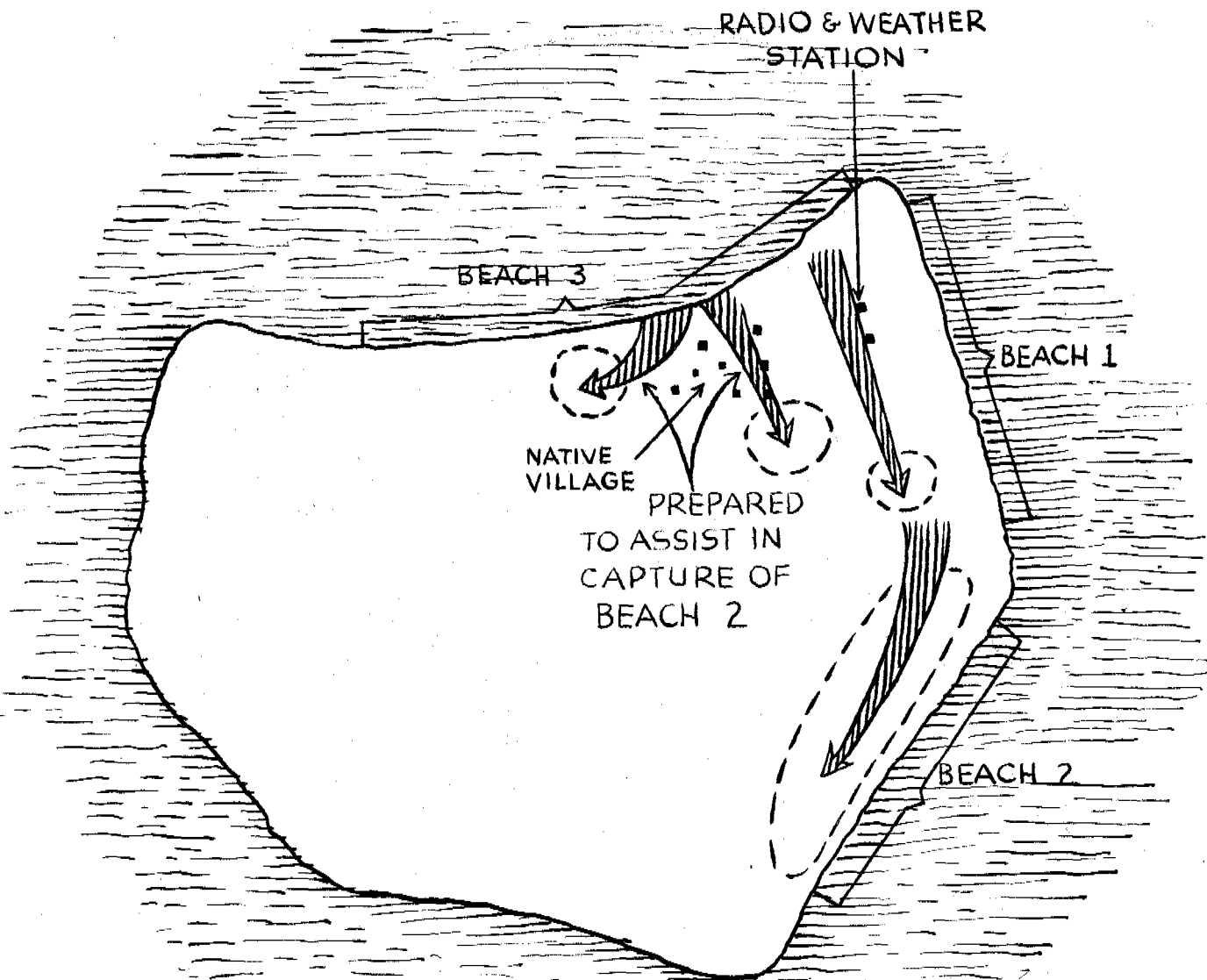
The airfield construction project was handicapped from the beginning by a lack of heavy equipment and a shortage of personnel. Due to the necessity of performing regular and special engineering tasks on all of the islands occupied by our troops, an average of little more than one line company was available at any time. This

SECRET

was augmented by a platoon of infantry of the 2d Bn 323 Inf. On Jig plus 20 days some heavy equipment was borrowed from the 51st NCB. On Jig plus 23 days, the 51st NCB took over most of the work on the airstrip proper while the 155th Engr (C) Bn continued work on the cribbing and taxiways. The cribbing was completed on 22 October.

On 26 October, the 155th Engr (C) Bn departed from Ulithi to rejoin the 81st Inf Div (Reinf). On 27 October (Jig plus 34) a C-47 landed on the Ameliorate Airfield.





SKETCH MAP
NGULU ISLAND

APPROXIMATE SCALE

1 inch = 100 yards

SECRET

I - PLANNING PHASE

A - PLANS

The concept of the operation against Ngulu Atoll envisioned the employment of a joint Army and Navy task force to reconnoiter Ngulu Island and such other islands as deemed necessary to determine the suitability of the atoll as a secondary fleet anchorage for staging purposes. (*)

On 10 October 1944, the Commanding Officer of RCT 323, then operating under the control of the Ulithi Atoll Commander, was ordered to furnish the equivalent of one rifle company to constitute the landing force for the Ngulu Operation. It was specified that the landing force be commanded by a captain and operate independently under Naval control.

Planning was based on Operation Order No. 4-44, Headquarters Commander Destroyer Division Eight, 10 October 1944, which provided for an assault landing on Ngulu Island to be followed by assault landings on other islands as designated by the task group commander (**). Any enemy force encountered was to be destroyed. Injury or interference with the natives was to be avoided, but information obtained from them regarding the strength and disposition of Japanese forces in the atoll. No garrison force was to be left on the atoll after the completion of the operation.

The landing force plan of operations against Ngulu Island provided for an assault landing by two platoons abreast on Beach 3, the northern beach facing the lagoon. The platoon on the left was to drive to the south. Upon reaching the opposite shore it was to be prepared to seize Beach 2 by moving to the west. The platoon on the right was to advance to the south side of the village and be prepared to assist in the capture of Beach 2. The support platoon was to protect the right flank of Beach 3 and be prepared to assist in the capture of Beach 2. An engineer demolition team was to land on Beach 3 and be prepared to remove any underwater obstacles in vicinity of the beach.

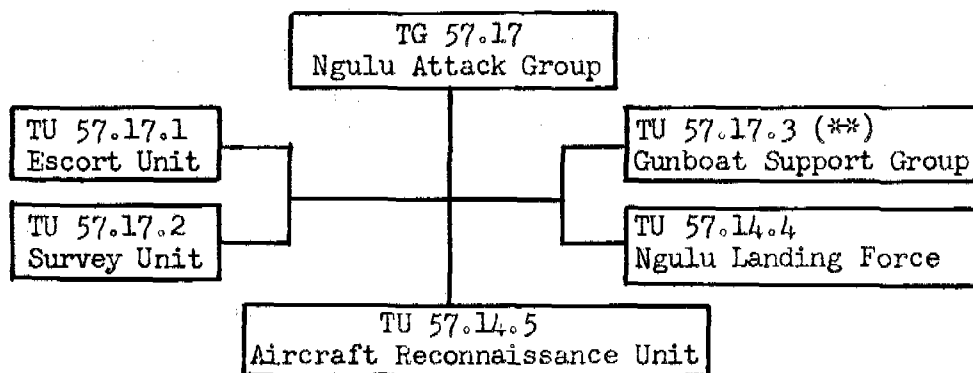
-
- (*) Operation order No. 4-44, Hq ComDesDiv 8, 10 October 1944
(**) Derived from Operation Plan 8-44, Hq ComFwdArea.

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The foregoing plan was presented to and approved by the Naval Task Group Commander at a conference held aboard the USS Ellet at the Ulithi Anchorage on 14 October, which was attended by Army and Navy Commanders concerned. It was published as the Landing Force order for the assault on Ngulu Island (*).

B - TASK ORGANIZATION

The organization of the Ngulu Attack Group, Captain G.E. Griggs, USN, commanding, was as follows:



The Ngulu Landing Force, Captain Oscar D. Lutrell, USA, commanding, was composed of the following units:

- Co F 323 Inf (less Det)
- Det Co E 323 Inf
- Det Co G 323 Inf
- Det Co H 323 Inf
- Det Co B 155 Engr (C) Bn

In addition, the S-2 of the 323d Inf and two Ulithi Atoll natives, who agreed to assist in contacting Ngulu Atoll natives, accompanied the Landing Force. The Ex O of the 2d Bn 323 Inf was designated liaison officer to the headquarters of the Task Group Commander.

(*) FO No 1, Hq TU 57.14.4, 15 October 1944
(***) With Ngulu Landing Force embarked.

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II - EMBARKATION AND MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE AREA

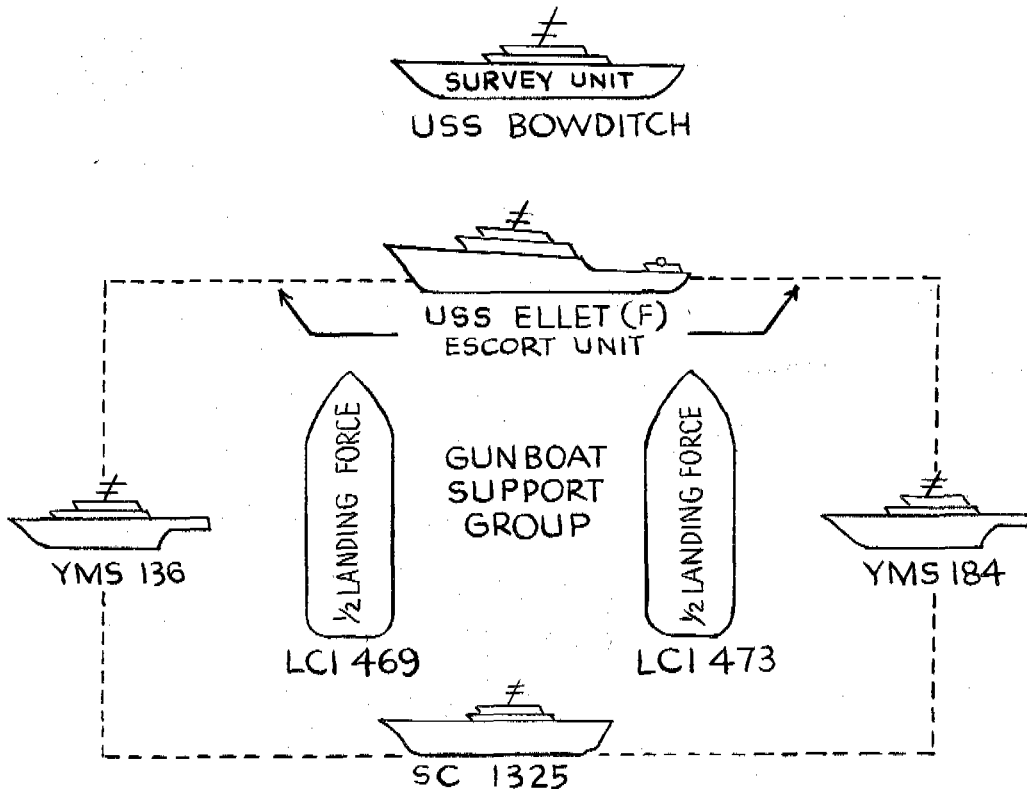
The Ngulu Landing Force embarked on two LCIs in the Ulithi lagoon at 0800, 15 October. The plan of embarkation was as follows:

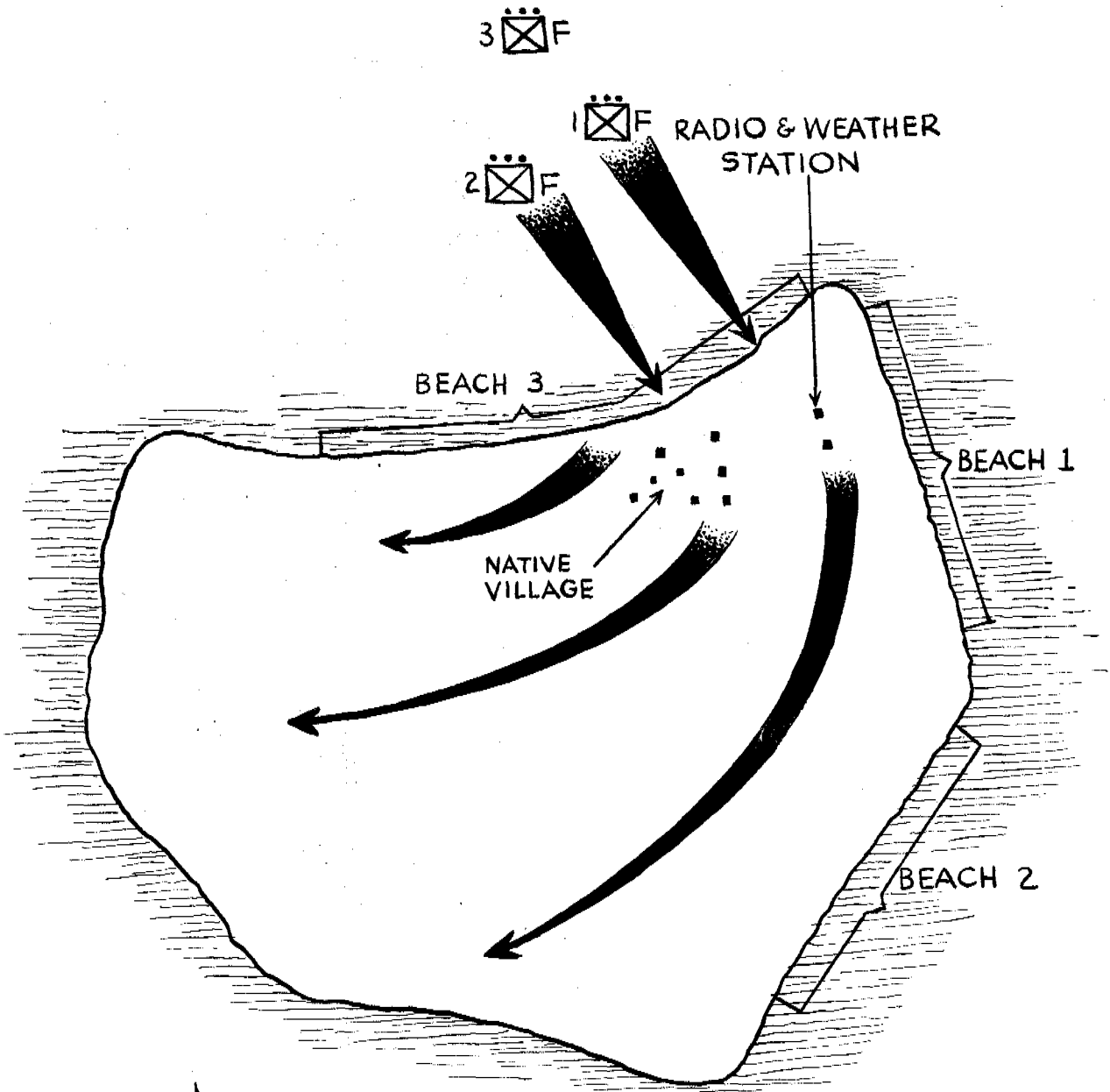
USS Ellet	1 Off, 1 radio operator
LCI 473	3 Off, 55 EM
LCI 469	1 Off, 57 EM, 2 natives

The Task Group departed from the Ulithi lagoon during the morning 15 October and arrived at the objective area at 0530, 16 October. The voyage was made without incident.

Schematic Diagram

Ngulu Attack Group





SKETCH MAP
NGULU ISLAND
APPROXIMATE SCALE
1 inch = 100 yards

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III - NARRATIVE OF OPERATION

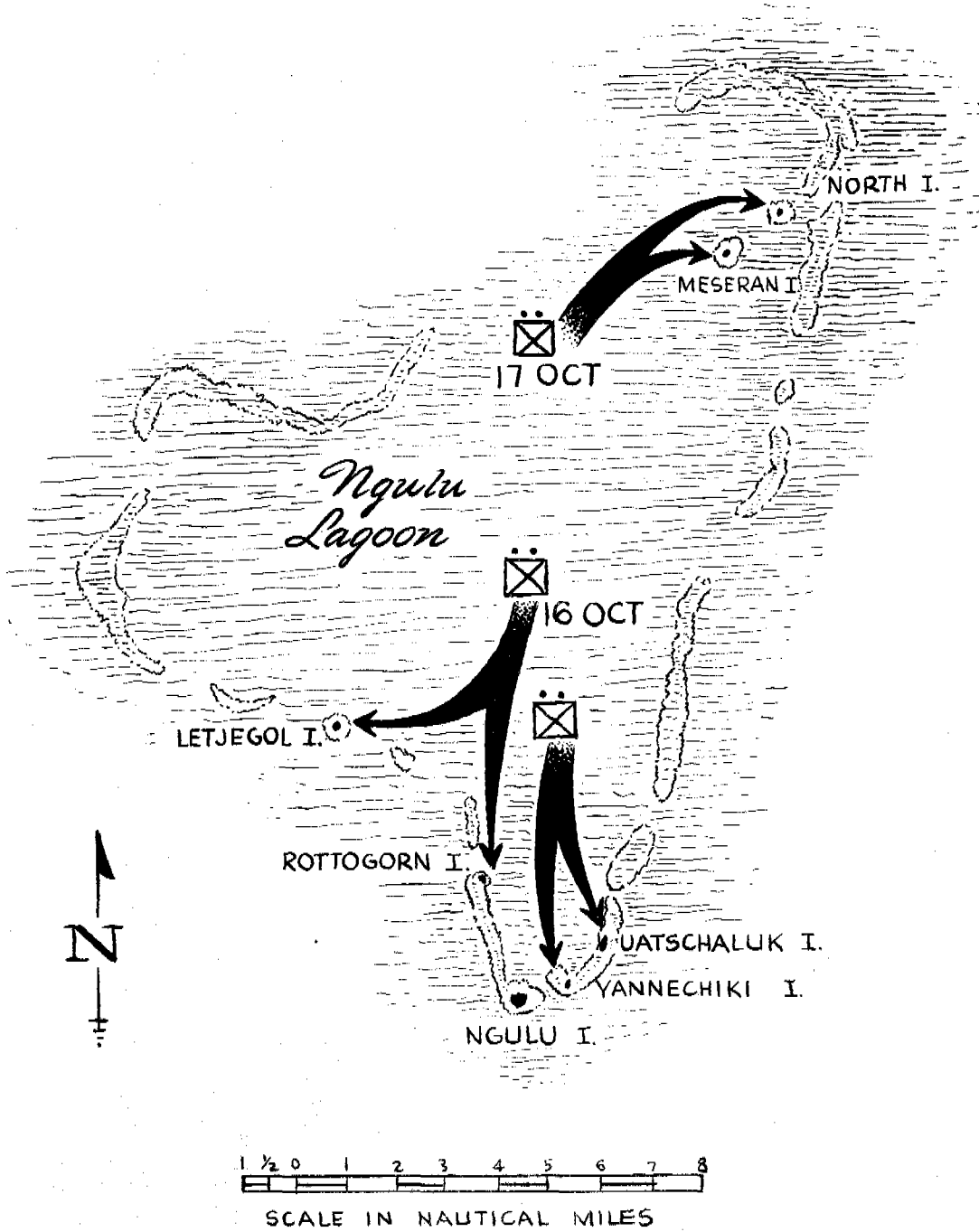
At 0045, 16 October, while the Ngulu Task Group was enroute to Ngulu Atoll, a prisoner of war was captured by elements of Task Unit 33.13.1, composed of the USS Montgomery and five YMS's, which had anchored for the night in the Ngulu lagoon. The prisoner was taken as he and seven other Japanese attempted to escape from Ngulu to Yap by small boat. Interrogation revealed that his companions probably committed suicide by drowning rather than surrender to the Americans. Later events proved that only one had actually committed suicide and that the other six had escaped capture by swimming to Uatschaluk Island. No positive information could be obtained from the prisoner relative to the presence of other Japanese on any of the islands of the atoll. At 0615, 16 October the prisoner was delivered to the USS Bowditch and later transferred for questioning to the USS Ellet.

Capture of Ngulu Island

Debarkation for an assault landing on Ngulu Island began at 0545, 16 October and was completed at 0630. Troops were boated in LCVPs. The first wave was composed of two LCVPs each carrying an assault rifle platoon. The second wave of one LCVP carried the support platoon and the Landing Force Headquarters.

Landings were made at 0635 and 0643 and were unopposed. Troops advanced inland in accordance with the predetermined plan. A thorough search of the island revealed it to be unoccupied. The radio and weather station and the living quarters in the vicinity showed signs of recent habitation and confirmed the prisoner of war's statement that he and his companions had left Ngulu Island during the previous night.

Ngulu Island was declared secure at 0830. The Landing Force Commander, Regimental S-2, and two interpreters were then ordered aboard the USS Ellet for a conference regarding the reconnaissance of the remaining islands of the atoll. It was decided that the reconnaissance be completed with the least practicable delay. The prisoner of war was further interrogated at this time, but no additional information could be obtained relative to the presence of enemy troops on the other islands of the atoll.



SECRET

Capture of Rottogorn and Letjegol Islands

Troops were reembarked at 1130 and organized into two reconnaissance parties. At 1300 one of these parties made landings on Rottogorn and Letjegol Islands on the southwestern reef. A thorough search of both islands revealed them to be unoccupied. Troops were reembarked at 1700.

Capture of Uatschaluk and Yannechiki Islands

At 1400 the second reconnaissance party landed on Uatschaluk Island on the southeastern reef. Troops advanced approximately 50 yards inland and came upon a native settlement which they immediately began to search. In one hut they discovered a Japanese attempting to commit suicide with a crude knife. Our troops tried to stop him, but he raised his knife in a threatening manner and had to be shot. Troops then proceeded inland to complete the reconnaissance and discovered five Japanese hiding in a small grove. They were armed with native spears, knives, clubs, and a hammer. As soon as they were aware of their discovery, they charged towards our troops, jabbering and shrieking as they came. Our troops tried to halt them without firing, but the Japanese gave no heed and had to be shot. Further reconnaissance of Uatschaluk Island and adjacent Yannechiki Island was made with negative results. After burying the Japanese dead troops returned to the ship.

Capture of North and Meseran Islands

Reconnaissance of the northern islands of Ngulu Atoll was continued during the morning of 17 October. North and Meseran Islands were thoroughly searched and no Japanese were found. Thirty-five natives were encountered on Meseran Island who acted very friendly towards our troops. They could furnish no information of recent enemy activity in the area. Troops were reembarked at 1600.

At 0800, 18 October it was officially announced that all islands of Ngulu Atoll were secure and free of the enemy.

SECRET

IV - ESTIMATED RESULTS OF THE OPERATION

A - AREA SECURED

The seizure of Ngulu Atoll provides a secondary fleet anchorage midway between the Southern Palau Islands and Ulithi Atoll and may be used to stage small craft between these two bases.

B - OPERATIONAL AND MATERIAL DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY

The seizure of Ngulu Atoll and the destruction of its radio and weather station deprives the enemy of the opportunity of obtaining and disseminating meteorological information valuable to air and naval operations in the Western Carolines. The enemy is further deprived of the opportunity of observing and reporting the movements and activities of our forces in this sector.

Losses in enemy personnel consisted of six killed by the Ngulu Landing Force, one prisoner of war captured by TU 33.13.1, and two suicides resulting from the action of the Ngulu Landing Force and TU 33.13.1. These Japanese were civilian technicians who operated the radio and weather station on Ngulu Island.

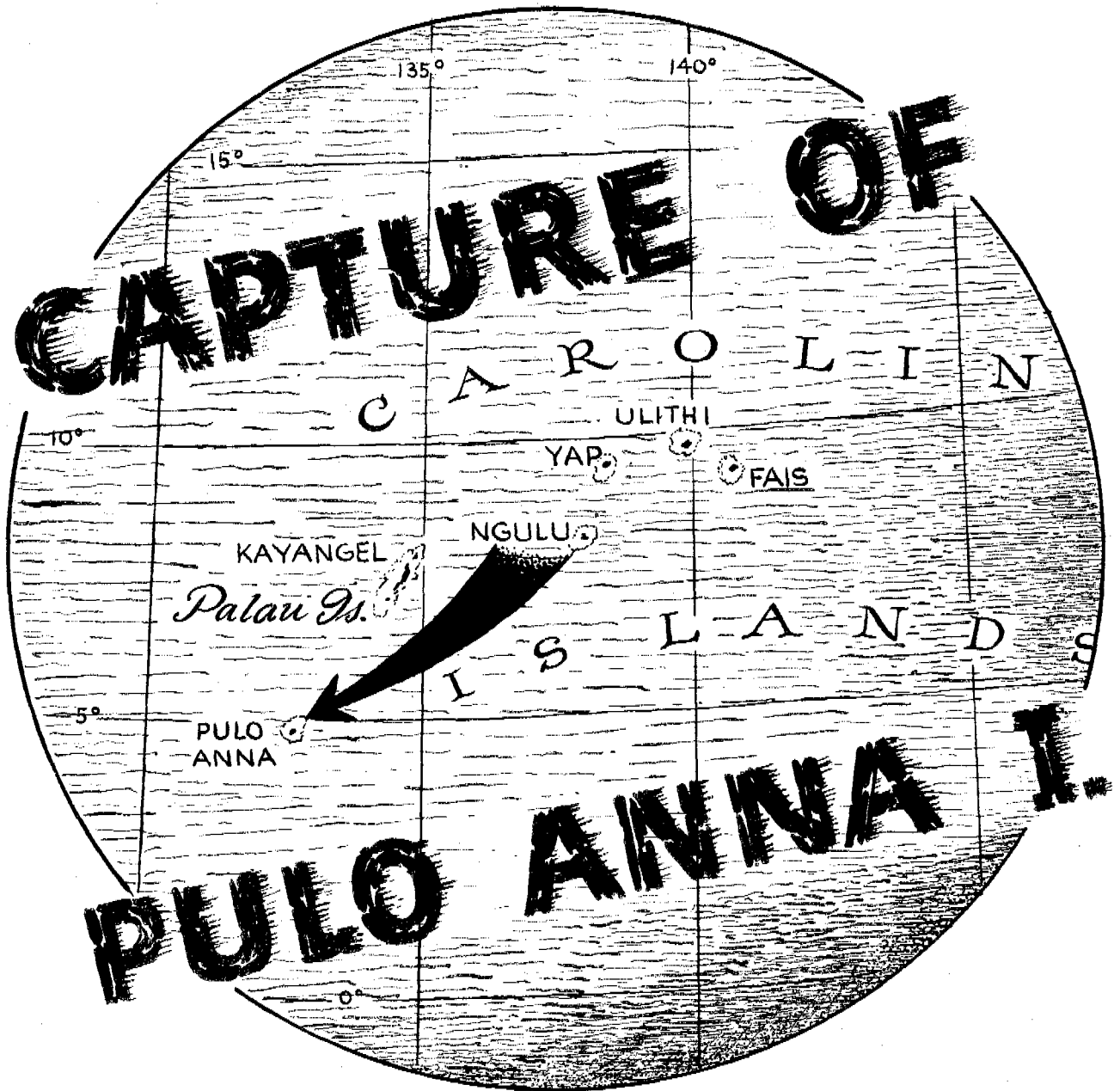
Material losses to the enemy were as follows:

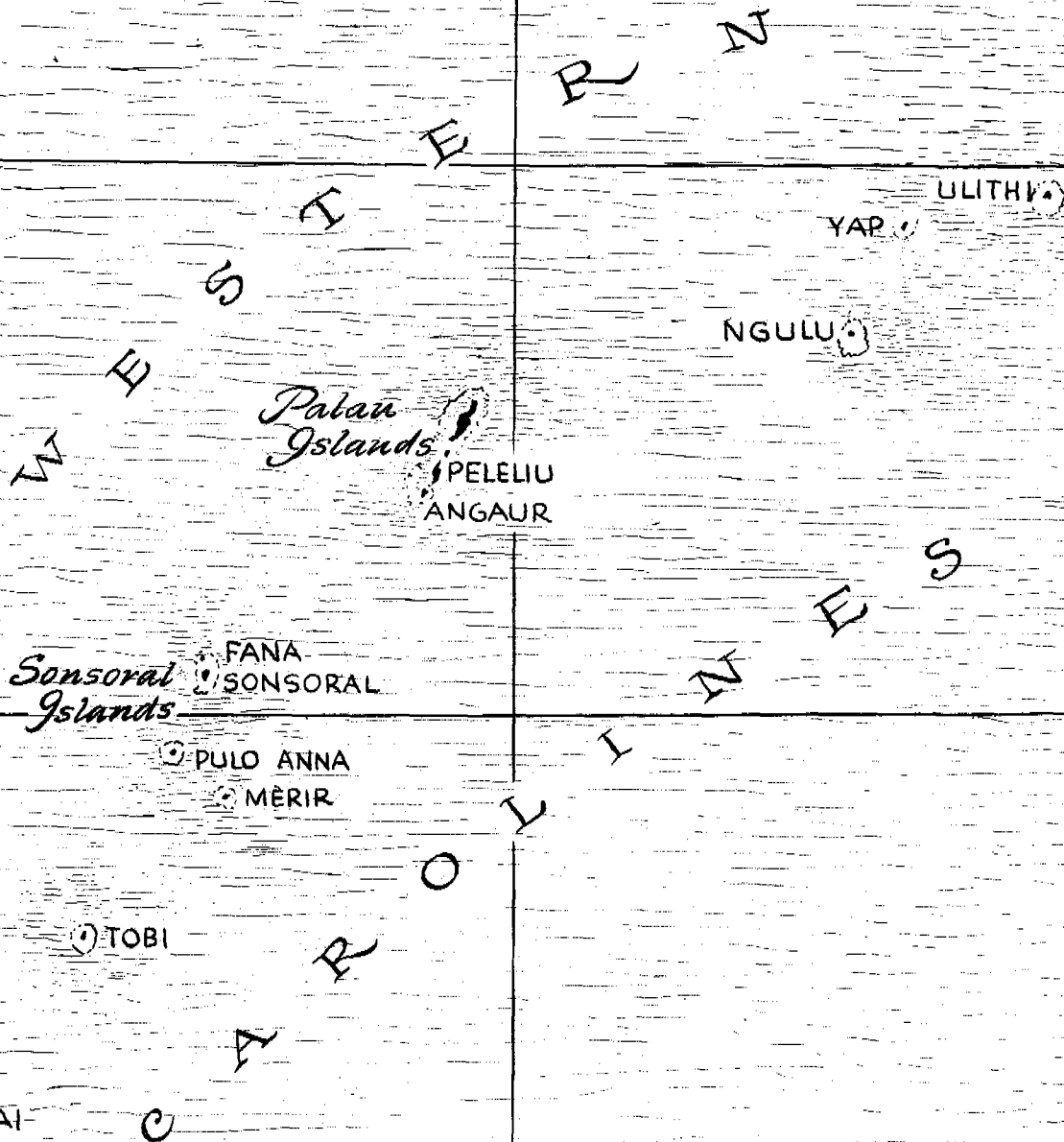
- 1 - Radio building destroyed (*)
- 5 - Living Quarters
- 1 - Motor house
- 1 - Cook house
- 1 - Food storage house

The following equipment was found in the boat which the Japanese used in their attempt to escape to Yap:

- 1 - German make compass
- 1 - Chronometer
- Miscellaneous records (**)
- Personal clothing (***)

-
- (*) Transmitter dismantled on order of Task Group Commander for forwarding to Jicpoa.
 - (**) Forwarded to Jicpoa.
 - (***) Of no intelligence value; distributed to troops.





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I - PLANNING PHASE

A - PRELIMINARY PLANNING

In accordance with plans of the Joint Army and Navy Staff, two Loran stations were to be established in the western Pacific. One of these stations was to be located in the Marianna Islands and the other in the Morotai-Palau area. Transmitting facilities for the latter were to be on either Morotai, Peleliu, Pulo Anna, or one of the islands in the vicinity of Pulo Anna, with a monitoring station on Angaur Island. Instructions from the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean areas, to the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area were to the effect that as soon as the military situation in the Palau Islands permitted, an investigation be made to determine the requirements for the occupation, administration, and defense of Pulo Anna Island or another island in the vicinity thereof. Results of the investigation were to be reported to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas; and upon his approval, the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area was to proceed with the establishment of the Loran Station, utilizing elements of the forces under his command (*).

On 22 October 1944, the 81st Infantry Division was directed by Commander Western Carolines Sub Area to make a study of the proposed operations against Pulo Anna Island, submit proposals and recommendations relative thereto, and furnish the force necessary to occupy the island. At the same time the Division was furnished a report of an air reconnaissance of Pulo Anna, Merir, and the Sonsoral Islands which was conducted on 17 October 1944 on order of the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area. The results of this reconnaissance were mainly negative. No small naval craft, aircraft, or enemy defenses were observed on any of the islands. A group of natives was observed on Pulo Anna and buildings were seen on Sonsoral Island, the larger of the two islands comprising the Sonsoral Group (**).

The mission of making the required study and preparing the plans for the operation were assigned to the Assistant Division Commander, 81st Infantry Division. From natives present on Angaur Island who had formerly lived on the islands under consideration, information was obtained that approximately 700 Japanese troops were present on Sonsoral Island on 1 July 1944 and that some 200 Japanese troops were on Merir Island on 1 March 1944. On Tobi

(*) Secret Ltr, CINCPAC & CINCPAC, 8 Oct 1944, Ser No. 003235
(**) Secret Ltr, COMWESCARSUBAREA, 22 Oct 1944, File No. A8-AD-007

SECRET

Island, 110 miles south of Merir, there were 8 Japanese observers and 150 natives as of 1 March 1944. No information could be obtained relative to the presence of Japanese troops on Pulo Anna Island (*).

The incompleteness of the information obtained from the natives and the air reconnaissance of 17 October made it advisable to conduct further investigation of all of the islands mentioned above. On 27 October the Assistant Division Commander accompanied by two Angaur natives who were familiar with the islands, conducted an aerial reconnaissance in a PBY5A with fighter plane escort. The reconnaissance established the presence of Japanese troops on Sonsoral Island, since our aircraft drew enemy anti-aircraft fire. No installations were seen on Fana or Merir Islands, although previous information had indicated that 200 Japanese troops were on the latter on 1 March 1944. A few natives were observed on Pulo Anna Island (**).

Based on this reconnaissance the Assistant Division Commander concluded that further information was needed regarding Merir and Sonsoral islands, and that Pulo Anna Island was probably unoccupied by enemy troops. He recommended that photo coverage of Pulo Anna and Merir Islands be obtained and that a small reconnaissance party accompanied by a few natives, be sent to Pulo Anna to obtain additional information regarding it and other islands in the vicinity (**).

On 2 November a plan for the reconnaissance of Pulo Anna Island was submitted to the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area. It proposed that a party of 35 officers and men, accompanied by 4 natives familiar with the island, proceed to Pulo Anna in 2 LCI's supported by planes from Marine Air Group 11 based on Peleliu. Included in the party would be Civil Affairs, Engineer, Coast Guard, and Marine Air Group personnel. Details of the plan provided for the force to arrive off Pulo Anna before daylight 4 November and to draw in close to the reef in the vicinity of the native village at the southern tip of the island immediately after daylight. Contact would then be established with the Pulo Anna natives in order to determine the presence of Japanese on the island. If no Japanese

-
- (*) Secret Ltr and Incl, Hq 81st Infantry Division, 26 Oct 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance and Occupation of Pulo Anna.
 - (**) Secret Report on Aerial Reconnaissance of Sonsoral, Fana, Pulo
Anna, and Merir Islands, Hq 81 Inf Div, 31 Oct 1944.
 - (***) Secret Ltr and Incl, Hq 81st Infantry Division, 2 Nov 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance and Occupation of Pulo Anna.

SECRET

were present it was proposed that the landing force would move ashore to secure full information of Pulo Anna and the other islands of the group, including any further information of Japanese activities in the area. In addition, reconnaissance would be undertaken by the engineer group to prepare an accurate sketch of the island, by the coast guard group to select a site for the Loran station, and by the command group to prepare plans for the occupation and defense of the island and the Loran station (*).

The foregoing plan was approved by the Commanding General, 81st Infantry Division and Commander Western Carolines Sub Area. The reconnaissance was undertaken on 4 November 1944. During the reconnaissance it was learned that no Japanese had been on the island since November 1941, although the natives believed that the Japanese occupied Sonsoral and Merir Islands. A reconnaissance by engineers and coast guard personnel indicated that Pulo Anna Island would be suitable for the installation of a Loran station (**).

On the basis of this new information, the Assistant Division Commander submitted recommendations as to supplies, occupying force and garrison force for Pulo Anna Island (**). These were approved by the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division and Commander Western Carolines Sub Area, and embodied in final orders for the occupation of Pulo Anna Island on 20 November 1944.

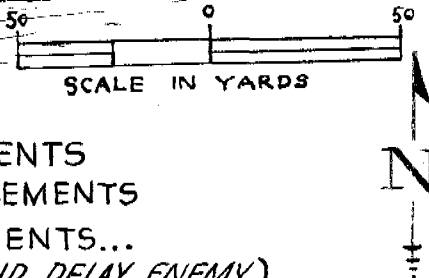
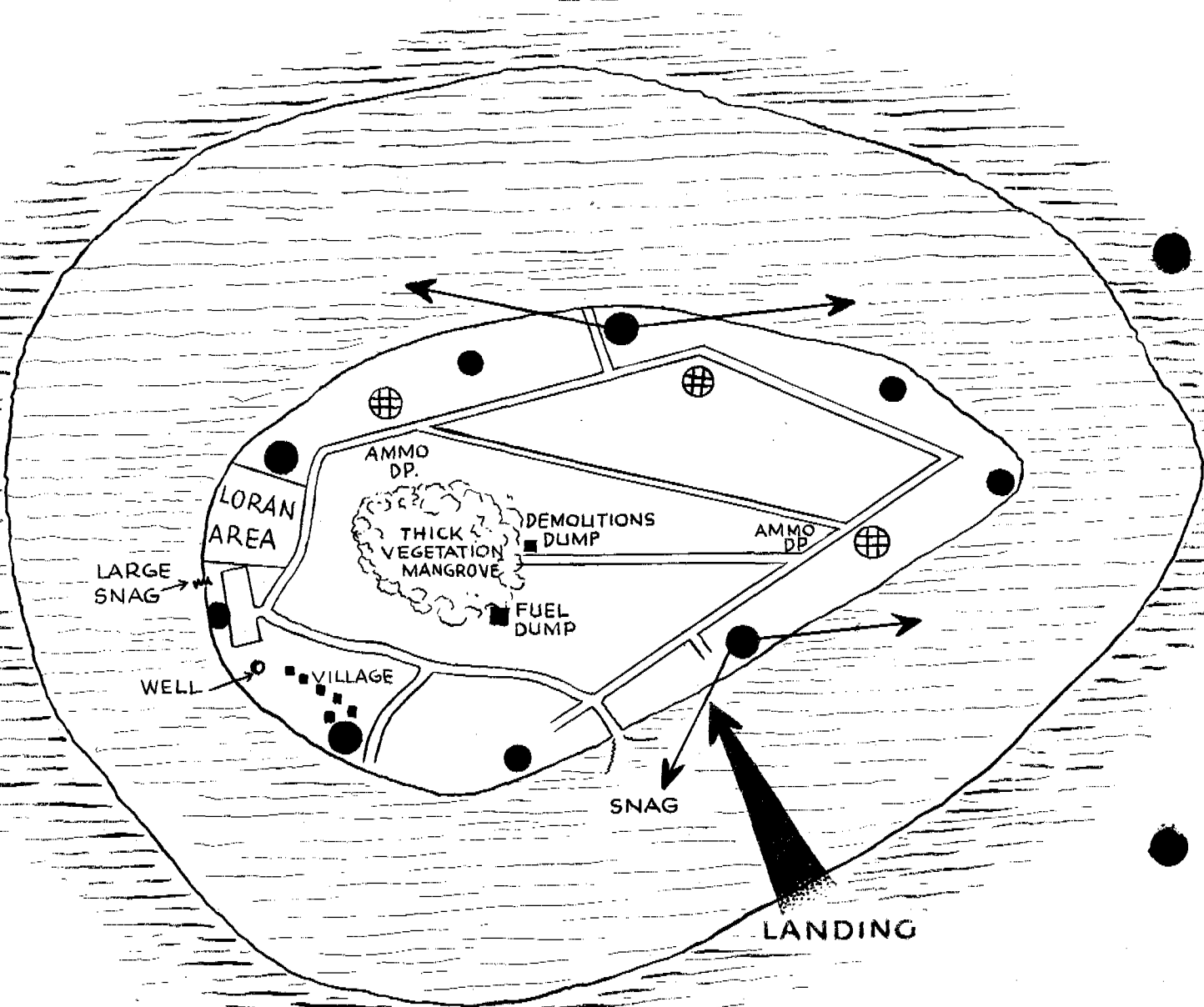
B - FINAL PLANS

Orders for the occupation of Pulo Anna Island were issued on 17 November 1944. The landing force was assigned the specific mission of occupying and defending the island, and making preparations for the installation of the Loran station. The date of occupation was set at 20 November with the time of landing to be announced. After defensive installations and housing were completed, and the island prepared to receive the Loran station, a garrison force consisting of the following units was to remain on Pulo Anna until relieved:

-
- (*) Secret Letter and Incl, Hq 81st Inf Div, 2 November 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance and Occupation of Pulo Anna Island.
 - (**) Secret Letter, Hq 81st Inf Div, 7 November 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance of Pulo Anna Island.

PULO ANNA ISLAND

TACTICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTALLATIONS



- PRIMARY EMPLACEMENTS
- SECONDARY EMPLACEMENTS
- ⊗ DELAYING EMPLACEMENTS...
(TO COVER CLEARINGS AND DELAY ENEMY)

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Pulo Anna Garrison Force, Maj Thomas R. Rogers, CE, Commanding (*)

Det Hq 52 Engr (C) Bn
Det Co A 52 Engr (C) Bn
Det 306 Med Bn
Det 81 Sig Co

Air support for the operation was to consist of a prelanding reconnaissance by a PBY5A protected by fighter planes. Additional air support, if necessary, was to be furnished on call of the Landing Force Commander in four hours. Light surface craft could be furnished in twelve hours from naval units in the Peleliu area (*).

C - TASK ORGANIZATION

The organization of the Pulo Anna Landing Force, Brig Gen Marcus B. Bell, USA, Assistant Division Commander, 81st Infantry Division, commanding, was as follows (**):

TU 57.14.6 (*)

Det Hq 81 Inf Div
Det Hq 52 Engr (C) Bn (***)
Det Co A 52 Engr (C) Bn (***)
Det H&S Co 52 Engr (C) Bn
Det 306 Med Bn (***)
Det 81 Sig Co (***)
Det 481 Amph Truck Co

The organization of the Naval Task Unit, Lt Comdr E. L. Yates, USNR, commanding, was as follows:

TU 57.14.5 (*)

LCI 397 (F)
LCI 306
LST 607
2 LCMs

-
- (*) Operation Plan No 2-44, COMWESCARSUBAREA, 17 Nov 1944.
(**) FO No 26, Hq 81 Inf Div, 18 Nov 1944.
(***) Pulo Anna Garrison Force.

SECRET

II - EMBARKATION; MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE AREA

Loading of supplies and equipment was completed at 0930, 18 November. All personnel were embarked by 1600, same date.

The convoy departed from Peleliu at 0630, 19 November. A typhoon which had formed at Truk and was moving north of the Palau Islands created a rough sea during the night 19-20 November, causing the convoy to slow down to prevent the loss of or damage to the two LCMs which were being towed by LST 607. The convoy arrived at the objective area at 1130, 20 November, four hours later than was anticipated.

III - NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS

Because of the delay encountered in reaching the objective area it was requested that the prelanding reconnaissance of Pulo Anna be delayed until 1000, 20 November. At that hour, 1 PB5A escorted by 4 VMFs flew over Pulo Anna Island and reported that natives were on the beach waving, and that there was no indication of the presence of enemy troops. The planes were then directed to reconnoiter Merir and the Sonsoral Islands with particular attention to locating Japanese landing barges. The planes returned at 1130, reporting negative results. The planes were then ordered to return to base.

The first elements of the Landing Force came ashore in outrigger canoes on the southeast beach of Pulo Anna Island at 1240, 20 October. They were followed by the remainder of the force embarked in DUKWs. A thorough precautionary search of the island revealed no Japanese present.

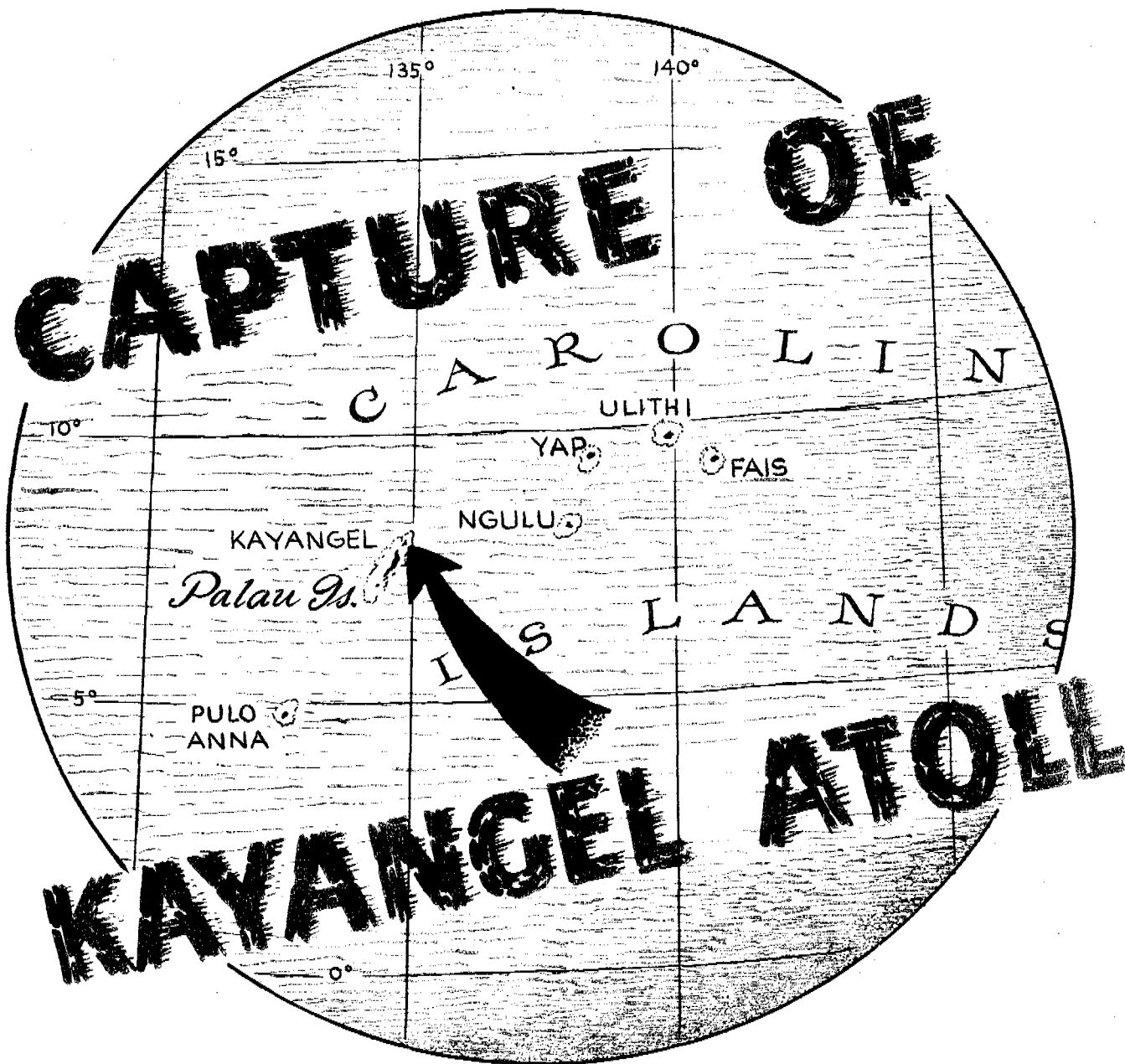
Two defense groups were placed in position to cover the north-east beach and the landing area. During the day an access road was cleared from the landing area to the camp site; the latter was partially cleared. All troops, except those needed for guard detail, returned to ship to spend the night.

General unloading began on 21 November and was completed at 0900, 24 November. In the meantime, work was rushed on the construction of the access road from the beach to the camp site, a perimeter road around the island, defensive installations, Loran station, dumps, and living quarters. The natives were set to work cleaning up their own village. By 0900, 24 November, the tactical and administrative installations as shown on Page 48 were completed except for a small amount of work on the Loran station site and defensive installations.

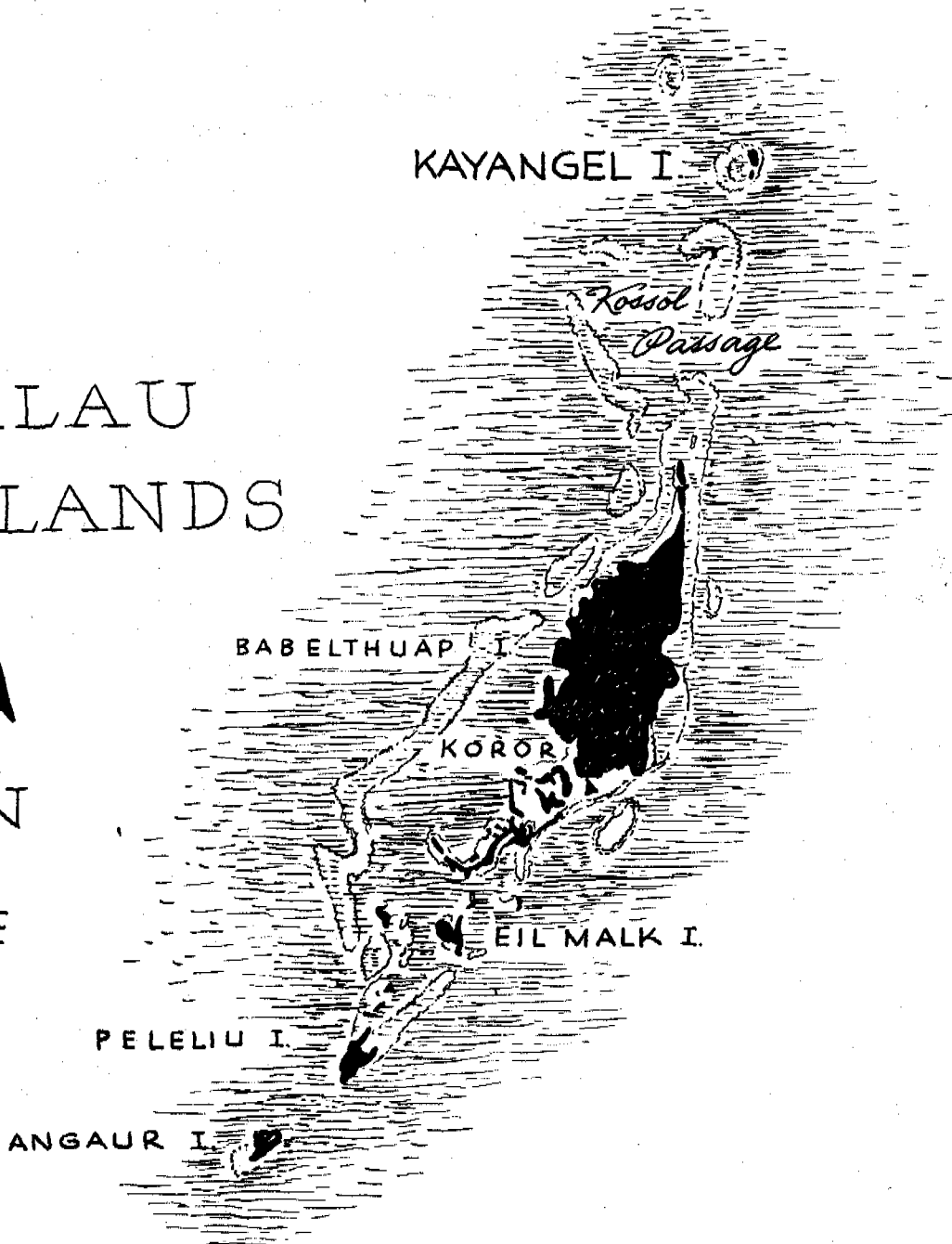
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Reembarkation of troops and equipment not scheduled to remain at Pulo Anna as the Garrison Force commenced at 0920, 24 November. The ship departed from Pulo Anna shortly thereafter, arriving at Peleliu on 25 November. Troops and equipment were unloaded and returned to their proper units.

Loran equipment and personnel arrived at Pulo Anna Island on 26 November and were unloaded during that day and the next. The Loran Station was in operation on 1 December 1944.




PALAU ISLANDS



LEGEND

 Reef

 Land

SCALE (Approx) 1" = 12miles

SECRET

PLANNING PHASE

A - PLANS

On 21 November 1944, the 81st Infantry Division was in receipt of orders directing it to conduct a reconnaissance of Kayangel Atoll, the northernmost islands in the Palau Group, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of occupying it as a boat haven and recreation area for naval forces afloat at Kossol Passage (*).

In compliance with the foregoing, plans were made by the Division to effect the desired reconnaissance in two phases, as follows:

Reconnaissance Phase: To establish contact with natives on Kayangel Atoll by using two Chamorro natives who had escaped from Japanese held Babelthaup and had offered their services to our forces. These natives were also to determine if Japanese troops were present in the atoll.

Occupation Phase: Beginning at 0900, 29 November to make successive landings on the three minor islands of the atoll - Gorak Ngarapalas, and Ngariungs. To make a subsequent landing on the major island of the atoll, Ngajangel, at a time to be designated, but tentatively set at 0900, 30 November.

Naval gunfire support was to be provided on call by two LCI gunboats, a PGM, and two MTP boats operating under control of the reconnaissance force commander.

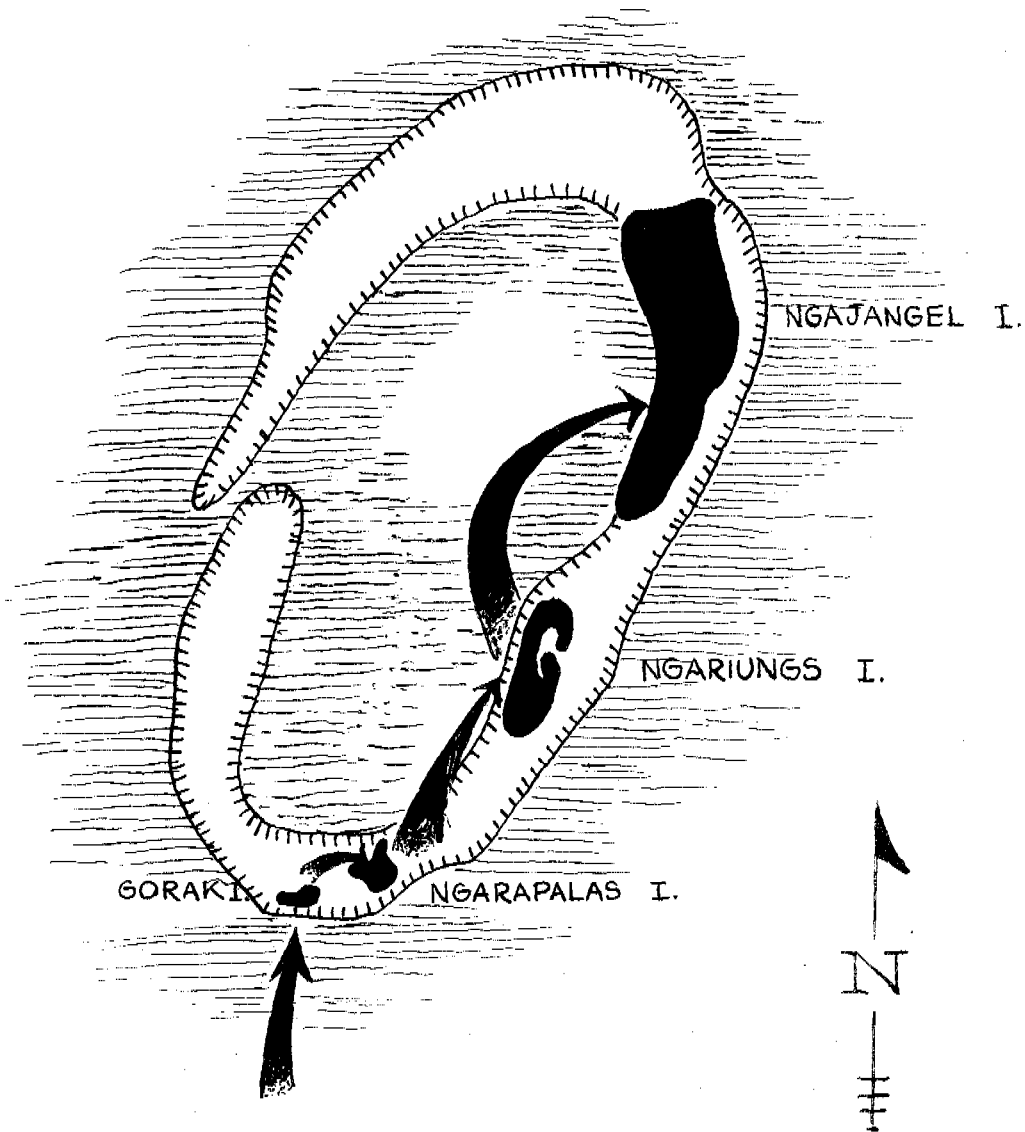
B - TASK ORGANIZATION

The organization of the Kayangel Atoll Reconnaissance Force, Lt Col Paul D. Goddard, USA, commanding, was as follows (**):

Det Hq 81 Inf Div (Plus two Chamorro natives
from Babelthaup, Palau Group)
81 Cav Rcn Troop (less Det
Det 306 Engr (C) Bn
Det 306 Med Bn

-
- (*) Ltr Hq COMWESCARSUBAREA, 21 November 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance of Kayangel Atoll.
(**) FO No. 27, Hq 81 Inf Div, 26 November 1944.

KAYANGEL ATOLL



SCALE 1:62,500

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Det 81 Sig Co
Det 726 Amph Tractor Bn
Det Co D 776 Amph Tank Bn

The organization of the naval task unit assigned to support the operation was under the command of Lt Byrne F. Martin, USNR, and composed of the following vessels:

LCI (G) 729 (Peleliu)
LCI (L) 731 (Peleliu)
LCI 727 (Peleliu)
LCI 929 (Peleliu)
2 - MTP boats (Kossol Passage)
1 - PGM boat (Kossol Passage)

II - EMBARKATION AND MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE AREA

During the afternoon of 27 November troops were embarked at Purple Beach, Peleliu Island on LCI (G) 729 and LCI(L) 731. At the same time, two LVT personnel carriers, two LVT amphibian tanks, and one $\frac{1}{2}$ T Truck with SCR 193 for communication with Division Headquarters were loaded at Beach Orange. The supplies loaded per individual of the force included two K rations, two 10-in-1 rations two B rations, fifteen gallons of water, and three units of fire.

Embarkation was completed at 1700, 27 November. The convoy departed from Peleliu immediately thereafter, and arrived at Kossol Passage at 0630, 28 November.

III - NARRATIVE OF OPERATION

At 1430, 28 November a conference of Army and Navy officers concerned was held and detailed plans for the operation completed. Two MTP boats and one PGM boat were assigned to join the landing force and remain with it for the duration of the operation in order to provide additional fire support as requested by the landing force commander.

Reconnaissance Phase

During the afternoon 28 November the two Chamorro natives went ashore on Ngajangel Island, using a native canoe. They returned prior to dark, bringing with them the Number 3 Man of the tribe that inhabited the island. The latter furnished the information that approximately sixty Kanaka natives occupied Ngajangel Island, that the

SECRET

other islands of the atoll were uninhabited, and that there were no Japanese troops on any of the islands.

Occupation Phase

Stormy weather on 29 November made it necessary to postpone the landings scheduled for that day.

Occupation of Gorak, Ngarapalas, Ngariungs Islands

At 0930, 30 November one squad of the 81st Cav Rcn Troop, embarked in a rubber boat, landed on Gorak Island and secured it shortly thereafter. Two platoons of the Troop, embarked in LVTs and supported by amphibian tanks, also landed on Gorak Island in preparation for a shore to shore movement on Ngarapalas Island. A landing was made on Ngarapalas Island at 1130 and its occupation completed at 1200. At 1300 these same troops departed for Ngariungs Island and occupied it by 1600.

All troops and equipment were assembled on Ngariungs Island prior to dark. Troops spent the night on the northern end of the island.

Occupation of Ngajangel Island

During the night orders were issued for the seizure of Ngajangel Island. The Kayangel native was returned to his village with instructions for the conduct of the natives during such time as our troops were on the island.

Two platoons of the 81st Cav Rcn Troop landed on Ngajangel Island at 0715, 1 December. By 1130 a complete reconnaissance of the island was completed. At that time it was officially announced that all of Kayangel Atoll was secure. No Japanese troops had been encountered on any of the islands of the atoll.

IV - RETURN TO PELELIU ISLAND

At 1645, 3 December all troops were withdrawn from the atoll and moved to Kossol Passage. On 4 December the landing force commander reported to the Port Director, Kossol Passage, and turned the atoll over to him.

The convoy arrived off Purple Beach, Peleliu, at 0720, 5 De-

SECRET

cember. Debarkation of troops and equipment was completed at 1000 and troops returned to their stations on Peleliu.

V - ESTIMATED RESULTS OF OPERATION

The islands of Kayangel Atoll protect the lagoon from all east and northeast winds and the western reef affords a certain amount of protection, as parts of the reef are awash at low tide; but the reef does not bare. The lagoon is suitable as a small boat haven. By our occupation of the atoll the Japanese are deprived of its use to observe the movements of our naval forces in the area.

The three southern islands which are unoccupied by the natives are suitable for recreation purposes. All have sandy beaches on the lagoon side and are covered with cocoanut palms and other tropical vegetation. There is an abundance of fish in the lagoon and around the reef, which can provide sport and is a source of additional food. The natives on Ngajangel Island can furnish bananas, limes, and coconuts in exchange for food and clothing which they need.



SECRET

I - PLANNING PHASE

A - PRELIMINARY PLANS

The concept of the operation against Fais Island, Western Carolines, envisioned the employment of an Army task force to reconnoiter the island with a view towards locating and destroying enemy facilities thereon, actual or potential, in order to deny its use to the enemy as an observation point or base of operations. Upon completion of the mission, all personnel and equipment were to be withdrawn from the island and returned to proper station (*).

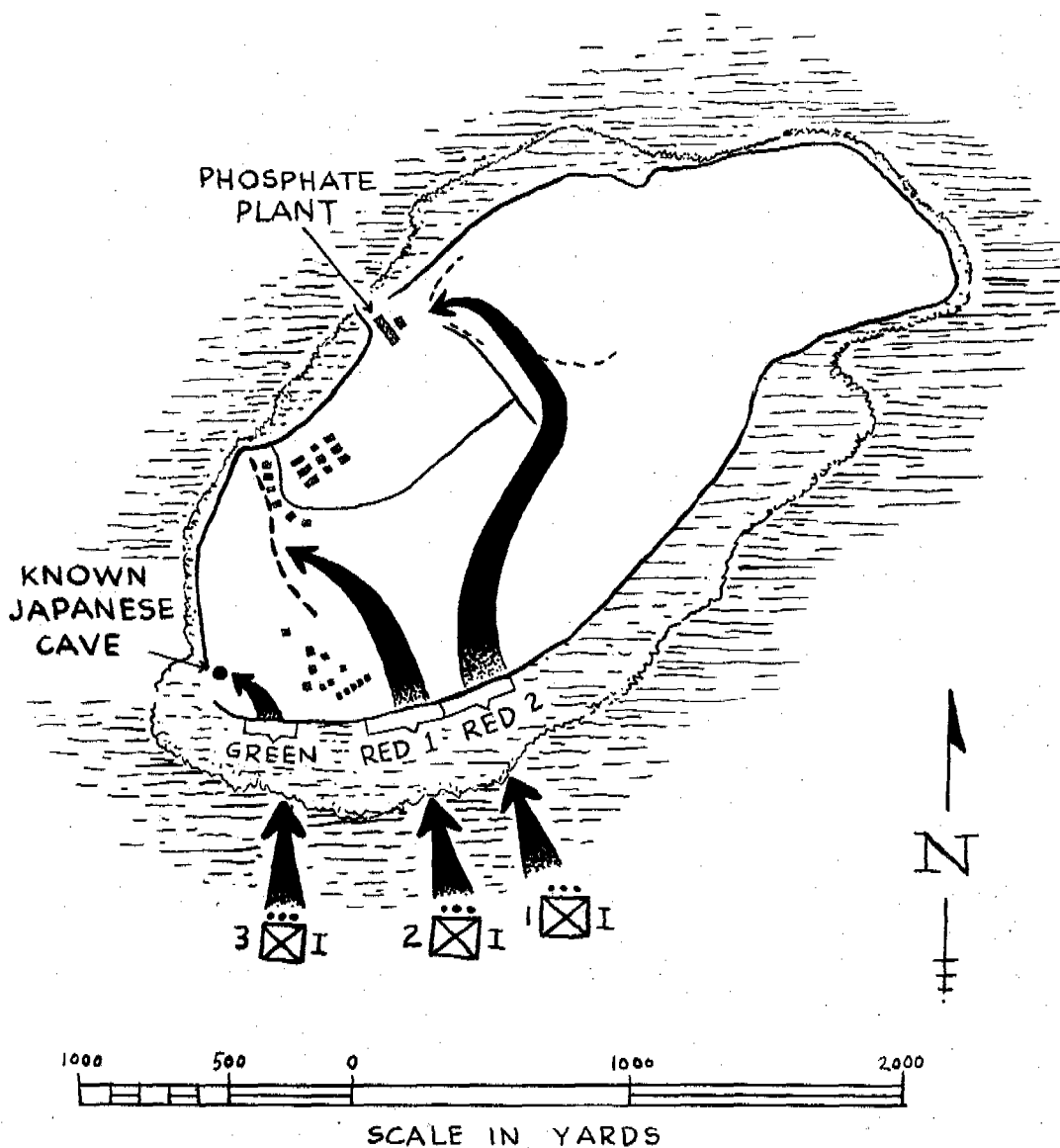
The mission of effecting the reconnaissance was assigned to the 81st Infantry Division, Ground Defense Force in the Southern Palau Islands, by the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area (**). Naval and air support for the landing were to be furnished by naval forces in the Western Carolines area.

As a result of a conference between the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area and the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division, the Assistant Division Commander 81st Infantry Division was designated officer in charge of operations at the objective area. Such troops and equipment as considered necessary for the operation by the Assistant Division Commander were to be furnished by the 81st Infantry Division (***). The movement to and from the objective was to be under control of the Naval. Naval plans contemplated lifting the Army task force at Peleliu and the assignment of fire support ships for the operation from the naval force operating in the Ulithi area. Air support was to be furnished by the Ulithi Atoll Commander.

In order to supplement the existing information regarding Fais Island and prepare plans for air and naval support, the Assistant Division Commander visited Ulithi Atoll on 22 December 1944. In addition to accomplishing the foregoing, the Assistant Division Commander established contact with Ulithi Atoll natives who formerly lived on Fais Island, and made arrangements whereby certain of these natives would accompany a detachment of the 483 AAA (AW) Bn, Ulithi Atoll defense troops, on a mission of

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- (*) Operation Plan 4-44, Hq COMWESCARSUBAREA, 24 December 1944
 - (**) Oral instruction COMWESCARSUBAREA to CG 81 Inf Div
 - (***) Ltr Hq 81 Infantry Division, 22 December 1944,
Subject: Reconnaissance of Fais Island.

FAIS ISLAND



2-78-9

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establishing contact with the Fais Island native population prior to the scheduled landing of the main task force. This plan was calculated to avoid unnecessary harm to the Fais Island natives by instructing them to assemble in an area away from the landing beaches in order to avoid interference with our troops and at the same time procure information from the natives relative to the strength and disposition of enemy forces on Fais Island.

B - FINAL PLANS

The final plans for the Fais Operation provided for the detachment of the 483 AAA (AW) Bn, accompanied by seven Ulithi natives, to depart from Ulithi in time to reach Fais Island on 24 December. A report of the activities of this group was to be furnished to the Task Force Commander prior to the scheduled time of the landing, tentatively set for 0800, 1 January 1945. Elements of the task force proper, departing from Peleliu and Ulithi, were to assemble at a designated rendezvous area off Fais Island by 0600, 1 January 1945. From this area the entire force was to proceed to the southwestern part of the island where the landings were to be effected.

The plan of operations was based on the supposition that Japanese resistance, if any, would be centered around known Japanese defenses on the western side of the island. To overcome this resistance quickly and prevent the withdrawal of enemy forces to the interior of the island, simultaneous landings by three rifle platoons were to be effected on three beaches along the southwestern shore. The platoon on the left was to proceed directly to the area where it was anticipated the enemy would be. The remaining two platoons on the right were to advance to the north and northwest to block an attempt by the enemy to withdraw to the east. Further operations ashore were to depend on developments in the situation. (*)

Naval and air support for the landings were planned on the supposition that the Fais Island natives could be contacted and instructed to assemble in the eastern part of the island. The support was to consist of the prelanding bombardment and strafing of the beaches by ships and planes; thereafter with call missions as directed by the Task Force Commander. In event the natives could not be contacted, naval and air support for the landings were to be dispensed with on order of the Task Force Commander.

(*) FO No. 1, TU 94.5.10, 25 December 1944.

SECRET

C - TASK ORGANIZATION

The Army component of the task force constituted for the Fais Operation consisted of the following units of the 81st Infantry Division (Reinf) (*):

TU 94.5.10, Brig Gen Marcus B. Bell, Commanding.

Task Force Santa (**)

Co I 321 Inf
1 Sec 81mm Mortars, Co M 321 Inf
1 Sqd Prov I&R Plat, 3d Bn 321 Inf
1 Comm Sec, 3d Bn 321 Inf
1 Med Det, 3d Bn 321 Inf
1 Sqd 3d Plat, Co 306 Engr (C) Bn
Det 726 Amph Tractor Bn (6 LVT4As)
Det Co D 776 Amph Tank Bn (3 LVTALs)
Det 481 Amph Truck Co (2 DUKWs)

The Navy component of the task force consisted of the following vessels:

TU 94.5.9, Lt Comdr J. F. McFadden, Commanding (*)

LCI 77 Ulithi
LCI 81 Ulithi
LCI 725 Ulithi
LST 225 Peleliu
DE 256 Peleliu

Naval aircraft assigned to support the operation and furnished by ATCOM Ulithi consisted of 6 TBFs, 4 VMFs, and 1 Dumbo PBX-5A.

II - EMBARKATION; MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE AREA

The Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn, accompanied by the Ulithi natives, embarked on LCI 77 at Ulithi and proceeded to Fais Island,

(*) Operation Order No 4-44, Hq COMWESCARSUBAREA, 24 Dec 1944.

(**) FO No 30, Hq 81 Inf Div, 26 December 1944.

SECRET

arriving there on 24 December. It joined the remainder of the Task Force in the designated rendezvous area at 0515, 1 January 1945.

Task Force Santa was embarked on LST 225 at Peleliu during the morning of 28 December and departed for Fais Island at 1200, same date, escorted by the DE 256. The convoy reached the rendezvous area at 0400, 1 January.

The Task Force Commander and staff departed from Peleliu for Ulithi by air the morning of 30 December. During 30-31 December the Task Force Commander completed coordination of naval and air support. At 1200, 31 December the Task Force Commander and staff boarded the LCI 725. At 2300, LCI 725 and LCI 81 departed Ulithi and arrived in the rendezvous area at 0530, 1 January.

III - NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS

1 January 1945

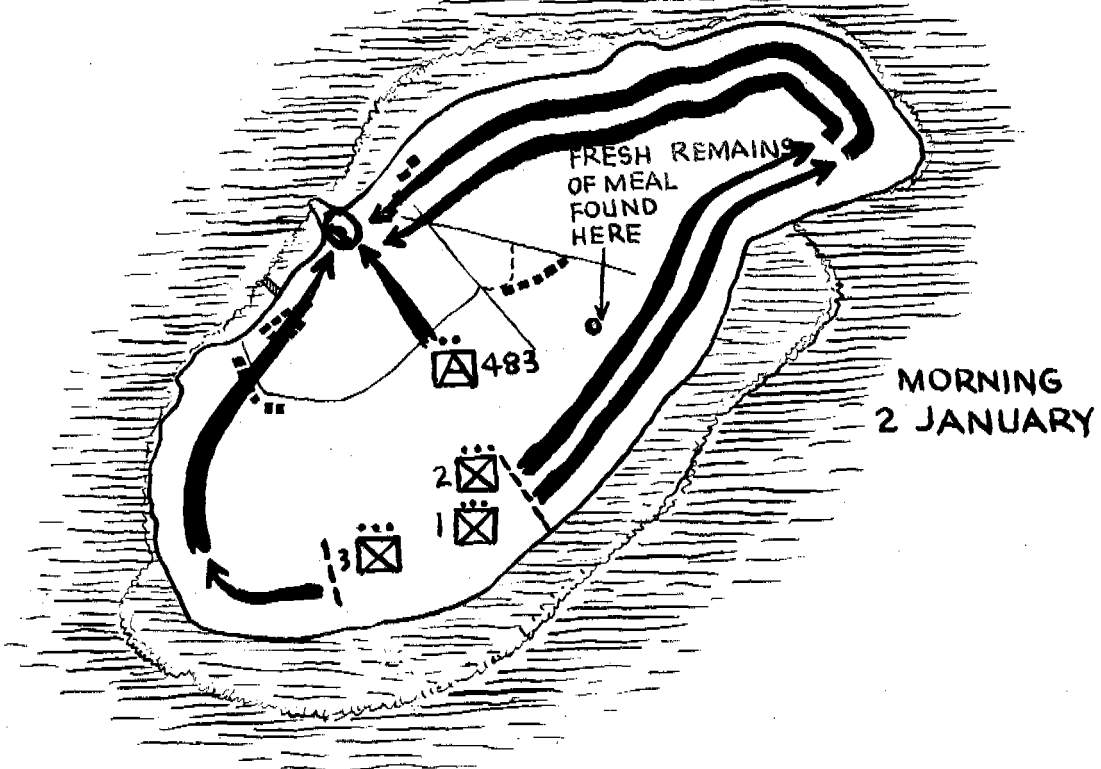
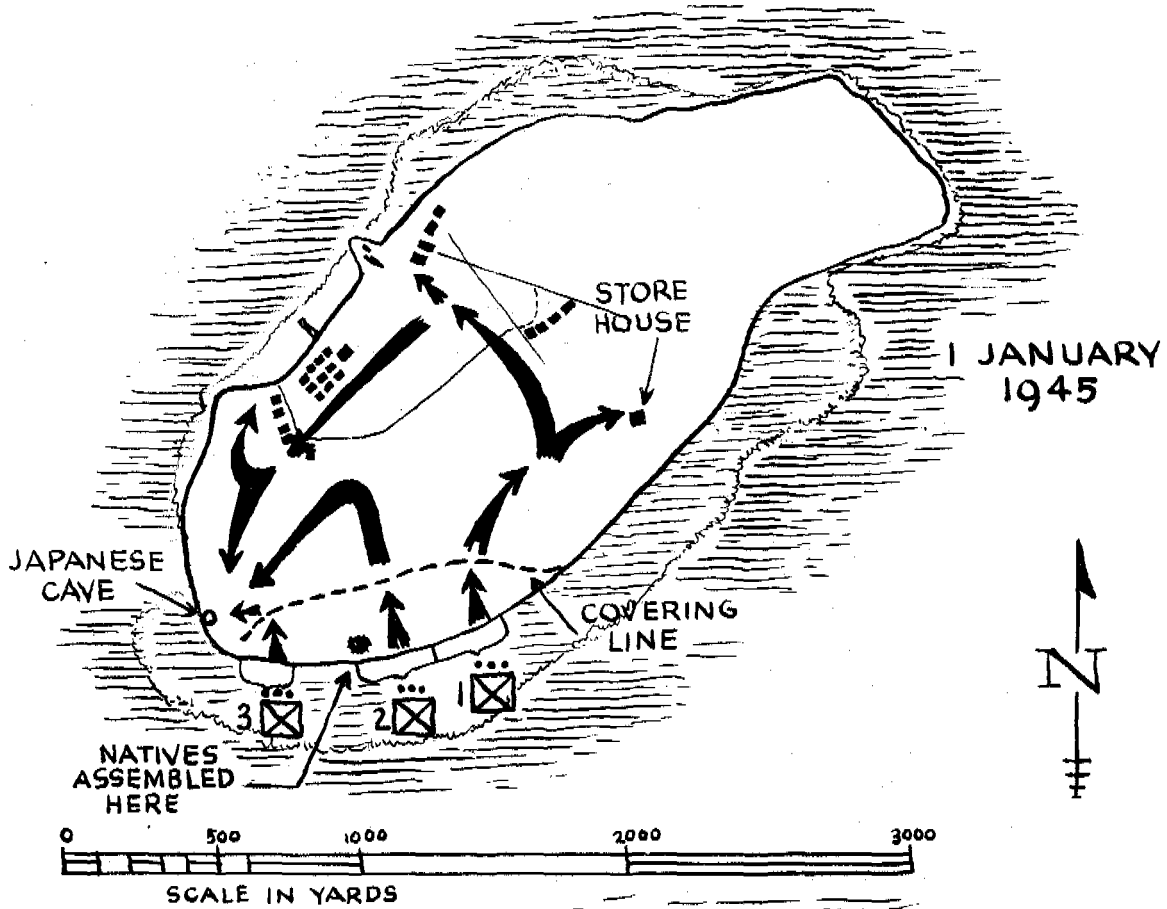
At 0400, 1 January the Task Force Commander received a message from the Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn to the effect that the natives had dispersed and taken cover throughout the island and could not be assembled. As a consequence, naval and air support for the landing was cancelled. The plan of operation was altered to provide for a limited initial advance to a covering line just north of the native village where assault troops would remain until all natives were assembled.

Transfer of all personnel of Task Force Santa to LST 225 was completed by 0800. Two native guides were assigned to each assault platoon and one native guide remained with the Task Force Commander.

The convoy arrived in the transport area off Fais Island at 0830. Debarkation of troops began immediately thereafter. Each assault platoon was embarked in 2 LVTs and supported by 1 Amphibian tank. By 0920 debarkation was completed and landing craft in formation. The line of departure was crossed at 0925. At 0935 landing craft reached the beaches. Troops moved immediately to the designated covering line to await further orders to continue operations based on the original plan. No enemy opposition was encountered.

Shortly after the landing, the native king was contacted in the village and instructions issued to him to assemble all his subjects without delay in the vicinity of the village council house on the beach. At 1015 the king reported that all natives were assembled and accounted for. Orders were then issued for the continuation of the reconnaissance as planned.

FAIS



SECRET

The 3d Platoon Co I moved directly to its objective in the western portion of the island, but found the cave unoccupied. The entire area was searched, but no evidence was found of recent Japanese occupation.

The 1st and 3d Platoons moved northward across the center of the island and then turned west. A complete search was made of the phosphate plant, radio station, post office, and all other buildings, but no enemy was encountered. One cave in the northwest part of the island contained evidence of recent Japanese occupation. A storehouse about 1,000 yards east of the native village also showed signs of recent Japanese occupation. It contained considerable quantities of rice, canned salmon, dried fruit, clothing, and personal effects.

At 1630, the three platoons of Co I joined forces on the western shore of the island. At 1700 the Company was reformed and moved to the beachhead where perimeter defense installations had been prepared by the Det 483 AAA (AW) Bn. Troops spent the night within the perimeter. Defense positions were manned by the Det 483 AAA (AW) Bn and the 2d Platoon Co I.

Between 1500-1800 planes reconnoitered the water area around Fais Island for a distance of 30 miles. There was the possibility that the enemy had escaped from the island by small boat. However, results were negative.

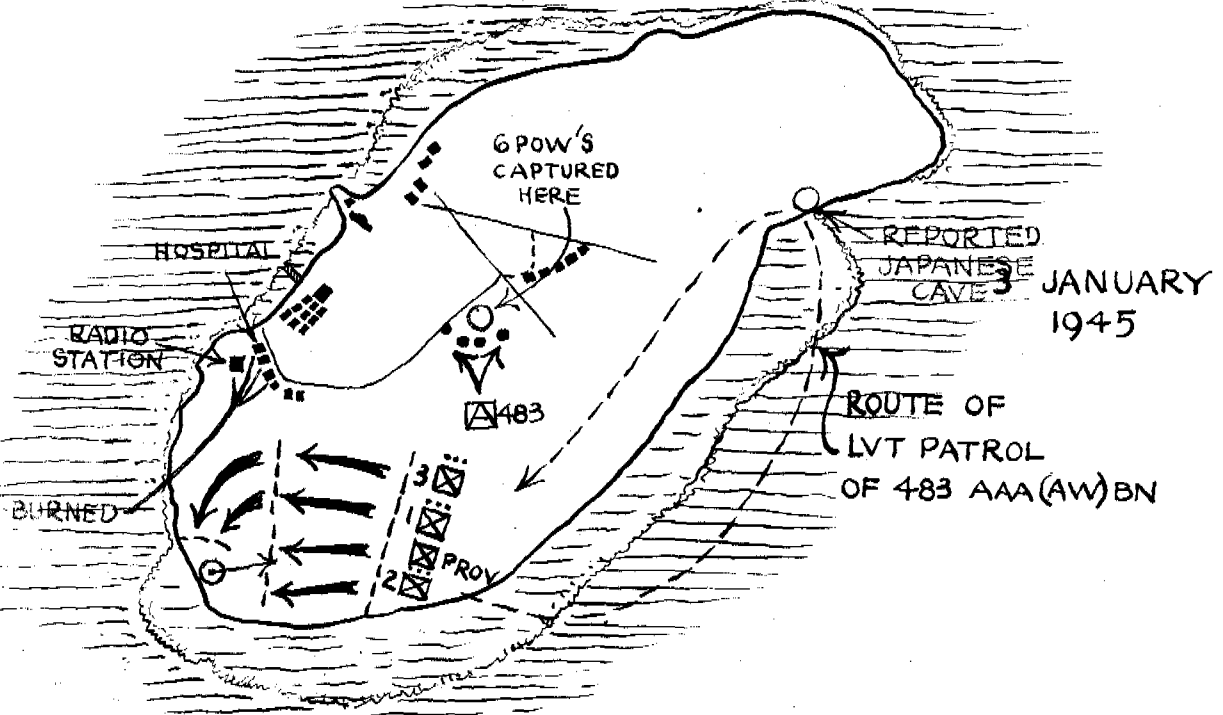
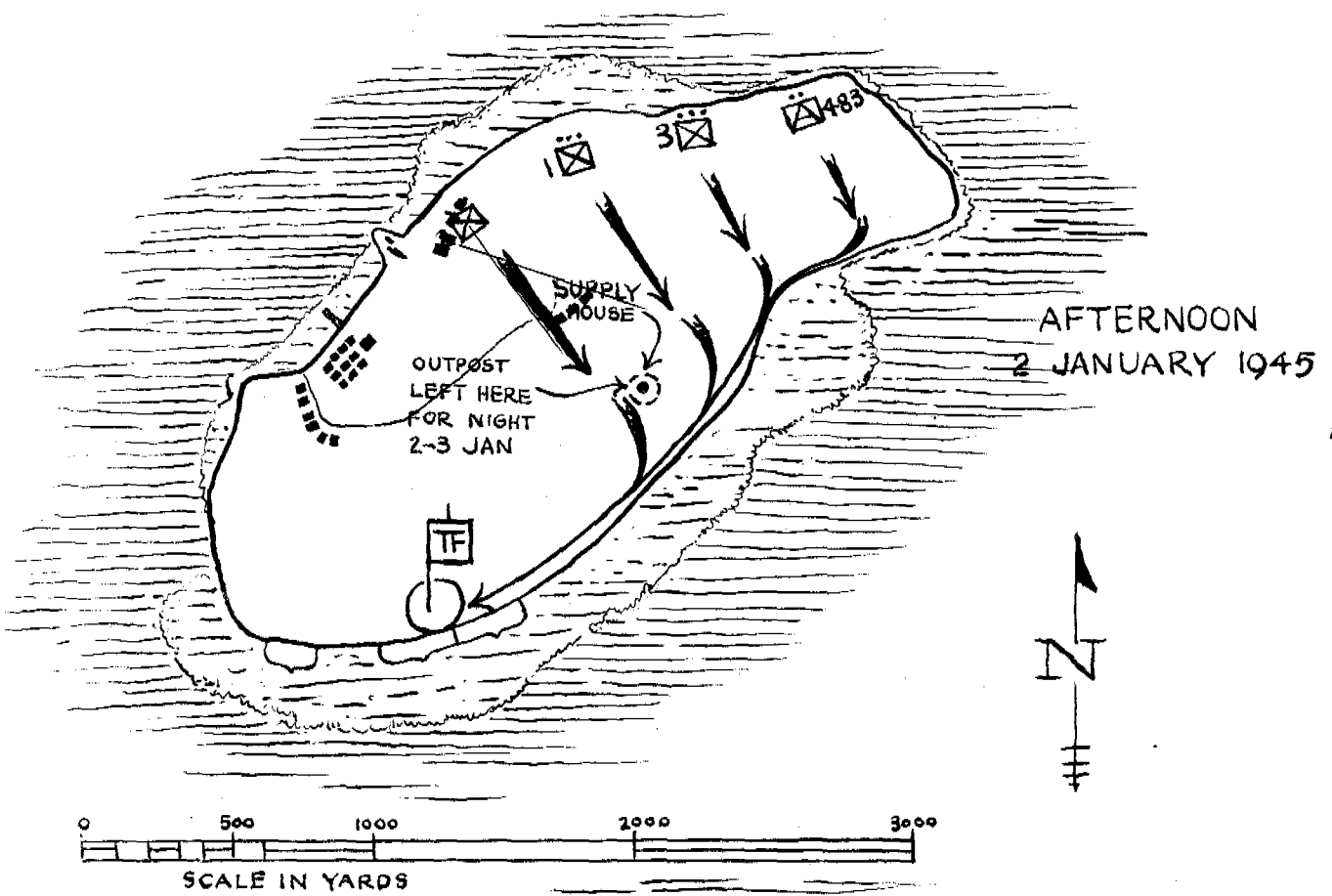
2 January 1945

A thorough reconnaissance of the eastern half of the island was made on 2 January. During the morning the 1st and 2d Platoons of Co I, moving abreast of each other in skirmish line formation, started from the beachhead and advanced around the eastern half of the island to the phosphate plant on the north coast. The 3d Platoon reconnoitered the area it had covered on the previous day and at noon joined the other two platoons at the phosphate plant. The Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn moved to the vicinity of the phosphate plant where it reconnoitered the plant buildings and plant area and maintained observation for enemy movements.

Indications of recent Japanese occupation were found near the supply building which had been searched the previous day. A Japanese alarm clock which was still running and the fresh remains of a coconut and papaya meal were found in the vicinity, but no Japanese encountered.

During the afternoon another search was made of the eastern half of the island. A skirmish line was formed of the three pla-

FAIS



SECRET

toons of Co I and the Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn, which extended eastward from the phosphate plant almost to the northeast tip of the island. On signal this line moved across the island to the southern shore. All possible hiding places in the phosphate diggings were searched, but no Japanese were found. An outpost of 1 officer and 6 enlisted men were left at the supply building to be on the alert for returning Japanese. The remaining troops returned to the beachhead for the night.

Planes reconnoitered for a distance of 30 miles to sea from Fais Island, but again no indication was found of enemy small boats. Throughout the day LCI's maintained surveillance around the entire island.

During the day special reconnaissance was made by the Navy and engineer representatives, radio technicians, and intelligence personnel. Much valuable equipment and records were located. All such movable material was taken to the beachhead for safekeeping.

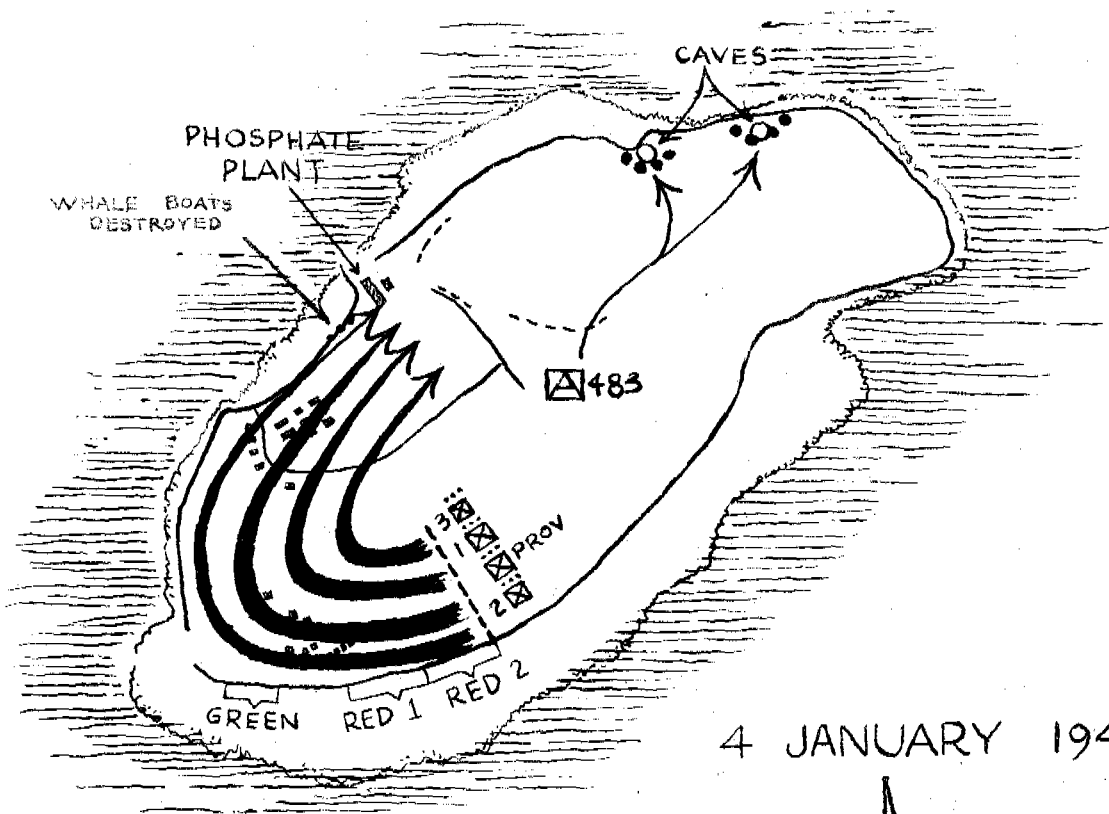
3 January 1945

At 0600, 3 January, a patrol composed of 1 officer, 6 enlisted men of the 483 AAA (AW) Bn and 1 native guide moved by LVT to reconnoiter previously unobserved caves which were reported to be on the southeast shore of the island. The patrol conducted a thorough search, then returned overland to the beachhead. No enemy was found.

At 0830, the three platoons of Co I and the provisional mortar platoon composed of personnel of the mortar section Co M, LVT drivers, and Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn were formed in a skirmish line extending from the beach to about 350 yards inland. The plan was to swing the line completely around the island and search every foot of ground in which the enemy could be hiding. At 0930, machine gun and rifle fire from the known Japanese cave in the southwest part of the island struck the left flank of the advancing skirmish line. Our losses from the initial burst were 3 killed, 2 seriously wounded, and 3 slightly wounded. Troops closed in on the cave in semicircular fashion. Two amphibian tanks were brought into position and they fired at the Japanese strongpoint with their 75mm howitzers. At 1100 our troops assaulted the enemy position and brought all resistance to an end. Eight Japanese were killed. Planes which had been alerted immediately after the Japanese had opened fire were not used during the action.

At approximately 1000, 6 Japanese civilians surrendered to a patrol of the Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn near the center of the

FAIS ISLAND



4 JANUARY 1945



SCALE IN YARDS

SECRET

island. From these prisoners it was learned that the Japanese detachment on Fais Island consisted of 5 naval personnel armed with 1 machine gun and 3 rifles, 4 post office and radio station employees armed with 1 rifle, and 8 phosphate company civilian employees armed with 3 rifles. The prisoners were taken to the scene of the morning's action in order to identify and bury the dead. It was learned that 4 sailors and 4 civilians were killed in the skirmish, thus leaving 1 sailor and 2 civilians still at large. Our troops continued their search for the remaining Japanese, but without result. All troops returned to the beachhead at 1730.

During the afternoon, the Task Force engineers destroyed the radio station after removing all valuable equipment. Two other buildings of potential value to the enemy were burned.

Our seriously wounded and dead were evacuated by LCI at 1300. The dead were later buried on Identical Island, Ulithi.

4 January 1945

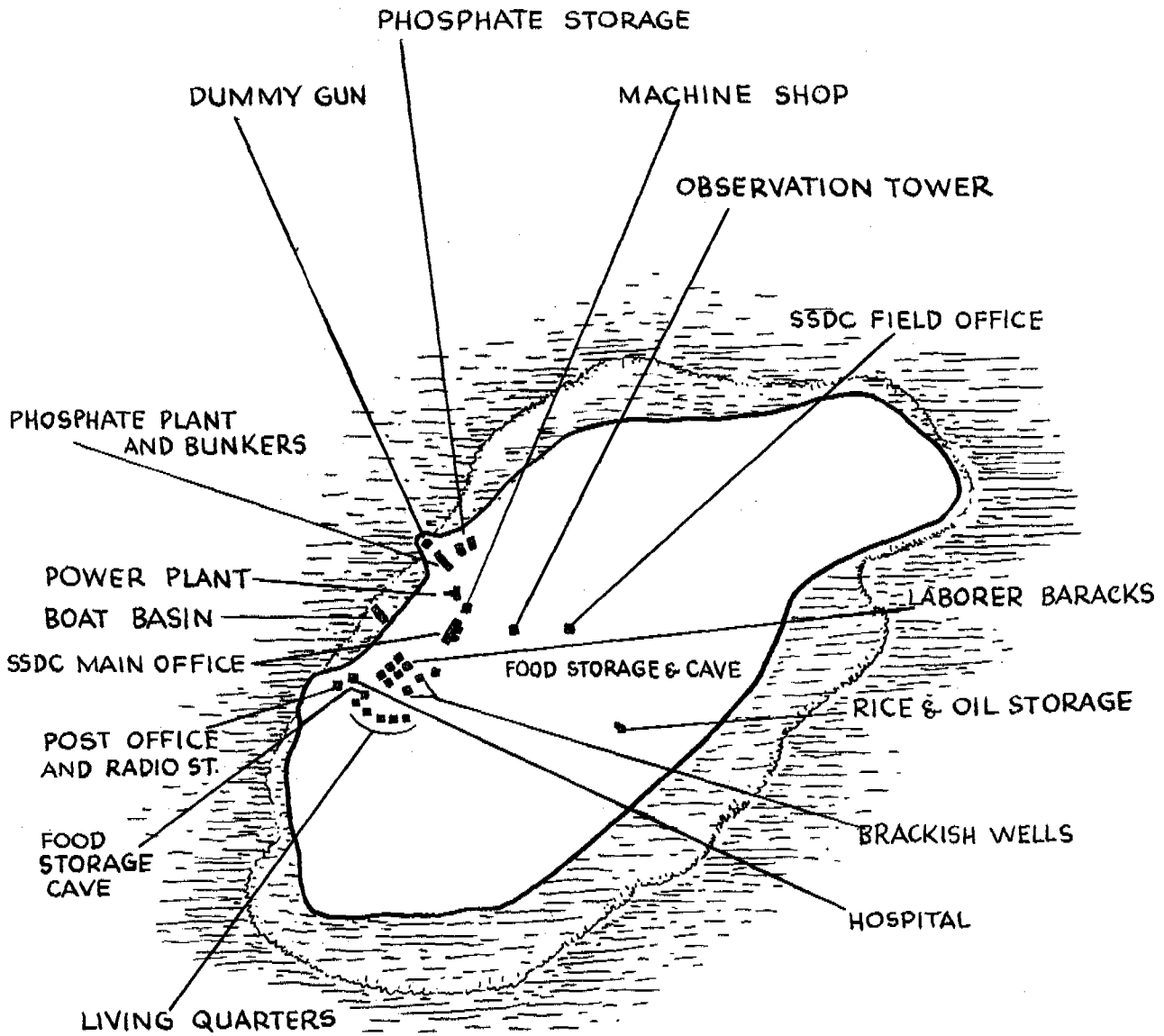
On 4 January another search was made of the western half of the island by troops in skirmish line formation. A patrol of the Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn investigated two possible hiding places in the eastern part of the island, but none of the three reported remaining Japanese was found.

All Japanese boats and buildings of value to the enemy were destroyed. The collection of enemy materiel, equipment, and records was completed and the whole made ready for shipment.

The Flag of the United States of America was raised in a formal ceremony held at 1600, as the Task Force Commander proclaimed Fais Island a possession of the United States in the name of the Commander - in - Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas. Instructions relative to the significance of our seizure of the island was transmitted to the people of Fais through the king and council of chieftains.

IV -- REEMBARKATION; RETURN TO STATION

Reembarkation of troops and equipment commenced at 1730, 4 January and was completed at 2200, same date. The Task Force



SECRET

Commander and staff, Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn, and Ulithi natives were embarked on LCI 725. The remainder of the Task Force and equipment were embarked on LCI 725. Due to the extremely rough sea, 1 LVT4A and 1 LVTAL were lost as a result of damage caused in loading them on the LST. There was no loss to personnel. At 2400, LST 225 departed for Peleliu under escort of DE 256. The remainder of the Naval task unit departed for Ulithi.

The LCI's arrived at Ulithi at 0500, 5 January. The Task Force Commander and staff were disembarked on Identical Island and the Detachment 483 AAA (AW) Bn on Ameliorate Island. After conferring with the Ulithi Atoll Commander and staff, the Task Force Commander and staff departed for Peleliu by air at 1300, 5 January.

LST 225 arrived at Peleliu on 7 January. Personnel and equipment were unloaded prior to dark and returned to their parent units.

V - RESULTS OF OPERATION

Personnel losses to the enemy as a result of the operations by Task Force Santa consisted of 8 killed and 6 prisoners of war. The prisoners were placed in custody of the Ulithi Atoll Commander.

Material damage to the enemy consisted of the loss of a radio station; structures usually found in a small community, such as dwellings, a hospital, post office, police station; a boat basin well equipped with stores, boat repair equipment, and a number of small boats; and the extensive properties of the South Seas Development Corporation, including 40,000 tons of refined phosphate ore.

All salvable radio equipment was removed from the radio station prior to its destruction and later placed in the custody of the Ulithi Atoll Commander. Items of intelligence value, such as records belonging to the radio station, post office, and South Seas Development Corporation, were forwarded to JICPOA.

A survey was made of the vast amount of supplies and equipment found and left on the island. Included were food and fuel stores, electrical and mechanical equipment, tools, construction materials, and a large number of miscellaneous items. Results of the survey were furnished to the Commander Western Carolines Sub Area.

SECRET

VI - INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

According to the statements of prisoners of war, Fais Island was unoccupied by Japanese military personnel prior to 16 July 1944. On that date, 5 Japanese sailors were brought to the island for the purpose of observing and reporting the movements of our Naval forces in the area. In this they were assisted by the 12 Japanese civilians who remained on the island after the departure of the remainder of the Japanese civilian population during February - June 1944. The Japanese sailors attempted to impart basic military training to the civilians and conducted some instruction in rifle marksmanship.

No fixed military defenses were found on Fais Island. Two caves were used as hiding places by the Japanese, and one of these was used as a strong point by the group of 8 Japanese killed on 3 January. Two dummy coastal guns were found in addition to an observation tower. Shelters were non-existent on the island prior to the first shelling of it by a U. S. submarine in 1943. Following this shelling, dugout shelters were constructed under the houses in the residential area along the road leading from the phosphate plant to the hospital.

Armament present on the island included 8 rifles, 1 light machine gun caliber 7.7 mm, 1 signal pistol, and 15 old and in-operative training rifles.

Communication facilities included a radio transmitter and receiver. The transmitter did not have sufficient power to communicate with Tokyo, but maintained daily contact with Yap. On 17 July 1944 the Fais radio station was bombed by U. S. planes. Subsequent to that date transmissions to Yap were impossible due to the damage caused by the bombing. However, the receiver continued in operation until 24 December 1944. Tokyo, Australia, and Yap radio stations were clearly heard. An entry in the Fais radio log showed that on 10 June 1944 Fais radioed Yap asking when troops would be sent for the defense of Fais Island. There was no reply.

Prisoner of war statements revealed that little damage had been caused by the shellings of U. S. submarines during May and November 1943 and March 1944. An attack by U. S. planes in April 1944 caused widespread damage which necessitated abandonment of operations at the phosphate plant.

Commencing in February 1944, the Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, and native employees of the South Seas Development Corporation and their families began leaving Fais Island for Yap. In all, approximately 600 - 700 departed during February - June 1944.

SECRET

VII - CIVIL AFFAIRS

Operations

The Fais Island natives were confined to the beach area in the vicinity of the native village throughout our operations. They spent the nights within the defense perimeter established by our troops. This was done in order to avoid harm to the natives, which might result from mistaking them for Japanese.

The natives were cooperative at all times. The king in particular rendered valuable service as advisor to the Task Force Commander.

Historical Background

Fais Island is inhabited by approximately 280 natives who are the descendents of the first people to settle on the island. They are Micronesians, but many show an admixture of Spanish and Mongolian blood. They have been Christians for many years.

The natives keep themselves relatively clean, according to the standards of Western Caroline Island natives. They are healthy and sturdily built, but lazy by inclination. There was no evidence of yaws or malaria among them. Although they were not closely examined, there was no readily apparent evidence of venereal disease or tuberculosis. Smallpox and dysentery have existed on the island. Older people in general appear to be undernourished. The natives are of the opinion that for ordinary illnesses the native remedies are effective. Medicines for internal use are concocted of the herbs indigenous to the island. During the period of convalescence, massages are given the sick to aid in their complete recovery. From statements of the natives, there has been only one outbreak of disease of epidemic proportions. This occurred in 1921 and caused the death of 72 people.

Fais Island is self sufficient in food production and can support at least twice its present population. Coconut water is used for drinking and slightly brackish well water for cooking purposes. Coconuts are plentiful and of good quality. The fertile soil produces taro, three or four kinds of potatoes, bananas, papayas, a vegetable similar in appearance to a watermelon, a small native pumpkin, breadfruit, and a few Mandarin oranges. In addition to the products of the soil, the natives have pigs, chickens, and fish which they catch off the reef.

Typhoons rarely strike Fais Island with sufficient force to disrupt the normal life of the natives. One instance within the

SECRET

memory of the present population occurred about 40 years ago, when so many of the coconut trees were destroyed that 20% of the population of 500 had to leave for Ulithi and Yap in order that those remaining would have sufficient food on which to live.

The entire native population is divided in twelve tribes, each of which is ruled by a tribal chieftain. The tribal chieftains derive their powers from a king whose rule is absolute. The king deals with his people through his council of chieftains.

The attitude of the Fais Island natives is peaceful, friendly, and cooperative. They dislike the Japanese, since the Japanese did not abide by the agreement entered into in regard to the rental of the island and the removal of the phosphate ore. The Japanese cheated the natives of the rental fee and unnecessarily destroyed many coconut trees in their phosphate digging operations. The natives appear to like the Americans and give indications that they are and will remain loyal to the United States.



SUPPLEMENTARY

2-78-9

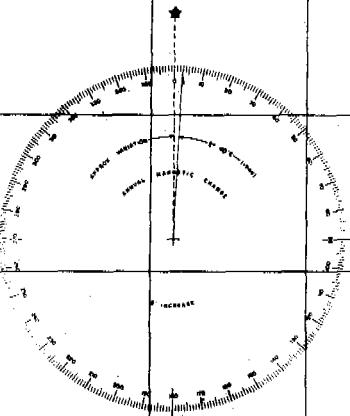
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3 CASE TYPE RADIO TOWERS

NGESEBUS I.
BEACH CRIMSON

KONGAURU I.

NGABAD I.



PELELIU I.

BEACH WHITE 1

BEACH WHITE 2

BEACH ORANGE 1

BEACH ORANGE 2

BEACH PURPLE

UNNAMED ISLAND

BEACH SCARLET 3

UNNAMED ISLAND

BEACH SCARLET 2

BEACH SCARLET 1

SPECIAL AIR AND GUNNERY TARGET MAP

SHEET 27 OF 28 SHEETS SCALE 1:50,000

DATE: 11/25/54

CLASSIFICATION: SECRET

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SUPPLEMENTARY

A - FINAL COMBAT ACTION IN THE WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS

The final combat action in the Western Caroline Islands in which elements of the 81st Infantry Division were engaged, occurred on Peleliu. Shortly after 0200, 18 January 1945, OPs reported the positive identification of Japanese landing craft in the vicinity of Purple and White Beaches, and the landing of an unknown number of Japanese troops in those areas. Elements of RCT 321 were alerted immediately. The RCT CO and staff reported to the Joint Operations Center to direct operations from that Command Post.

At 0400 the 316 FA Bn dispatched a force of 50 men to occupy positions in the Purple Beach sector, where personnel manning a shore OP were driven from their positions by Japanese fire. At 0500 this force was augmented by an additional 75 men of the 726 Amph Tractor Bn. At 0510 all elements of RCT 321 were ready for combat and standing by.

Based on the information that an unknown number of Japanese had made landings in the vicinity of Purple and White Beaches, the CO RCT 321 assigned sectors to units under his command and directed that a systematic search be made of these sectors to eliminate the entire Japanese landing force. The 323d Inf and 12 AAA Bn (Marine) was placed under the operational control of CO RCT 321.

The search began at 0700, 18 January. The 1st Bn 321 Inf established contact with the enemy in the vicinity of White Beaches 1 and 2, and at 1040 reported the destruction of all Japanese within its sector. The battalion suffered several casualties from Japanese grenades.

The 3d Bn 321 Inf completed a search of the Amber Beach area, and at 1330 reported its sector free of the enemy. The battalion captured two prisoners and killed all other Japanese encountered.

At 1015, the 3d Bn 323 Inf moved northward from the Peleliu airfield and searched the Umurbrogal Mt area as far north as the 321 Inf Trail, without contacting the enemy.

The I & R Platoon 321 Inf searched the area north of Purple Beach, with negative results.

At 0835, the combined 316 FA Bn and 726 Amph Tractor Bn force contacted the enemy to the south of Purple Beach. The enemy had

SECRET

occupied a fortified position in TX 126 S and held up the advance temporarily. One assault platoon of the 1st Bn 321 Inf, equipped with flamethrowers and demolitions, was sent to reinforce the group and assisted in overcoming the enemy. A search of the entire southern part of the island was completed by 1900.

Prior to darkness motorized patrols were organized to operate throughout the night along the East and West Roads. All defensive positions were reinforced against possible Japanese attack. No activity was reported during the hours of darkness.

Seventy-one Japanese were killed and 2 prisoners of war taken during the day. Information gathered from the prisoners and from a captured field order indicated that the landing party was assigned the mission of "destruction of the aircraft forces, ammunition dumps, and sub-area staff" on Peleliu Island.

B - STATISTICS

Casualties suffered by the 81st Infantry Division (Reinforced) as a result of operations at Ulithi and other Western Caroline Islands, except Angaur, Peleliu and the islands immediately to the north thereof, were as follows:

	BATTLE		NON-BATTLE			TOTAL
	Wounded	Injured	Disease	Injured	Battle Fatigue	
Received from units	4	1	2	2(*)	0	9
Returned to duty	2	1	2	1	0	6
Died	0	0	0	1(**)	0	1
Killed in action	3(***)	0	0	0	0	3
Evacuated	2	0	0	0	0	2
Remaining in Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	0

(*) 1 at Ulithi; 1 at Fais

(**) Ulithi

(***) Fais

Casualties suffered by the 81st Infantry Division (Reinforced) as a result of all operations in the Western Caroline Islands were as follows:

SECRET

	BATTLE		NON-BATTLE		TOTAL	
	Wounded	Injured	Disease	Injured	Battle Fatigue	
Received from units	1960	407	1863	359	423	5012
Returned to duty	826	285	1332	230	288	2961
Died	145	6	3	6	0	160
Killed in action	398	0	0	0	0	398
Evacuated	922	100	232	80	115	1449
Remaining in Hospital	67	16	296	43	20	442
Missing in action	0	0	0	0	0	4

C - MOVEMENT FROM PALAU ISLANDS TO NEW CALEDONIA

On 22 November 1944 orders were issued which directed the departure of the 81st Infantry Division from the Palau Islands for a rehabilitation area in Guadalcanal (*). The destination was subsequently changed to New Caledonia (**).

Movement to New Caledonia began in December 1944. On 6 December RCT 322 was relieved from its ground defense mission on Angaur Island, as the 1st and 2d Bns, 322 Inf departed from Angaur on that date (***). The remainder of the 322 Inf departed on 27 December.

On Peleliu, the responsibility for the ground defense passed from the Commanding General 81st Infantry Division to the Island Commander at 1800, 13 January 1945. Operational control over RCT 321, which was composed of the 321 Inf, 316 FA Bn, Co A 306 Engr (C) Bn, and Co D 710 Tank Bn, was given to the Peleliu Island Commander until such time as RCT 321 could be relieved from its ground defense mission by the 111th Infantry Regiment which was to become part of the Peleliu Garrison Force (****)

Division Troops departed from Peleliu during the early part of January 1945. The 81st Infantry Division Command Post on Peleliu was closed at 0800, 14 January, as the Commanding General departed for New Caledonia. The 1st Bn 323 Inf departed on 7 January; the remainder of the 323 Inf on 20 January. RCT 321 was relieved by the 111th Inf on 6 February and departed on 8 February.

(*) U S Naval Dispatch from CINCPOA to COMFWDAREA, 221003, November 1944; Serial AD 00124, COMWESCARSUBAREA, 24 November 1944.

(**) U S Naval Dispatch from CINCPOA to COMFWDAREA, 290646 November 1944

(***) FO No 28, Hq 81 Inf Div, 27 November 1944.

(****) FO No 1, Hq 81 Inf Div, 11 January 1945.

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CO 306th Med Bn	1
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