

Map Room Files.

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BOX 170.

6# A-16/3 WARFARE -- SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA: March, 1942 - February, 1944.

Regraded Unclassified

A16/61P

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 28, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY:

Dear Grace,

If the President is looking for something to read I am sure that he will find the enclosed account of the "Battle of Guadalcanal" interesting reading. If he is pressed for time, there is no need for him to read the enclosed report at this time.

WILSON BROWN.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

February 1, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The President.

The following article under the title "Australia and New Zealand" appears in the confidential O.N.I. Weekly, issue of January 26, 1944:

"Governmental leaders of Australia and New Zealand, meeting in Canberra, this week concluded a pact for future exchange of information and cooperative action in South Pacific problems. The two Governments agreed in general to a continuous means of consultation, probably through a permanent secretariat, for joint action in matters of common concern, such as control of territories, native welfare and communications. The conferees, headed by Prime Minister John Curtin of Australia and Prime Minister Peter Fraser of New Zealand, also proposed the forming of a South Seas Regional Commission, made up of representatives from the two Dominions, Great Britain, France and the United States, to consider post-war development in the islands adjacent to Australia and New Zealand.

"Australia and New Zealand will jointly submit their views on these matters to the proposed British Empire Prime Ministers' conference, which is expected subsequently to lay the program before all the United Nations.

"Press dispatches said that a program calling for future control by Australia and New Zealand of islands not hitherto under their jurisdiction was presented by the Australian government to the conference at Canberra. The Australian press generally insists that it is implicit in Australia's suggestions that there should be unyielding sovereignty for the British Commonwealth of Nations over the territories within the natural defense zones of Australia and New Zealand. This presumably refers to the Solomon Islands, the Bismarcks and New Guinea, and possibly to other islands to the north and east of Australia."

Very respectfully,

W. B.
WILSON BROWN.

A16/SW/Vac

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Admiral Brown
to file*

January 25, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

*File
WB*

ADMIRAL LEAHY

Please take up with the Joint Staff the following question and let me have an informal report.

The New Zealand Minister, Mr. Nash, came to me the other day and said that it is impossible for New Zealand to maintain two full Divisions, one in Italy and the other in the Solomons. I gather it is a question of replacements.

My first thought is that the request for the elimination of one Division should be acceded to, and my second thought is that it should be the Division in Italy because the maintenance of that Division from a base in New Zealand means a tremendous amount of transportation in both directions. It might be possible to keep the Italian Division in Italy certainly until Rome is in our hands -- say April first -- but this is a matter which concerns the Combined Staffs.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

-2-

I should like to have a slant on it which I shall communicate to Mr. Churchill.

There are a number of other questions which the Joint Staff or the Combined Staffs here could let me have a thought on.

F. D. R.

P.S. Please return Mr. Nash's letter with your reply.

SECRET

Australia

F. J. M. ✓

June 11, 1943

My dear Evatt:

I am enclosing a note which will formally acknowledge your several communications to me about aircraft.

I do hope you have a successful visit in England and I shall look forward to seeing you upon your return.

I am very pleased to learn of the fine progress that Mrs. Evatt is making.

Ever so cordially yours,

encl.

FDR

Dr. H.V. Evatt,
Australian Legation,
Washington, D.C.

SECRET

SECRET
1946 JUN 11 1943

June 11, 1943

My dear Dr. Evatt:

I am now prepared to reply to Mr. Curtin's request, as submitted by you, for tactical aircraft.

This government, under lend-lease arrangements, is prepared to give Australia approximately 475 planes prior to the end of 1944. This is in addition to any previous commitments made by us to your government. Some of these planes, in all probability dive bombers and fighters, will be sent at once.

No commitment can be made at this time as to the type of the balance of the planes that are to be delivered to you but that will be canvassed immediately.

It is impossible, furthermore, at this time, to give the exact dates when the planes can be delivered to you but you can be sure that this will be done as early as the strategic requirements permit.

Sincerely yours,

FDR

Dr. H.V. Evatt,
Australian Legation,
Washington, D.C.

CC-General H.H. Arnold, AAF

SECRET

Regraded Unclassified

14B
SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

File
Confidential

May 25, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Dr. Evatt's request for the R.A.A.F.

Since your brief conversation with me yesterday evening on the above subject I have gone into the matter again and as a result submit a new draft for a reply by you to Dr. Evatt. It is attached.

It is my opinion that to meet Dr. Evatt's request at this time we must do definite harm to our program in some direction. I wish you would consider these aspects of his request:

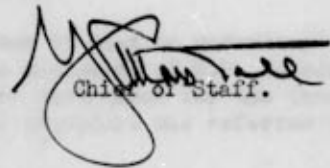
We agreed a few weeks ago to a material increase in the air forces to the Southwest Pacific and those reinforcements are now en route or, in the case of the heavy bombers, have already arrived.

These additional planes proposed by Dr. Evatt amount to approximately a 42% increase in the total air forces, actually 64% of the present U.S. air force under MacArthur.

The British Chiefs of Staff have discussed this with the representative of the R.A.A.F. in Washington and they do not agree with Dr. Evatt's proposal.

It is not a small matter but a very large one. Frankly, he has pounded us with propoganda and personal pressures. We will be seriously hurt if we submit to his demands.

If the attached letter does not meet your views I am prepared to redraft it accordingly.


Chief of Staff.

Incl.

SECRET

SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Not sent

Dear Dr. Evatt:

Since receipt of your letter of May 20th I have had the plane situation carefully resurveyed, and in addition there has been a consideration of the over-all plane program by the Combined Chiefs of Staff now in session here. I have also discussed the matter in some detail with General Marshall and General McNarney - who is acting for General Arnold in the latter's absence. It has been my strong desire to meet the request of the Australian Government if it appeared practicable to do so without seriously interfering with the general program.

The anticipated production of aircraft indicates at the present time that it probably will not be possible to alter existing arrangements other than by the reduction of agreed upon commitments in other theaters. Our 1943 production schedule will not, it is believed, exceed existing commitments. If it should I shall see that the Australian Government directly benefits by the increase. But under existing circumstances it does not appear the part of wisdom to promise you an increase which quite evidently can only be obtained by the reduction of other commitments. This course involves either overruling the decisions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff or so cutting into our U.S. training program as to reduce the output of trained combat crews. The planes for this last purpose are the seed corn for our Air program.

In the early days of U.S. participation in the war we greatly hampered the development of our Air Forces by drawing on the planes needed for the training of the personnel. We also hampered our war effort by sending out partially trained crews and by cutting into the commitments for reserves to be established in the various theaters, leaving commanders without adequate planes to keep their units on a fully operative basis. I do not feel that we should renew such destructive procedure, which must be the case were I to agree to meet your requests at this particular time.

In considering this matter it must be understood that we are perfectly willing to turn over the equipment of U.S. squadrons in the Southwest Pacific to the Australian Government for the increase of its national air force. However, this procedure was referred to General MacArthur and he is opposed to it.

SECRET

Under the circumstances I suggest that the Australian Government submit a detailed program outlining their proposed expansion of the R.A.A.F. for 1944, in September next, which will be just prior to the resurvey of allocations in the light of the events of the summer both as to fighting and production. I shall personally see that the proposals of the Australian Government are given the most careful consideration, with a view to the early increase of the R.A.A.F.

Sincerely yours,

The Right Honourable
Dr. H.V. Evatt, K.C., M.P.
The Australian Legation,
3117 Woodland Drive, N.W.,
Washington, D.C.

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

May 23, 1943.

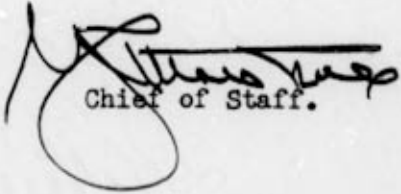
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Aircraft for the Royal
Australian Air Force.

Dr. Evatt's letter of May 20th, attached, is a restatement of the request contained in his letter to you dated April 22nd, which was answered by your letter of May 5th.

The Australian government desires a fixed agreement for the development of the Royal Australian Air Force to 71 squadrons, and proposes an expansion of nine additional squadrons over the program agreed upon for 1943 and eighteen additional squadrons by July 1944. Thorough investigation indicates that current allocations to the Royal Australian Air Force cannot be increased without serious disruption of existing commitments.

It is recommended that a letter be dispatched to Dr. Evatt substantially in the form of the draft herewith submitted. I would interpose no objection to the substitution of Australian for American squadrons now in the Southwest Pacific, but General MacArthur does not deem this advisable.


Chief of Staff.

D R A F T

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Dr. Evatt:

I wish very much that I could accede to the request in your letter of May 20th, wherein you suggest that additional aircraft be provided to permit an early accomplishment of the Royal Australian Air Force Program.

The production program of our aircraft industry has been thoroughly restudied, and it is not now possible to alter existing arrangements, which were described in my letter of May 5th. Our 1943 aircraft production schedule will not exceed existing commitments, and it is, therefore, not practicable to increase the allocation of aircraft to the Royal Australian Air Force to exceed the 634 tactical aircraft which was agreed upon by the Combined Chiefs of Staff on January 21 last.

I suggest that the Australian Government submit a detailed program outlining their proposed expansion of the Royal Australian Air Force during 1944. When the allocation of aircraft for 1944 is considered, you may be sure that the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff will give sympathetic consideration to the requirements of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Sincerely yours,

Regraded Unclassified

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET

May 21, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL MARSHALL:

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY
FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F.D.R.



At the
AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 20th, 1943

Dear Mr. President,

Following upon Mr. Churchill's endorsement at the Pacific War Council of Mr. Curtin's proposal for equipping the additional squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force and your most helpful observations, I beg to request your own endorsement of the plan before the present conferences terminate. The total aircraft (unit equipment) involved numbers 474 and it was part of the alternative proposal which I submitted to you that deliveries should be spread over a sufficient time to cover the expanding personnel of the Royal Australian Air Force.

All this is respectfully submitted.

Yours sincerely,

The Honourable Franklin Delano Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

ADDRESS OFFICIAL
THE SECRET
WASHINGTON

PH/SWP

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

2-27-43

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The State Department advises that Sir Owen Dixon will not leave for about ten days. If the time of departure should be moved up they will notify us.

E.M.W.
E.M.W.

WASHINGTON
THE WHITE HOUSE

ADDRESS OF
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 26, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a note dated February 25th from the Australian Minister, together with the original copy of a message addressed to the President by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honorable John Curtin.

It will be noted that the Australian Minister would be grateful if the President could receive him prior to his departure for Australia.

Will you be good enough to let me know when it will be agreeable to the President to receive Sir Owen Dixon?

G. T. Summerlin
George T. Summerlin

Enclosure:
Copy of note dated February 25,
1943 from the Minister of Australia,
with original enclosure.

FOR DEFENSE



BUY
UNITED
STATES
SAVINGS
BONDS
AND STAMPS



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

25th February, 1943

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith, for favour of transmission to the President, a message addressed to the President by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable John Curtin.

I should be grateful if the President could grant me an interview in view of my visit to Australia for purposes of consultation with my Government.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

OWEN DIXON

The Honourable

Cordell Hull,

Secretary of State of the United States,

Washington, D. C.



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
February 24th, 1943

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been requested by the Prime Minister of Australia, The Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

" In the conviction that personal collaboration is the best form of consultation for the prosecution of our common war effort, I announced in Parliament today that Dr. Evatt would shortly proceed abroad to visit the United States and, later on, the United Kingdom. Present intentions are that he will leave Australia some time in March. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to accept your kind invitation and visit you in person, but with the war at its present critical stage demanding the closest attention of the Chief Executive Officer in all theatres, I feel it my duty to remain at present in Australia.

A year ago Dr. Evatt represented me and the Commonwealth Government in what proved to be a most valuable mission on behalf of Australia, and I had no hesitation in deciding that in view of the personal contacts he had already made, and the foundations already laid, no one could better represent Australia at the present juncture than my Minister for External Affairs.

I feel confident that you will all afford him as heretofore the same confidence and opportunity of personal collaboration.

2.

I propose that Sir Owen Dixon should return to Australia for a short visit for the purposes of consultation and exchange of views. In his absence, subject to your convenience, Dr. Evatt will represent Australia in the United States, and will occupy a seat on the Pacific War Council.

It is my earnest hope and intention to visit you at a later date and to carry to you personally my salutations and respects."

*Evatt
701.4711*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

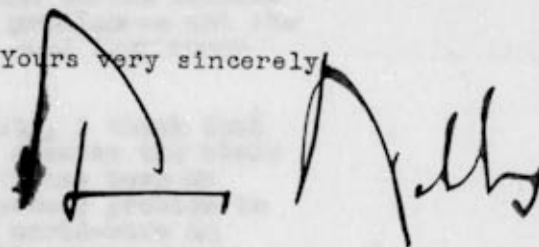
March 2, 1943

My dear Mr. Forster:

The President asked me to let you have for his files the attached copy of the letter which he has addressed today to the Prime Minister of Australia and which I am handing to the Australian Minister who will take it with him when he returns to Australia in the near future.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. A. [unclear]', written over the typed name 'Yours very sincerely'.

Enclosure.

Rudolph Forster, Esq.,
The White House.

CONFIDENTIAL
THE JUDGES AND MEMBERS OF THE
March 2, 1943

Dear Mr. Curtin:

I shall, of course, be delighted to see my old friend, Mr. Svatt, when he comes here on his way to London, and he will take the place of Sir Owen on the Pacific War Council.

May I tell you how very happy I have been in having Sir Owen Dixon as your Minister, and we count on his return after his visit to Australia.

When he sees you he will tell you something of my thought in having an exploratory meeting of the United Nations to talk over the food problem -- not the relief problem -- the more long range subject.

Very confidentially, I think that London is inclined to discuss the whole of world economics. It has been my thought that an exploratory problem in those foods which are world-wide in their market, especially those foods of which there are exportable surpluses, might be a good preliminary to a more

1942

general later conference. There will
be more about this very soon.

With my warm regards,

Very sincerely yours,

The Right Honorable
John Curtin, M.P.,
Prime Minister of Australia.

adm file

March 1, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. SUMNER WELLES

I am sending you herewith a suggested message to Mr. Curtin which Sir Owen Dixon can take to him. Will you go over it and put it into proper form?

Dear Mr. Curtin:-

I shall, of course, be delighted to see my old friend, Dr. Ewart when he comes here on his way to London, and he will take the place of Sir Owen on the Pacific War Council.

May I tell you how very happy I have been in having Sir Owen Dixon as your Minister, and we count on his return after his visit to Australia.

When he sees you he will tell you something of my thought in having an exploratory meeting of the United Nations to talk over the food problem -- not the relief problem -- the more long range subject.

Very confidentially, I think that London is inclined to discuss the whole of world economics. It has been my thought that an exploratory problem in those foods which are world-wide in their market, especially those foods of which there are exportable surpluses, might be a good preliminary to a more general later conference. There will be more about this very soon.

With my warm regards,

Very sincerely yours,

F. D. R.

CONFIDENTIAL

SW PAC

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

February 11, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The following extract from a personal letter from Major General J. Lawton Collins, commanding the 25th Division, which we withdrew from Hawaii and sent to Guadalcanal, may be of interest to you. It is dated January 26th.

General Collins is one of our youngest Division commanders and one of the brilliant officers in our Army.

"We have just completed successfully our second major operation against the Japanese. In these two engagements we completely turned the south flank of the Japanese positions, practically destroyed one entire regiment and finally captured their principal base. During the period January 10-25th we have killed 2044 known dead, captured 106 prisoners and many field pieces, ammunition and other stores. We have lost 158 killed or missing in action, so have taken toll at better than twelve to one. The Japanese are definitely on the run and the troops of the Corps should shortly be able to clear the Island.

"The tactical doctrines taught at Benning and other service schools have proven eminently sound. Maneuver is still the essence of attack whether in open country or in jungle warfare. In our first engagement one regiment executed a remarkable march through the heaviest-type jungle, while a battalion held the Japanese attention frontally. This march caught the Japanese by surprise and pocketed the major part of their 124th Infantry. At the same time my other front-line regiment fought an open-warfare battle that reminded me of some of the Civil War campaigns. As a sample, the final charge that ended three days severe fighting was led by Major Charles W. Davis, who went over the top of a hill, held by the Japanese, with his pistol in one hand and waving his men forward with the other. They followed with a dash and took the hill. I am recommending Davis for the Medal of Honor.

"The Japanese have shown very poor tactical judgment here and an inflexibility of temperament and plan which has operated to our profit. Their one great asset is their willingness to die. We have accommodated them on this score. But their vaunted stamina and fearlessness has been more than matched by our men."



J. Lawton Collins
Chief of Staff.

A16/SWPac

Signal Corps, United States Army

*ST-43
WZ
Adm Brown
Office*

Received at

THERE FOLLOWS A PARAPHRASE OF A MESSAGE FROM CURTIN TO ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL

I AM INFORMED THAT YOU (CHURCHILL) AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ARE MEETING IN WASHINGTON. I AM SURE THAT IMPORTANT RESULTS WILL BE OBTAINED FROM YOUR DISCUSSIONS OF PROBLEMS WHICH ARE OF GREAT STRATEGICAL IMPORTANCE.

GENERAL MACARTHUR HAS DISCUSSED WITH ME MANY OF THE LESSONS LEARNED IN NEW GUINEA. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS WAS THAT BY USING COMBINED AIR AND GROUND FORCES IN CLOSE COORDINATION SWIFT POWERFUL OFFENSIVE MOVEMENTS ARE POSSIBLE.

THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT THE JAP HELD ISLANDS SHOULD BE ATTACKED BY COORDINATED AIR GROUND ATTACK INSTEAD OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS WOULD TEND TO CONSERVE MANPOWER AND SHIPING. AFTER A CONSIDERATION OF THE OPERATIONS IN NEW GUINEA IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE UNITED NATIONS STRATEGY IN THE PACIFIC SHOULD BE REVIEWED WITH A VIEW TO ALLOTING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT TO THIS AREA. IF 500 ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT AND 1,500 ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND IF THE NECESSARY NAVAL STRENGTH CONSISTANT WITH THE NEEDS OF A COVERING FORCE ALSO MADE AVAILABLE, JAPAN CAN BE STRUCK - FORCED FROM HER ISLAND GAINS AND MADE TO CONTRACT HER LINES. IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT A DEATH BLOW COULD BE STRUCK WHILE SHE IS STILL IN HER PRESENT EXTENDED CONDITION.

IT IS INCREASINGLY APPEARANT THAT THE ENEMY IS WEAK IN AIR POWER AND DUE TO HIS LIMITED PRODUCTIVE POWERS SHOULD BECOME MORE SO. IT IS NOT BELIEVED THAT NAVAL SUPPORT OF GREATER MAGNITUDE THAN THAT ALREADY SET UP BY NAVAL HEADQUARTERS, WOULD BE REQUIRED. BECAUSE YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY, IN PRE-WAR YEARS TO THE PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR JOINT NAVY, AIR AND GROUND COMMAND, I HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL.

paraphrased by CHH 1/21/43

A16/SK

*Copy to CIA
to file*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Berlin. (Enemy broadcast) recorded by UP. Tokyo dispatches said that Japanese air forces successfully attacked Fiji and New Caledonia in the Southwest Pacific yesterday (American forces are stationed at both places). 12/16 gr 938A.

8 AD Japanese report, Berlin. The Japanese report said 12 American planes were destroyed on the ground and three others shot down in combat over Suva, a port in the Fijis. An American destroyer of the INGRAHAM class was said to have been sunk and another so damaged that it was abandoned after Japanese bombings west of Lau, one of the eastern group of the Fiji Islands. The Japanese also reported attacks on a convoy of 12 transports and merchantmen escorted by destroyers in the Coral Sea. Four merchantmen and a destroyer were sunk and three merchantment and another destroyer were set afire, it was said.

Dated 12-16-R1044A

*Memo for The President
We have no confirmation
of the above*

*Very resp
John McCre*

A16-30 W Pa

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET December 14, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ADMIRAL LEAHY.

This is the preliminary battle report
of the SOUTH DAKOTA about which I talked
to you.

Very respectfully,

John L. McCrea,
Captain, U.S. Navy,
Naval Aide to the President.

Returned by
Adm. Leahy 12/16/42
and then returned to
Cominch. *R*

16-3

for President file

December 8th, 1942

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been requested by the Prime Minister of Australia, The Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

Dear President Roosevelt,

I have received your communication of December 2nd regarding the return of the Sixth Division to Australia and I am grateful for your kind message of congratulations on the part played by the Sixth Division in the recent victory in the Middle East.

2. I am very glad you are agreeable to the return of the Sixth Division to Australia at the earliest date practicable and I note your observations as to the factors which you think should govern the fixation of this date.

3. After a magnificent advance through most difficult terrain of the Owen Stanley Range, the final stages of clearing the Japanese from this part of New Guinea have proved most difficult. Brigades that went over mountain track are now so depleted that they are being withdrawn and replaced by other Australian forces.

4. Experience has proved that wastage in tropical warfare in undeveloped areas is immense. For example at least one-third of our force at Milne Bay is already infected with malaria. Buna area is an equally evil one for this disease. Our battle wastage is fairly considerable. The two together may soon place us in what may be a very precarious position. The Japanese have shown a degree of stubbornness in the defense of Buna and Gona which would indicate that they are not going to take their reverses in this area without making the greatest effort to hold on and to come back later.

5. The Sixth and Seventh Australian Divisions after the Buna operations are completed must have a prolonged rest out of action. They both have a very large number of reinforcements to absorb and a great number of sick to return. There is a pressing need for the services of the Ninth Division in this area. It is also required for subsequent phases of the campaign to drive the Japanese from New Guinea and adjacent islands.

6. You will recall that in my message of October 17th to Mr. Churchill, which was repeated to you, it was explained that the manpower position necessitated the reduction of strength of the Australian Army by one Division. The Government has since been advised that the demands of warfare in the tropics have made it perfectly clear that we cannot maintain reduced strength in the field, and the reduction of another division, making two in all is proposed.

7. Speaking in terms of divisions, our present distribution is as follows, although we have reduced brigades in several cases from three to two battalions:

- Three divisions in New Guinea (less one brigade)
- One division North Queensland
- One division Darwin
- Two divisions (less one brigade) and one armoured in Western Australia
- One greatly reduced division and one armoured division (now completing) in New South Wales
- One reduced division and one armoured division (now completing) in South Queensland.

Practically all of these forces are distributed around our perimeter with a very small reserve force in Australia.

8. I feel that you should be aware of the foregoing considerations which show clearly the pressing need for the

services of the Ninth Division in the South West Pacific area. I note that the movement of the 25th United States Division to the Australian area will be completed before the first of the year.

*1st Mar
Air Sub.*

I am very grateful for this. I wish you to know that we shall co-operate in the plan that you have outlined, which, as we see it, does not envisage the utilisation of the Ninth Division for any further operations in the Middle East or adjacent areas. We look forward to the fulfilment of the understanding that the Ninth Division shall be returned to Australia as early as possible in the New Year.

9. We regret that owing to other demands on shipping you are unable to arrange the return of the equipment of the Ninth Division. There are certain minimum requirements to ensure effective employment of the Ninth Division in the South West Pacific Area, and it is requested arrangements be made for the return of the following:

- (a), All personal equipment.
- (b) Weapons, rifles, pistols, anti-tank rifles, Bren guns, mortars two-inch, and associated stores.
- (c) Engineer stores, hand tools, compressors, pumping sets, dynamo welding plant complete with trailer required. No bridging equipment required.
- (d) Signal stores, generating sets and charging sets only.
- (e) Workshop equipment 68, equipment including hand tools (major portion is included with technical vehicles referred to in (f)).
- (f) Vehicles: breakdown trucks 46, garage trucks 31, machinery trucks 29, workshop engineers trucks 2, trailer laundry 10, all complete with equipment.

I am informed all the above items except vehicles and equipment carried in them could be stowed in personnel ships. It is estimated that approximately 3500 tons of shipping space additional to that available in personnel ships will be necessary. My advisers suggest that 3500 tons could be lifted in shipping from the Middle East regularly proceeding to Australia and I should be glad if arrangements could be made for this to be done.

I have also forwarded a message to Mr. Churchill informing him of the substance of this message to you.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CURTIN. "

A16-3/middle
Exact



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 17th, 1942

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been requested by the Prime Minister of Australia,
The Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following
message:-

"Dear President Roosevelt,

I have carefully considered the suggestion in your
telegram of November 1st for the retention of the 9th Imperial
Division in the Middle East and your proposal to send the United
States Division to Australia from Hawaii conditional on the right
to divert it elsewhere within the Southwest and South Pacific areas.

2. As explained to Mr. Churchill in my telegram of
October 17th, which was repeated to you, it is impossible for
Australia to despatch to the Middle East the reinforcements
necessary for the maintenance of the 9th Division in view of the
difficulties already being experienced in maintaining the Australian
Army and meeting the heavy wastage from tropical warfare in New
Guinea. Unless the Division returns to Australia it cannot be
maintained, whereas it can be built up again in Australia by the
allocation of personnel from other formations which are being
disbanded owing to contraction in the number of our divisions.

3. The attitude of the Australian Government has all
along been quite definite and clear regarding the future employment
of this Division.

4. After the outbreak of war with Japan, and following
a statement generously volunteered by Mr. Churchill that no obstacles
would be placed in the way of Australian troops returning to defend
their homeland, the Government requested that all Australian troops
overseas should return to Australia.

A16-3/middle East



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 17th, 1942

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have been requested by the Prime Minister of Australia, The Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

"Dear President Roosevelt,

I have carefully considered the suggestion in your telegram of November 1st for the retention of the 9th Imperial Division in the Middle East and your proposal to send the United States Division to Australia from Hawaii conditional on the right to divert it elsewhere within the Southwest and South Pacific areas.

2. As explained to Mr. Churchill in my telegram of October 17th, which was repeated to you, it is impossible for Australia to despatch to the Middle East the reinforcements necessary for the maintenance of the 9th Division in view of the difficulties already being experienced in maintaining the Australian Army and meeting the heavy wastage from tropical warfare in New Guinea. Unless the Division returns to Australia it cannot be maintained, whereas it can be built up again in Australia by the allocation of personnel from other formations which are being disbanded owing to contraction in the number of our divisions.

3. The attitude of the Australian Government has all along been quite definite and clear regarding the future employment of this Division.

4. After the outbreak of war with Japan, and following a statement generously volunteered by Mr. Churchill that no obstacles would be placed in the way of Australian troops returning to defend their homeland, the Government requested that all Australian troops overseas should return to Australia.

5. In March we allowed two brigade groups of the 6th Division to be used in Ceylon on the understanding that the 9th Division would return to Australia as soon as possible. Had these brigades returned directly to Australia we would have been able to strengthen the forces in New Guinea much earlier with battle trained troops.

6. In April the Government agreed to the postponement of the return of the 9th Division until it could be replaced in the Middle East.

7. When the Australian Government had every reason to expect the return of the Division in July it raised no objection to its transfer from Palestine to the Western Desert to help stem the Axis advance. Mr. Churchill was advised there would be difficulties in the despatch of further reinforcements from Australia and that when available reserves were exhausted the Division would have to be withdrawn from the line of battle.

8. On July 30th in a further personal telegram to Mr. Churchill I stated it was impossible for the Government to do more than agree to an extension of the period for the temporary retention of the 9th Division in the Middle East. A limit was set to reinforcements that would be available and it was specifically stated ancillary units were not to be broken up for use as reinforcements. It was emphasized the Commander-in-Chief Middle East would therefore need to have these facts in mind in his use of the Division.

9. Mr. Churchill, the Australian Representative on the United Kingdom War Cabinet and the Commander of the Division have been informed:-

(a) No further reinforcements for the 9th Division are being despatched from Australia.

(b) The Government is not agreeable to the 9th Division being broken up by the replacement of wastage from ancillary and other units.

(c) It is essential that the Commander-in-Chief Middle East should have regard to this position in his use of the 9th Division.

The Government views the present use of the Division as absolutely governed by the fulfilment of the conditions laid down by it some time ago and I have told Mr. Churchill that in our plans and dispositions we are relying on the Division being returned in good shape and strength. Now that the situation in the Middle East for which the 9th Division was retained has been cleared up satisfactorily, the Government expects early effect to be given the understanding reached in April.

10. You might be interested to know that on the entry of Italy into the war certain units of the 6th Division reinforcements and Corps troops were diverted to the United Kingdom, where they were organized into the 9th Division for the defence of Britain against invasion. This Division, which was later transferred to the Middle East and withstood the siege of Tobruk, therefore really became an additional overseas commitment. It was realized at the time that it would probably be beyond our capacity to maintain it and experience has proved this to be the case.

11. Decisions on global strategy have been taken by Mr. Churchill and yourself. The Commonwealth Government has shown a ready willingness to co-operate in other theatres at considerable risk to the security of Australia. This has been demonstrated by the service overseas of our naval, land and air forces and our continued participation in the Empire Air Training Scheme. The Government considers the contributions it has made to other theatres entitle it to the assurance that the fullest possible support will be given to the situation in the Pacific. You will recall that the military advisers of the Commonwealth Government consider that three further divisions are necessary in the Southwest Pacific area. In view of its responsibilities for the local defence of Australia and in light of the views of its advisers, the Government feels that the maximum strength of Australian forces should be concentrated in the Southwest Pacific area to meet all contingencies of the military situation in the Pacific.

- 4 -

12. We are grateful to learn that you are sending to the South or Southwest Pacific Area the Division from Hawaii. We would be delighted to welcome it to Australia where it would be an invaluable addition to the two splendid American Divisions already here.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CURTIN. "

- 4 -

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Yours sincerely,

JOHN CURTIN. "

A 16-8/5W Doc

SECRET

FROM: COMGEN 1ST MARDIV
TO : COMSOPAC
DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 1942.

150318 NCR 9950 - L

COMSOPAC PASS TO COMAMPHCORPS

WE BELIEVE THE ENEMY HAS SUFFERED A CRUSHING DEFEAT. WE THANK LEE FOR HIS STURDY EFFORT OF LAST NIGHT. WE THANK KINCAID FOR HIS INTERVENTION YESTERDAY. OUR OWN AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN GRAND IN ITS RELENTLESS POUNDING OF THE FOE.

THOSE EFFORTS WE APPRECIATE BUT OUR GREATEST HOMAGE GOES TO SCOTT, CALLAGHAN AND THEIR MEN WHO WITH MAGNIFICENT COURAGE AGAINST SEEMINGLY HOPELESS ODDS DROVE BACK THE FIRST HOSTILE STROKE AND MADE SUCCESS POSSIBLE. TO THEM THE MEN OF CACTUS LIFT THEIR BATTERED HELMETS IN DEEPEST ADMIRATION.

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: COMMANDER TASK FORCE 67
TO : COMSOPACFOR
DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 1942.

161038 NCR 335

THIS IS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GLORY FOR THE USS SAN FRANCISCO. IN ADDITION TO DESTROYING ENEMY FORCES AND ACTING WITH GREAT GALLANTRY IN THE BATTLE OF SAVO ISLAND ON OCTOBER 11-12 THE SAN FRANCISCO AGAIN HAS LED OUR FORCES INTO A BATTLE AGAINST ODDS ON THE EARLY MORNING OF NOVEMBER 13TH. IN THIS ACTION THE SAN FRANCISCO INFLECTED HEAVY DAMAGE ON THE ENEMY, SHE SILENCED AND DISABLED AN ENEMY BATTLESHIP AT A DISTANCE OF 3,000 YARDS, SHE SANK 1 ENEMY DESTROYER, AND ENGAGED AND HIT 2 OTHER ENEMY VESSELS. AT ONE TIME ON BOARD WERE BLAZING 25 SEPARATE FIRES. THESE WERE PROMPTLY CONTROLLED.

DURING THIS ACTION OF NOVEMBER 12-13 THE SAN FRANCISCO RECEIVED 15 MAJOR CALIBER HITS AND NUMEROUS SMALL CALIBER HITS. HER SHIPS COMPANY NOT ONLY MAINTAINED THE ACTION WITH MOST OF HER BATTERY BUT BY GREAT EFFORT REDUCED HER DAMAGE AND RETURNED HER SAFELY TO PORT TO ACT IN THE FUTURE AGAINST THE ENEMY.

THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SHIPS COMPANY IS BEYOND PRAISE, NOT ONLY FOR BRAVERY BUT ALSO FOR EFFECTIVENESS.

FOR FIGHTING THEIR SHIP WELL AND EFFECTIVELY, FOR BRAVERY BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY, AND FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN ACTION ON NOVEMBER 12-13 I RECOMMEND THAT THE SAN FRANCISCO BE THE FIRST VESSEL IN THE NAVY TO RECEIVE THE CITATIO ANNOUNCED BY ALNAV 238 FOR OUTSTANDING SHIPS.

(SIGNED) REAR ADMIRAL TURNER

CONFIDENTIAL

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <u>USS SAN FRANCISCO</u>		CONSOPAC CINCPAC COMTASKFOR	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE <u>15 NOV. 1942</u>			DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM _____	INFORMATION	COMINCH USS HELENA	PRIORITY
DECODED BY _____			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

141101 NCR 9469 S

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME DATE TIME GCT

TEXT

SAN FRANCISCO ORIGINATOR. HELENA HAS BY HAND. PASSED BY NPM TO COMINCH FOR INFO.

WITH DEEPEST REGRET INFORM YOU OF DEATHS OF REAR ADMIRAL DANIEL J. CALLAGHAN AND LIEUT. COMDRS. LOUIS M. ^LDEHARDY, DAMON M. CUMMINGS, AND JACK WINTLE. DEATHS OCCURRED ABOUT 0200 13TH IN ACTION AGAINST KONGO CLASS BATTLESHIPS. BURIALS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED AT SEA. LT. COMDR. EMMET O BIERN SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, ENS ROLAND HILLAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED, LT. (JG) STEPHEN GRAYDON UNWOUNDED. THIS IS COMPLETE REPORT ON STAFF.

No. 1 ADMIRAL

No. 2 FILE

No. 3 F-1 OR CHARTROOM

No. 4 SPECIAL

SEALED SECRET

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

NCR 18

16-50520-1 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Regraded Unclassified

In dissolving this temporary force, I express the will that the Number 67 in the future be reserved for a group of ships as ready for high patriotic endeavor as you have seen. I thank you for your magnificent support of the project of reenforcing our brave troops in Guadalcanal, and for your eagerness to be the keen edge of the sword that is cutting the throat of the enemy.

I was well aware of the odds which might be against you in your night attack on November 12, but felt that this was the time when fine ships and brave men should be called upon for the utmost. You have more than justified expectations in taking from the enemy a toll of strength far greater than the strength you have expended.

With you I grieve for long cherished comrades who will be with us no more and for our lost ships whose names will be enshrined in history.

No medals, however high, can possibly give you the reward you deserve. With all my heart, I say "God bless courageous men, dead and alive, of Task Force 67."

Turner

A 16-3 / SW Pac
A 16-3 / ~~Russia~~
Capt. In. Chas.
to file

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

November 1, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Southwest Pacific.

In the memorandum on October 26 I informed you that the first combat team (5,000 infantry and artillery) of the 25th Division from Hawaii would sail from there on November 15 for the South or Southwest Pacific, according to circumstances. The sinking of the PRESIDENT COOLIDGE at Espiritu Santo has forced a change of schedule, delaying the initial movement until November 25. The next combat team will sail from Hawaii about December 1.

The equipment lost on the COOLIDGE was partly made good from our reserve stocks in New Caledonia. The remainder is being assembled on the West Coast for shipment about November 12. Eight 155-mm guns lost on the COOLIDGE are being replaced by eight removed in the South Pacific from a shipment to Australia. This was with MacArthur's consent. These guns for Australia will, in turn, be sent from the West Coast on the first cargo vessel to leave for that area.

Russia.

Following your query as to what difficulties we were having regarding the Anglo-American Air Force to Caucasus, I had an inquiry made of London by Sir John Dill to find out what difficulties they had learned of, as we had no information on the subject. The reply to his inquiry has just come, and I quote it below:

* Russians have not yet accepted our offer. Consider precipitant action on our part might have detrimental effect on negotiations with Russia concerning defense of North Persia. We have decided, therefore, to postpone dispatch of telegram concerning air mission for the present!

Dill comments that this reply "doesn't take us very much further, I am afraid. Russians don't help us much to help them." I am checking on the matter further through our people in the Middle East.



[Signature]
Chief of Staff.

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WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

October 26, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Situation in the South Pacific.

In compliance with your memorandum of October 24th requesting information on our capabilities in the Guadalcanal Area, the following is submitted:

The situation in the entire South Pacific is dependent upon the outcome of the operations now under way to repulse what appears to be a major Japanese assault on our forward positions there. In 48 hours or less the situation will require a further analysis of our requirements in this area.

On Guadalcanal it is estimated the Japanese have 15,000 troops. Our forces now there number about 22,000, comprising a reinforced Marine division with about 3,500 Army troops from the U.S. Army Division in New Caledonia. The remainder of this division and a part of the 43rd Division, totaling approximately 15,000 troops, are available for immediate reinforcement of Guadalcanal. The difficulty is to provide the necessary shipping and escorts.

In the South Pacific Area there are 72,000 additional ground troops, including a division of 13,000 New Zealanders. Of these 23,000 can be moved into forward positions as soon as shipping is available. The remainder (49,000) are distributed for the defense of island positions in the South Pacific Area. Not more than 15,000 troops of this remainder should be considered as available for reinforcement of the forward areas until we resume offensive operations.

Army air in the South Pacific consists of 46 heavy bombers, 27 medium bombers and 133 fighters. To meet the present emergency 23 heavy bombers are being dispatched by air and 53 fighters by boat from the Hawaiian area. In addition General MacArthur has been informed that he is to be prepared to furnish on call to Admiral Halsey, bombardment reinforcement and attrition replacements for P-38 fighters, 15 of which are in the South Pacific Theater. Routine attrition replacement airplanes are provided at a monthly rate of 20 percent of aircraft in combat in the Theater or areas.



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In the Southwest Pacific Area there are 2 U.S. divisions and 3 Australian divisions ready for combat. In addition there are 7 Militia divisions in various stages of training, not ready for combat. General MacArthur's plan calls for the utilization of the 2 American and 3 Australian divisions which are ready for combat in the seizure and occupation of the Northeast coast of New Guinea. Most of the 3 Australian divisions are now committed to New Guinea, along with 1 American division, the 32nd. The 41st Division now in Northeast Australia will be sent to New Guinea as the action progresses.

Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area.

- (a) U.S. Army - 83 heavy bombers, 115 medium bombers,
40 light bombers and 361 fighters,
plus routine attrition replacements.
- (b) Australian - 70 medium bombers, 15 light bombers,
14 flying boats, 100 fighters.
- (c) A total of - 83 Heavy Bombers
185 Medium Bombers
55 Light Bombers
461 Fighters
14 Flying Boats
798

The 25th Division in Hawaii is being prepared to sail to the South or Southwest Pacific, its first Combat Team on November 15th and the remainder of the division about December 1st.

The effectiveness of our forces depends upon our ability to distribute and maintain them by transport in critical combat areas. The U.S. Army, and Australian and New Zealand ground and air forces in the South Pacific and Southwest Pacific Area total 11 divisions (including the 25th Division yet to arrive) and 1069 land-based combat aircraft. (The U.S. Naval aircraft are not included in this total.)

The Japanese forces in the area, including New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomons, have been estimated at a maximum of 5 divisions, 350 land-based and 204 carrier-based aircraft. We therefore have considerable superiority both on the ground and in the air, if the necessary concentrations for offensive action can be effected.

Ground forces now in the South Pacific alone (5 divisions) should be sufficient to insure the security of our forward positions, including Guadalcanal. The effectiveness of these troops, however, necessarily depends upon our ability to transport and maintain them in the combat area where they are required.

Factors determining the number of troops that can be supported in the South and Southwest Pacific Area are shipping and essential supplies.

The limited shipping available in the Pacific already presents a critical problem. A conservative estimate on our cargo shortage in the Pacific, both Army and Navy, is 25 standard ships per month for the next 3 months to move maintenance supplies and the accumulated backlog of material and personnel for units now in or being dispatched to this area. A rather general survey of the situation indicates this shipping can only be made up by discontinuing troop movements to the U.K.; discontinuing the Persian Corridor project; freezing troop movement to the Middle East (14,000 air, air maintenance and S.O.S. troops) and India (3000 - Air - Signal and Medical Troops); withholding the proposed transfer of 5 ships per month to the Russian flag for West Coast Lend-Lease shipments. These curtailments will release approximately 19 ships for the Pacific, and in view of the inadvisability of curtailing other vitally important operations, the remainder can only come from Lend-Lease commitments.

The supply of ammunition is also critical. The current shortage imposes a further limitation on troops that can be sent to an active theater. In connection with this shortage, if we are to continue training in the U.S. and in Defense Commands (Caribbean, Alaska, Hawaii, Iceland, etc.) and replace expenditures of ammunition of units in active theaters, it will be impracticable before July 1, 1943, adequately to supply additional units in the South Pacific over the number now there or scheduled to go. Our only recoverable source of ammunition would be from the commitments made to Russia and the U.K. by Lend-Lease. We are sending approximately 20 million rounds of ammunition to Russia per month and have cut our commitment to Great Britain from 80 million rounds to 40 million. A reduction of present commitments appears inadvisable at this time.

The number of combat aircraft in continental United States represents the bare minimum to provide a basis for tactical training and for a minimum of security. The Western Defense Command has but 25 heavy and medium bombers for coastal security, and these include the offshore reconnaissance with ASV equipment. The Eastern Defense Command has about 50% of its requirement for anti-submarine patrol operations. None of these planes are suitable for bombardment operations in the South Pacific.

The organizational training and replacement units have roughly 60% of the aircraft required for the training of bomber and fighter crews. Moreover, these units are now utilizing for the greater part, aircraft that are obsolescent or otherwise unsuitable for assignment to an active theater. The fighter groups in the defense commands perform the dual function of security as well as training. Diversion of aircraft from these

SECRET

units will result in a fatal reduction in the flow of trained personnel in combat theaters. There are no operational light bombers in the U.S. except those now allotted to TORCH. Some 100 of these airplanes are now undergoing modification to meet the requirements of TORCH and to fulfill the Russian protocol.

The only practicable source from which combat aircraft could be diverted to the South Pacific from the U.S. is from the heavy bombardment units now in or en route to England (the ground crews are already in England). This force consists of 5 heavy bombardment groups which are to carry out diversionary or supporting missions for TORCH. The next group will not be ready for departure from the U.S. until January 1943. Two heavy groups intended for England have already been diverted to the Pacific since September 10th.

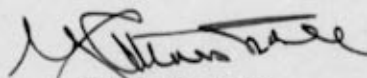
Measures to be Taken

Three heavy bombardment squadrons (23 planes) in Hawaii, under orders for Australia, have been directed in the past few days to proceed to New Caledonia and there report for temporary duty with the Army forces under the Commander of the South Pacific area. An Army fighter or pursuit squadron of P-40 planes (25) in Hawaii has been released for transfer to the South Pacific. The Navy is transferring an Army squadron of P-39 fighters (28) from Christmas Island to the South Pacific.

Instructions were sent to General MacArthur yesterday to be prepared to make a quick transfer of heavy bombardment planes from his area to the South Pacific; also to be prepared to provide replacement for losses in P-38 planes in the South Pacific area.

No further Army reinforcements from the mainland or Hawaii, other than the 25th Division in Hawaii previously referred to, appear practical of arrangement in the immediate future. Additional logistical support, especially in shipping, appears urgently necessary, for both the South and Southwest Pacific. The adjustment of this last matter must depend upon the decision as to where the ships are to be obtained.

Finally, it appears that there should be a further unification of command in the entire Pacific theater, certainly in the South and Southwest Pacific. The present complications in the employment of air in the Pacific emphasize this necessity.


Chief of Staff.

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U.S. AND JAP AIRPLANES IN SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

	<u>V.F.</u>	<u>V.S.B.</u>	<u>V.T.B.</u>	<u>V.P.B.</u>	<u>V.S.O.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Guada	11	9	--	--	--	20
Tulagi	--	--	--	--	2	2
Espiritu Santos	16	7	--	--	9	32
New Caledonia	--	21	--	25*	--	46
Efate	46	9	2	--	8	65
Funa Fati	--	--	--	--	4	4
Samoa	14	18	--	--	11	43
Borabora	--	--	--	--	8	8
Tongatabu	--	--	--	--	--	4
	87	64	2	25	40	224
Carriers	71	65	27	--	28	186
Enroute	146	49	15	16	--	<u>226</u>
				Total Navy		636
	<u>H.B.</u>	<u>M.B.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>L.B.</u>	<u>P.B.</u>	
Army	46	27	133	--	--	106
Enroute	23	--	53	--	--	<u>76</u>
						182
R.A.A.F.	--	70	100	15	14	199
U.S. Army - Australia	83	115	361	40	--	<u>599</u>
				Total Army		980
<u>JAP</u>				<u>U.S.</u>		
Land Based	350			In South Pacific		1314
Carrier Based	<u>204</u>			Enroute		<u>302</u>
Total	554 ✓			Total		1616 ✓

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 24, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Air Reinforcements for the South Pacific.

The message transmitted to you by radio yesterday, which had my approval, was not wholly concurred in by Admiral King, whom we were unable to locate until late in the evening. He desires 15 P-38 planes to be withdrawn from Port Moresby and sent to South Pacific. Attached is the version of the message which he prefers.

General Marshall and General Arnold are of the opinion that these 15 planes should remain at Moresby to protect MacArthur's concentration of Fortresses now based there for operations against Rabaul and Bougainville.

I agree with General Marshall
William A. Leahy

SECRET

SECRET

Admiral King gave Admiral Leahy and me your message regarding air reinforcements to the South Pacific. Message has been sent to Hawaii to divert one squadron of B-24s, now leaving there for Australia, to New Caledonia.

As to P-38s, we find none are today actually enroute either to South Pacific or Southwest Pacific. MacArthur has two squadrons, about fifty-odd, of these planes in Moresby and none in Australia. They are a vital part of MacArthur's defense of his concentration of fortresses at Moresby to operate against Rabaul and Bougainville Island region. He had previously been unwilling to hazard Fortresses at Moresby. The South Pacific now has 15 P-38s, drawn from MacArthur and a total of 149 P-39s with one squadron (25) of P-40s enroute from Hawaii.

In view of the capability of the enemy to switch his attack to New Guinea and the necessity to be able to continue operations of Fortresses from Moresby for effective attacks on Rabaul and Bougainville, it seems to us inadvisable for MacArthur to have to transfer more than 15 more P-38s to the South Pacific at this time.

SECRET

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

October 23 1942

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Admiral King gave Admiral Leahy and me your message regarding air reinforcements to the South Pacific. Message has been sent to Hawaii to divert one squadron of B-24's, now leaving there for Australia to New Caledonia.

As to P-38's we find none are today actually enroute to either South Pacific or Southwest Pacific. MacArthur has two squadrons, about 50-odd of these planes in Moresby and none in Australia. They are a vital part of MacArthur's defense of his concentration of fortresses at Moresby to operate against Rabul and Boganville Island region. He had previously been willing to hazard fortresses at Moresby.

The U. S. Chiefs of Staff question advisability of this transfer of P-38's under existing conditions. South Pacific now has 15 of these planes drawn from MacArthur and a total of 149 P-39's with one squadron of 25 P-40's enroute from Hawaii.

G C Marshall, Chief of Staff.

MA920

Admiral King

SECRET COPY

SECRET

MEMORANDUM to the Secretary to the President:

Request the following message be transmitted to The President this evening:

"General Marshall to The President:

P(1) "Admiral King gave Admiral Leahy and me your message regarding air reinforcements to the South Pacific. Message has been sent to Hawaii to divert one squadron of B-24s, now leaving there for Australia, to New Caledonia.

P 2 "As to P-38s, we find none are today actually enroute either to South Pacific or Southwest Pacific. MacArthur has two squadrons, about fifty-odd, of these planes in Moresby and none in Australia. They are a vital part of his defense of his concentration of Fortresses at Moresby to operate against Rabaul and Bouganville Island region. He had previously been unwilling to base Fortresses at Moresby. hazard Fortresses at Moresby. Moresby to enable him to base Fortresses there.

~~"The U.S. Chiefs of Staff question advisability of the transfer of P-38s under existing conditions. South Pacific now has 15 of these P-38s planes drawn from MacArthur and a total of 149 P-39s, with one squadron of 25 P-40s enroute from Hawaii."~~

Chief of Staff

~~372 ... ia
24 on way.~~

P 4 #In view of capability of enemy to switch attack to New Guinea and necessity to be able to continue operation of Fortresses from Moresby for effective attacks on Rabaul and Bouganville, it seems to us inadvisable for MacArthur to have to transfer more than 15 more P-38's to South Pacific at this time.

SECRET

October 24, 1942.

FOR LEAHY, KING, MARSHALL and ARNOLD only.

My anxiety about the Southwest Pacific is to make sure that every possible weapon gets into that area to hold Guadalcanal, and that having held it in this crisis that munitions and planes and crews are on the way to take advantage of our success. We will soon find ourselves engaged on two active fronts and we must have adequate air support in both places even though it means delay in our other commitments, particularly to England. Our long range plans could be set back for months if we fail to throw our full strength in our immediate and impending conflicts. I wish therefore, you would canvass over the week-end every possible temporary diversion of munitions which you will require for our active fronts and let me know what they are. Please also review the number and use of all combat planes now in the continental United States.

ROOSEVELT

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
Flagship of the Commander in Chief

Cinopac File
Pac-90-wb
AL6-3/MAKIN

Serial 03064

October 20, 1942.

SECRET

From: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.
To: Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.
Subject: Solomon Island Campaign - Makin Island Diversion.
Enclosures: (A) Comtask group 7.15 secret ltr. SS168/AL6-3/(037) dated August 24, 1942.
(B) Task Unit 7.15.3 secret ltr. dated August 21, 1942.
(C) Comsubpac secret ltr. FF12-10/AL6-3/(01002) dated September 3, 1942.

1. The raid on Makin Island on 17-18 August was planned to destroy enemy forces and installations, to gain information, and primarily to create a diversion confusing Japanese plans and diverting forces from the stronger concentrations being assembled to attack Guadalcanal in late August. It succeeded in all its purposes, inflicting loss of planes, ships, supplies, and men, and diverted ships and aircraft, by causing the formation of a Makin relief force.

2. In the raid Japanese losses were:

1 3500 ton AP or AK

1 1500 ton FY

2 seaplanes

100-150 men

Radio stations, stores of gasoline and other equipment and material.

3. This loss was inflicted at the cost of 30 of our Marine raiders killed in action and drowned, and much of the raiding force equipment.

4. NARRATIVE. The account of the expedition as told by the enclosed reports needs little amplification or adjustment of conflicting observations; hence this section of the report is limited to a brief summary.

5. The Second Raider Battalion had been conducting extensive training for some weeks in the Hawaiian Islands. Part of the units had participated in the Battle of Midway and others had trained on that island afterwards. Immediately preceding the Makin Island landing they had trained in handling rubber boats in surf and had made several night landings on Oahu from submarines.

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
Flagship of the Commander in Chief

Cincpac File
Pac-90-wb
A16-3/MAKIN

Serial 03064

October 20, 1942.

SECRET

Subjects: Solomon Island Campaign - Makin Island Diversion.

6. Two hundred and twenty-two officers and men of the raider battalion embarked in NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT and sailed from Pearl Harbor at 0900 (9½) 8 August. The voyage was uneventful the submarines being able to run on the surface most of the time thereby making the ships habitable despite the large number of men carried. NAUTILUS, proceeding at higher speed in order to reconnoitre, made landfall on Little Makin Island at 0300 (-12), 16 August, and conducted a periscope reconnaissance. (All times hereafter, unless otherwise indicated, are Zero-12).

7. At 2116, 16 August, ARGONAUT and NAUTILUS joined at the rendezvous in spite of heavy rainfall and proceeded to the debarkation point. It was a clear night with scattered clouds, wind NE, force 4, raising moderate swells. At 0300, 17 August, the raider force commenced embarking in boats.

8. The plan called for assembly alongside NAUTILUS so that all boats might get underway together. The onshore wind and current drove the NAUTILUS toward the reef so that she frequently had to go ahead to keep clear. As a result boats could not keep alongside. Some boats from NAUTILUS had to take off troops from ARGONAUT and return to NAUTILUS. Many of the outboard motors would not start, adding to the difficulty of keeping boats assembled. The roar of the surf and the wash of the swell through the limber holes of the NAUTILUS drowned out orders.

9. After assembling off NAUTILUS, the force planned to proceed to two separate beaches for landing. Because of communication difficulties and some confusion among the boats, the Marine Commanding Officer ordered all troops to land on a single beach. They cleared the submarines and landed at 0500 on schedule, negotiating the surf easily. Fifteen of the eighteen boats landed together, with two others nearby. The remaining boat did not receive the changed order and went to the beach originally assigned, to the south. It contained a Lieutenant and eleven men who were behind the enemy's lines throughout the day's fighting and inflicted considerable damage, at a cost of three men killed.

10. Boats had not been assembled in waves with each unit together, hence the various platoons were mixed in landing, and re-organization on the beach was necessary. Before this was completed, one man accidentally fired his gun. This was about 0530; dawn was just beginning to break.

11. Realizing that the alarm had been given, the Commanding Officer despatched one company to the other side of the island (less than ½ mile). In a few minutes this company reported having reached Government Wharf, near the northern edge of the settlement of Butaritari. This company was then deployed to advance down the island and the other company held in reserve. Meanwhile, voice radio communication had been established with the submarines.

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
Flagship of the Commander in Chief

Cincpac File
Pac-90-wb
A16-3/MAKIN

October 20, 1942.

Serial 03064

SECRET

Subject: Solomon Island Campaign - Makin Island Diversion.

12. In a few minutes the Japanese were contacted and by 0630 firing was general along the front. Natives, who were universally friendly, reported where Japanese troops were concentrated. The submarines were requested to fire on one of these groups and NAUTILUS responded promptly, firing 24 rounds in an area about one mile long. ARGONAUT did not fire for fear of bombarding own troops. At this time the shore force reported range and bearing from Government Wharf of two ships in the harbor and requested that they be taken under fire. NAUTILUS opened fire at 0716 but communication with the shore went out almost immediately so that there were no spots. Salvos were laddered widely in range and bearing, 46 rounds being expended. Both ships were hit and set on fire, and later sunk. One was a 3500 ton AP or AK which the natives stated quartered sixty marines.

13. The Japanese were prepared for a raid, probably because of a general alert following our landing in the Solomons. They took strong positions with machine guns, grenade throwers, automatic rifles, and a flame thrower. Well camouflaged snipers secured in the tops of coconut trees, where natives said they had been for three days, were the most difficult problem. They could not be brought down until the fronds concealing them were sawed off by machine gun fire. Snipers and machine gun fire killed eleven men on the Marine right flank and stopped the advance until about 1130. At that time a platoon of the reserve company was deployed on the left and slow progress resumed. This platoon had no casualties in the fighting.

14. Soon after NAUTILUS completed firing, ARGONAUT dove on false plane contact and NAUTILUS followed. They surfaced at about 1000, re-established voice radio with the land force, and upon request were preparing to resume fire on the ships which had not yet sunk when a biplane was sighted. Both ships made emergency dives at 1039. NAUTILUS surfaced at 1255 but immediately dived again when 12 plane appeared. Thereafter the submarines remained submerged until near sunset when danger from aircraft was considered past.

15. Three groups of planes appeared over the island during the day. Two biplanes, one of which had driven the submarine down, flew over the Marine Force at 1130. After reconitering for fifteen minutes, they dropped bombs and departed. The next group of 12 planes was sighted by forces ashore at 1320; four were sea-planes, two large and two medium. One each of these landed in the lagoon where both were destroyed by machine gun and 55 calibre anti-tank rifle fire. Natives reported that the large sea plane had brought thirty-five Japanese reinforcements. After bombing and strafing for over an hour, the remaining planes departed.

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16. Because of the report of reinforcements, the conclusion that the next flight would bring more, and the fact that snipers were still troublesome, the Marine Commanding Officer decided to withdraw the center and right of his line, hoping to bring snipers out of the heavy foliage protecting them. This he did; but the snipers did not advance. As he states the principal gain was that when a third group of planes attacked at about 1630 they concentrated on the area his troops had vacated and the area beyond where Japanese resistance had been strongest. Our troops suffered no casualties from any of the air attacks this day.

17. Although the mission of destruction of enemy forces and installations had not been completed, after the last bombing the raider commander decided to withdraw according to plan. The appointed time of departure was approaching and he considered that it was necessary to fall back slowly so as to permit an orderly embarkation into the boats. It appears that there were only a few Japanese soldiers left alive, yet such is the effect of boldness in a few resolute men that is seemed to the raider commander at this time that he was still opposed by a large force.

18. The withdrawal was accomplished without enemy attack. Embarkation in rubber boats was carried out as planned but now came the major disaster and major good fortune of the expedition. Motors would not start. When the boats reached the surf, which had been easily transited that morning, they were forced back or turned over. For an hour the Marines struggled desperately to get through. Equipment and clothes were lost. Men jumped into the water trying to push the boats through the short, sharp surf, only for the most part to be forced to give up in exhaustion and return ashore. Several were probably drowned at this time. Hardly more than one-third of the men reached the two submarines. The remaining 120 men assembled on the beach with a little equipment salvaged from the water, set up sentries, and waited miserably in the rain for dawn and another attempt to pass the surf. At 2100 one of the sentries encountered a Japanese patrol of eight men and killed three of them before falling seriously wounded by a shot through the chest. Because of the possibility of Japanese reinforcements in the morning, prospects looked dreary.

19. NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT waited off the appointed beach throughout the night. At daybreak boats were again loaded and set against the surf. Several containing a total of about fifty men got through. Volunteers in one boat returned from NAUTILUS to the surf with a line throwing gun and with a message that though the submarines might be forced down by aircraft they would return, and would remain as long as necessary to remove all troops ashore. The boat had scarcely delivered its message when ARGONAUT submerged on false contact and NAUTILUS followed. They surfaced about 0901 but were almost immediately forced down again, this time by true radar contacts. The boat from the NAUTILUS with its volunteer crew of five men was strafed by one of the planes and its crew probably killed. One man from ashore who had decided to swim to the NAUTILUS arrived exhausted just as she went down. He was at "the limit of his endurance" but nevertheless swam back ashore.

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20. Japanese planes were over the atoll much of the day from about 0920 to 1730. Four large flights bombed and strafed the length of the main island, the smaller island to the north, and Little Makin to the south. Our forces remained under cover during the bombing and received no casualties except for those strafed in the rubber boat.

21. With no chance of reaching the submarines during daylight, the Marines on the beach turned back ashore; and now the good fortune of their disaster was revealed. As patrols spread out over the island they discovered that contrary to the opinion of the previous evening there was no strong resistance remaining. In fact, there was practically none. On the "front" Japanese were lying dead around their machine guns or behind palm trees which had been cleanly pierced by our .50 caliber AP bullets. Throughout the day only two snipers were encountered. They were shot. Total enemy dead counted on the field of battle was 83. These with personnel on the two sunken ships, resulted in a total loss to the enemy of 100 to 150 men.

22. Patrols fired gasoline stowage of 700 to 1000 barrels, destroyed the main radio station, and carried out other demolition. No heavy gun fortification existed. When the submarines reappeared off the landing beach at 1930 they were requested to proceed to the quieter water at the lagoon entrance. A sloop in the harbor had appeared to be likely transportation for our troops but on inspection, after a single Japanese Marine defending it was killed, it was found unseaworthy. Remaining rubber boats and a native outrigger were used, the submarines being reached at 2330, 18 August, after nearly two days ashore.

23. The return journey was without event except for the excellent surgery of the accompanying Navy doctors under difficult conditions. NAUTILUS moored at Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, about noon, 25 August, and ARGONAUT at 1245 (9 $\frac{1}{2}$), 26 August.

CONCLUSIONS

24. Submarines were excellently handled and proved themselves well suited for raider operations; however, they need several changes to improve habitability. Humidity and heat were severe even though additional air conditioning units had been provided. It would have been impossible to take care of the large number of men aboard with existing equipment had most of the cruise not been made on the surface. ARGONAUT is now being converted into a submarine transport, with necessary changes to make her more suitable for prolonged cruising with a large number of men aboard.

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25. The raider loading and landing plan had several defects which should be eliminated in subsequent operations. A single unit with all boats should be in one ship. Units should load in boats in desired landing order, and boats should proceed in waves to the beach so that reorganization will not be necessary ashore. Frequent drill in this phase of landing is essential.

26. In raids of this nature which depend above all on surprise and swiftness of execution, the raiding force cannot let itself be tied down by position fighting. It must maintain mobility, striking rapidly, seeking to surprise and rout the enemy before they can recover and organize defenses. Should the force be pinned down by a "fire fight", it must continue offensive reconnaissance instead of retreating or remaining static. After the first part of the engagement, the raider force did not strike aggressively; for example, the platoon on the left flank suffered no casualties and made slow progress.

27. The plan of operations, including withdrawal, must be on a definite time schedule, as in the subject operations, it is necessary to coordinate the raid with the movements of ships. With effective anti-submarine measures the Japanese could have prevented the submarines from remaining an extra day.

28. Reconnaissance prior to landing must be extensive. Raiders landing without organization on the beach might have been stopped by a single machine gun. In addition to periscope reconnaissance, ground reconnaissance of information is desirable. In this operation it could have been obtained by landing a man ashore in advance of the raid.

29. Native reports should be considered with suspicion. The Japanese may have deliberately spread the rumor of reinforcements in order to influence the decisions of the raider commander. Active patrols would have given him sound information as to the location and strength of the enemy.

30. The old story is war of the importance of the offensive was again demonstrated. On the afternoon of August 17, had the raiding force sent out reconnaissance patrols and pushed forward instead of withdrawing, they would have discovered that the apparent heavy resistance was the fire of only a handful of men fighting to the death. They could have destroyed installations on the island and reembarked to their leisure, probably saving most of the loss of life from drowning and from strafing by planes on 18 August.

31. Radar was invaluable both for plane contacts and for navigation close to the beach in strange waters at night. SD radar picked up one group of planes at sixteen miles.

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32. Communication appears to have been satisfactory between submarines but they had difficulty receiving messages from the portable radio sets ashore, especially when these were carried across the island and were transmitting through trees. Similar experience in Guadalcanal confirms the need for an improved portable voice radio.

33. Diesel powered submarine boats would have been valuable on this expedition and will be carried in future ones.

34. A more rugged type of outboard motor than the Evinrude is needed. If better ones are available, it is requested that a suitable supply be obtained.

35. Several men, highly trained in handling boats through surf, should be attached to each raider unit.

36. Bombardment ammunition for 6" guns, under production at the time of this expedition, has now become available and is being supplied to submarines mounting this caliber of gun.

37. Japanese defense forces were very good at camouflage, were bold and resolute, and fought until killed. Apart from these excellent characteristics, however, they appear to have been inferior to our Marines. Their fire power was weak, their aim poor, and their dispositions faulty, most of the men being bunched so that they were killed in groups. With equal courage, approximately equal numbers, and equal boldness of leadership, our Marines will defeat the Japanese every time.

38. At no danger of too frequent repetition, the final recommendation of the raider commander, wrought from sore experience, is set down here again: "The night of August 17... emphasizes the truth that is as old as the military profession: No matter how bad your own situation may appear to be, there is always the possibility that the situation of the enemy is much worse." To this might be added another truth that a few resolute men seem like battalions.

39. Through the courage and endurance of the Marines and cool headed cooperation of submarine personnel, this expedition was successfully carried to completion against and by the aid of various chances of fortune. Losses were somewhat larger than they should have been but the goals of the expedition were achieved. Considerable damage was inflicted on the Japanese, and at a crucial time in the Solomon Islands operations they were forced to divert men, ships and planes to the relief of Makin Island.

C. W. NIMITZ.

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Al6-3/MAKIN

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Subject: Solomon Island Campaign - Makin Island Diversion.

Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

Copy to:

Commandant, USMC
Comsubpac
Comamphibforpac
Comsopac
Comamphibforsopac
Comsowespac
Comsubspac
Comsubron FOUR
CO 2nd Marine Rdr. BN.
Comtaskgroup 7.15
Comtaskunit 7.15.3
CO ARGONAUT
CO NAUTILUS

/signed/
P. V. MERCER
Flag Secretary.

NARRATIVE

The task group departed Pearl at 0900, August 8, 1942 and proceeded in company radar escort until daylight of that date after which the two submarine units proceeded independently.

The NAUTILUS being required to arrive at the destination earlier than the ARGONAUT in order to conduct a periscope reconnaissance of the objective, proceeded at best sustained surface speed, approximately 14.3 knots.

No contact with enemy forces was had en route and almost the entire trip was made on the surface, the day preceding arrival being the only one during which more than a hour's submergence was resorted to. On that occasion the NAUTILUS was submerged from 0900 to 1000.

Landfall was made on Isala Makin Atoll at 0900, August 16, all islands of the group being completely blacked-out, and subsequent reconnaissance of the south eastern coast of the main island

U.S.S. NAUTILUS

SSL68/Al6-3

Serial 037

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S. S. C. R. - 121

Care of Fleet Postmaster
San Francisco, California,
August 24, 1942.

Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

From: Commander Task Group 7.15.

To: Commander Task Force 7.

Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

Reference: (a) CTG-7 Operation Order 71-42.
(b) CTG 7.15 Operation Order 1-42.

1. This report covering the execution of references (a) and (b) represents a summary of events, experiences and conclusions incident to the operation. Detailed reports of the activities of the individual Task Units will be submitted separately by their respective commanders. Certain figures given in this report are approximations (which will be indicated) due to lack of opportunity for free communication between the various units of the Task Groups subsequent to the start of the expedition and up to the time of submitting this report. It is believed however that sufficient information is in the hands of the group commander to permit submission of a reasonably accurate account and analysis of the operation at this time and it is accordingly so submitted.

2. The report is presented in the general form prescribed for war patrol reports of submarines of the Pacific Fleet with such departures therefrom as may be indicated.

NARRATIVE

The task group departed Pearl at 0900, August 8, 1942 and proceeded in company under escort until nightfall of that date after which time two submarine units proceeded independently.

The NAUTILUS being required to arrive at the destination earlier than the ARGONAUT in order to conduct a periscope reconnaissance of the objective, proceeded at best sustained surface speed, approximately 14.5 knots.

No contact with enemy forces was had en route and almost the entire trip was made on the surface, the day preceding arrival being the only one during which more than a hours submergence was resorted to. On that occasion the NAUTILUS was submerged from 0930 to 1700.

Landfall was made on Little Makin Atoll at 0300, August 16, all islands of the group being completely blacked-out, and submerged reconnaissance of the south eastern coast of the main island

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U. S. S. NAUTILUS

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Serial 037

Care of Fleet Postmaster,
San Francisco, California
August 24, 1942.

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Report of Marine Submarine Raider Expedition.

Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

of Makin Atoll was begun at day break.

It was found that almost no distinguishing features existed other than some questionable tangents which crossed when within the limiting distance of two miles from the barrier reef in a very wide cut. By close observation however the set and drift of the current throughout the night in which the landing was expected to be effected was determined and agreed in general with that described in the coast Pilot. It was found however to shift direction rapidly as the day wore on and accordingly no great confidence was placed in the data obtained.

Endeavor was also made to reconnoiter the shore off the alternate landing beach selected, but tide rips and strong currents off Ukiangong Point rendered this impracticable in the time remaining.

The rendezvous with the ARGONAUT at Point Affirm was effected during a heavy rain squall at 2116, a fact which evidenced most excellent navigation on the part of that vessel, as current experienced en route was considerable and unpredictable.

After passing an operation order from a prospective attack on Little Makin Atoll to the ARGONAUT, the two vessels proceeded in company to the point of debarkation (Point Baker) the troops rigging boats and gear en route. Arrived at designated point at 0300. Weather at this time was clear with scattered clouds, wind N.E., force 4. A moderate swell was running from the eastward, but conditions for the landing were considered favorable.

The ship at this time was experiencing great difficulty in maintaining position due to a current of about 1 1/2 knots which set us continuously to the westward and in towards the reef. While the surf line could be faintly seen in the darkness, cuts on existing landmarks indicated the ship was within 500 yards of the reef and the commanding officer was forced to continually kick ahead to keep clear of it. As the boats were being put over at this time, it was impracticable to run out from the reef for any great distance.

Boats were cleared from the ship at scheduled time after some confusion due to the requirement that several of the boats from the ARGONAUT pick up personnel from the landing force of the

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NAUTILUS which interfered with the loading of the latter vessel's boats. The noise from the surf and the wash from the limber holes of the ship rendered enterboat communication by voice difficult and it was apparent that more detailed training and indoctrination in this phase of the operation is indicated for the future.

All boats were clear at the scheduled time however, and had been given the correct course allowing for current to take them to their respective landing beaches. It was subsequently learned that they departed en masse instead of in two groups as planned, due to the confusion aforementioned. They landed at beach Z at the scheduled time of 0500 except one boat which became detached and landed alone near beach Y, and two boats which landed north of the main body.

The submarines pulled clear of Point Baker and took position about 4 miles off the landing beaches. Communication by voice radio was established at 0513 with the Raider Unit.

At 0656 request was received from commanding officer raider unit to open fire with deck guns on lake area of Ukiangong Point. The NAUTILUS which was then on a southwesterly course complied at 0703, starting at the extreme end of the point and working down it about a mile. A total of twelve salvos or 24 rounds were fired at this time. Fire was then checked as the group commander had ordered a reversal of course in order to avoid unmasking the supposed shore battery at Flink Point.

For some reason not yet determined, the ARGONAUT which had instructions to follow the motions of the NAUTILUS in opening fire, had failed to do so, although supposedly listening in on the TBX over which the target had been designated.

Before the reversal of course by the NAUTILUS was completed and fire resumed request was received from C.P. (Col. Carlson) to take merchant ship, bearing 350° from government wharf, distance 8000 yards, under fire. This presented a difficult gunnery problem as no point of aim in deflection was presented due to lack of distinguishable land marks, and the NAUTILUS' own position was only approximately known. The resultant range was computed and the guns set on a computed bearing as being the only feasible solution to the problem. At this time communication with the shore failed due to interference.

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Fire was opened at 0716 and a total of 23 salvos or 46 rounds were fired. The salvos were laddered widely in range and deflection in order to cover the lagoon area as thoroughly as possible, after no spots were received from shore following the first three salvos fired on the computed bearing of the merchant ship.

"Cease firing" was then ordered by the group commander pending resumption of communications with the shore as it was felt that ammunition was being wasted and a casualty to the after ammunition hoist required repair. The battery was accordingly secured, the presence of enemy air units being expected momentarily on the basis of intelligence information.

Shortly there after the ARGONAUT suddenly submerged, presumably on a radar contact, as no planes were visible. The indication of the NAUTILUS radar was negative but presuming the ARGONAUT had good cause for submerging it was decided to follow suit.

After checking the trim and there being no further indication of aircraft in the vicinity the NAUTILUS surfaced at 0958 followed shortly by the ARGONAUT.

Voice radio was reestablished with the shore and the ARGONAUT immediately after surfacing. C.P. again requested gunfire against merchant ship off government wharf. The ARGONAUT was ordered to open fire with deck guns but before she could comply a biplane was sighted standing towards the atoll from the southeast and both ships made emergency dives at 1039.

The NAUTILUS surfaced at 1255 but was immediately forced down by the sighting of a formation of twelve shore based planes at high altitude and approaching from the southeast. The ARGONAUT was directed by under water sound, not to surface until further orders.

Both submarines remained submerged for the remainder of the afternoon as continued presence of enemy aircraft was anticipated to within two hours of darkness. Advantage was taken of this period to get a little much needed sleep, practically all hands having been up since the preceding evening and the captain and navigator since midnight of the evening preceding that.

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Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

Directed submarines to proceed submerged towards Point Baker to arrive by 1830 preparatory to picking up returning troops, ships to surface on signal. Received a message from the ARGONAUT via sound, stating she would be forced to surface at 1800 due to an exhausted battery and requesting permission to remain in her present location at minimum speed, in the hopes that planes over the atoll would not sight her against the setting sun. Affirmative was of course given, but such anxiety was felt until upon surfacing at 1845 no planes were sighted and the ARGONAUT was observed standing in to the rendezvous.

As no serviceable motors remained on board the NAUTILUS and as the marines who had returned on board were in too exhausted a condition to undertake the trip by paddle, the group commander directed the ARGONAUT to break out and send in with volunteers their two reserve boats and motors. The senior marine officer on the ARGONAUT recommended against this procedure until after daylight, as being suicidal. Feeling that this officer knew conditions on the beach better than he, the group commander modified his order to the extent of directing the sending of relief boats at the discretion of the senior marine officer on the ARGONAUT.

At daybreak several boats were observed to be putting off from the beach and to render their task as easy as possible the NAUTILUS moved in to within 500 yards of the reef and received two more boat loads of marines, the majority of whom were without outer clothing and almost devoid of arms and equipment. The first of these boats to arrive was immediately fitted with a motor which had been rendered serviceable during the night and manned by five

NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT arrived close in on the beach at 1830 preparatory to picking up remainder of the raider unit. Upon arrival received further message from the commanding officer of raider unit asking submarines pick his force up at Flank Point upon entrance at 2100, -5- stating that lagoons entrance was not fortified as previously supposed.

Proceeded as requested and received the remainder of the raider unit on board at 2130. The commanding officer of the raider unit reported to the group commander that he was satisfied that all surviving personnel of his command had been evacuated from the island.

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August 24, 1942.

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Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

volunteers. They were given instructions to assure the commanding officer of the raider unit that if the submarines were forced to submerge they would return as soon as circumstances permitted and by 1930 at the latest and would continue to endeavor to pick up any boats which came out.

Two more boats were observed to have cleared the reef and the ARGONAUT was directed to pick these up. They had scarcely done so when the ARGONAUT was observed to be diving. No radar contact was indicated but as the ships were close up against the shore line it was thought that perhaps the height of the palm trees had prevented indication of the approach of planes from that direction so the NAUTILUS followed suit and submerged. It is now believed that the ARGONAUT submerged on a false visual contact probably a bird, of which there were many.

The NAUTILUS surfaced at 0901 followed by the ARGONAUT but was forced down at 0914 on a definite radar contact at 14 miles and coming in fast. Did not sight planes but dove when radar indicated 5 miles. Have since discovered they were a formation of high level bombers and were probably nearly overhead at the time the NAUTILUS dove. Two bombs or depth charges were heard but were not close.

As it was again anticipated and later verified the enemy planes would remain over the atoll and vicinity during daylight hours, decided to remain submerged clear of the atoll for the remainder of the day in order not to unnecessarily compromise the area in which it was expected to recover troops.

NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT arrived close in on the beach at 1930 preparatory to picking up remainder of the raider unit. Upon arrival received blinker message from the commanding officer of raider unit ashore requesting submarines pick his force up at Flink Point Lagoon entrance at 2130, also stating that lagoon entrance was not fortified as previously supposed.

Proceeded as requested and received the remainder of the raider unit on board at 2330. The commanding officer of the raider unit reported to the group commander that he was satisfied that all surviving personnel of his command had been evacuated from the island.

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Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

It was decided at this time that because of (a) lack of suitable arms and equipment (b) a report by natives that no troops nor military installations existed on that island, and (c) a further report by the natives that the Japanese had bombed and strafed it that afternoon apparently under the impression that we had also occupied that island, the projected raid on Little Makin would not be made.

Accordingly the ARGONAUT was directed to proceed to base as previously directed and at 2353 M August 18, 1942, the NAUTILUS departed for Pearl.

The following morning the ward room was rigged as an operating room and five seriously wounded were operated on by the raider unit medical officer, Lieutenant William B. McCracken, U. S. Naval Reserve. These operations covered a period of more than 12 consecutive hours, and the skill, stamina, and devotion to duty exhibited by this officer upon this occasion is considered most praiseworthy and will be made the subject of special recommendation.

No personnel casualties nor losses were experienced outside of Task Unit 715:3 and final report on these will be made by the commander of the unit subsequent to arrival at Pearl. An estimate of personnel losses and casualties was submitted by despatch from this command on August 20, 1942.

Subsequent to the return to the ships of the raider unit it was learned that the following damage was done to enemy installations by the 6" gunfire from the NAUTILUS:

- (a) Natives reported "considerable" damage to enemy reserve area on Ukiangong Point.
- (b) One 3500 ton AP or AK, and one 1500 ton PG sunk in lagoon.

The latter is of course the sheerest good luck, as no accurate knowledge of the whereabouts of these vessels with relation to the fall of shot was had at the time of bombardment. Effort was made, however, by continuous shift in range and deflection to cover lagoon anchorage as thoroughly as possible.

The return trip to Pearl was made on the surface.

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Care of Fleet Postmaster,
San Francisco, California,
August 24, 1942.

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Subject: Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition.

During daylight, but in an WEATHERately patrolled by anti-submarine
craft this would prove impracticable, as would the use of flashing
lights. This was normal for the time of year and only on two occasions
did it have any adverse effect on the operation, both of them of
relatively minor consequence.

This presented one TIDAL INFORMATION of the problem
prior to its inception.

This is covered in more detail in the reports of the unit with
commanders. In general it may be said that both current, and rise
and fall of tide coincided fairly closely with expectations. The
relative affect of these were not properly evaluated however, it
being found that the state of tide of the reef was of relatively
minor import while the current along the reef affected the landing
and recovery operations considerably.

greater force to the NAVIGATIONAL AIDS will be broken down
into its components of bearings, soundings, pilot facilities, bearing
sight. This constituted one of the most baffling angles of the problem,
as aside from so called tangents on the island there were practically
no distinguishing landmarks. These tangents when ships were in
position for landing troops crossed at an angle of approximately
160° thus being of little value in establishing position laterally
along the beach. It was discovered moreover, that existing charts of
the atoll were quite inaccurate in this area. It was also indicated
that contrary to information contained in the Coast Pilot depths to
eastward of the barrier reef did not drop off sharply but rather
shelved in from a distance of about 1½ miles from the reef.

normally associated with the official operation of a submarine over
protracted periods. ANTI-SUBMARINE MEASURES able to further
increase the working space available to the submarine.
None, except as indicated in narrative i. e. two bombs dropped
from aircraft.

provided. It seems however COMMUNICATIONS visual practically re-
mains "in the" for that purpose.
This proved to be one of the most unsatisfactory features of
the operation, particularly with regard to ship to shore communication.
The need for supplementary means of communication to voice radio
was apparent, particularly during daylight hours, and in future
operations, this feature should be gone into more thoroughly.

In the apparent absence of anti-submarine craft free use was
made of the QC equipment for communication between the two submarines

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during daylight, but in an area adequately patrolled by anti-submarine craft this would prove impracticable, as would the use of flashing light at dark, a method which was also sparingly used.

HEALTH AND HABITABILITY

This presented one of the least known factors of the problem prior to its inception. True evaluation of this subject cannot be made until after opportunity is presented to compare notes with the ARGONAUT upon arrival at Pearl; but based upon experience gained during the rehearsal, prior to the start of the expedition, it may be assumed that conditions existing on the ARGONAUT were considerably less favorable than those of the NAUTILUS due to the greater number of men carried in the former, and her internal arrangement. Consequently unfavorable comment made in regard to conditions existing on the NAUTILUS may be expected to apply with greater force to the ARGONAUT. Habitability will be broken down into its components of berthing, messing, toilet facilities, bathing facilities, ventilation or air conditioning and diversion.

Berthing: This is the least troublesome of the factors involved, except perhaps as regards accommodations for officers. With proper study, planning and alteration it is believed that an appreciable increase of berthing space can be provided over that arranged for in this instance. It should be appreciated however, that by this, berthing space is meant just that, a berth for a man to recline in, and that any increase in this space must be made at the expense of space already existing, which in turn means a decrease in space normally associated with the efficient operation of a submarine over protracted periods. It is not considered advisable to further increase the berthing space at this time, until more experience is had with the present installation. For a period up to three weeks it is not considered that the present arrangement works undue hardship upon the personnel, particularly if a more comfortable bunk is provided. It means however, that the individual practically remains "in bed" for that period except for meals and for answering calls of nature. This applies of course only to the troops, although the ship's company when off watch must resort to similar practice.

In order to lessen the effects of such confinement and to insure as far as possible that the troops arrived at their destination in the best possible physical condition, it was the practice on this expedition while en route to the objective, to bring the troops

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on deck twice daily for air and exercise, once in the morning and again immediately after dark. The daylight period was discontinued when within range of enemy air patrols. This practice appeared to keep the troops in good physical condition, and the risk involved is considered warranted under the then existing conditions.

Messing: With careful planning and good management it is considered that the present facilities are adequate, and little complaint was heard on this score. It is required on the average three hours to serve each meal in six sittings, which in turn meant that the galley was preparing meals almost continuously, and this in turn resulted in higher temperatures in the ship, particularly while submerged.

Toilet Facilities: These, though overcrowded, proved adequate with proper supervision.

Bathing Facilities: Due to the need for conservation of fresh water, particularly at the start of the expedition, bathing facilities were almost non-existent during the outgoing trip. It is believed however, that with careful supervision and training adequate provision can be made for an essential amount of bathing.

Ventilation and Air Conditioning: This factor is one that gives the group commander more concern than any other, as it has been demonstrated during the course of this expedition that with the ship sealed up for diving the air in the ship is rapidly vitiated and in the course of a submergence of more than 10 hours resort must be had to the use of soda-lime and oxygen.

Moreover, when operating in waters of high injection temperatures the effect of body heat and humidity greatly aggravates an already extremely uncomfortable condition, that the air conditioning equipment now installed is inadequate to handle.

It is believed that if circumstances required daily all-day submergence under conditions similar to that encountered on this expedition over a period of several consecutive days, the cumulative effect of a deficiency of properly conditioned air would be great enough to seriously impair the efficiency of both the troops and the ship's company. The obvious solution to this problem is to increase the amount of air conditioning equipment and hold to a minimum the period during which troops must be carried on board. Further research into this feature of habitability is urgently indicated.

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This is born out by the statement of the commanding officer of the NAUTILUS that his crew evidences greater exhaustion during the current expedition than on a previous war patrol in enemy waters of nearly triple the duration of the present one.

DIVERSION

This is relatively unimportant during an expedition of short duration, but might become a considerable factor in an extended one. The only facilities which come to mind at the present time which could be expanded are reading matter, card and acey ducey games, and record players.

PLANNING

This is faulty in that the matter was not placed in the hands of those responsible for this phase of staff work as a concrete proposition, in sufficient time to permit of a thorough and unhurried survey of the problem.

It is believed that the tendency was to make the plan in too detailed form and too inflexible. This undoubtedly stems from the history of guerrilla warfare and previous commando experience. It is submitted however, that in guerrilla warfare as well as in commando work the attacking force has most accurate knowledge of the terrain either from local knowledge or from intelligence reports, and in most cases detailed knowledge of the strength and disposition of the enemy forces as well. When such information is available detailed planning is an assurance of success. On the other hand where the unknown both in regard to enemy terrain and forces and to the capabilities of our forces assumes as large proportions as was the case in this instance, an inflexible plan is an invitation to catastrophe.

It is realized that with the element of surprise so important a factor, communication at the scene of action must be held to a minimum, but it is believed that by means of a general plan with wide latitude for change, and by more thorough indoctrination of the intentions and methods of the leader, plus as much field training of the entire naval and marine units as possible, the greater assurance of success under various conditions will be had, even if not of the magnitude of one lucky one achieved where everything went according to plan.

ORGANIZATION

This feature while generally satisfactory had several points

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which should be changed for future operations of this character:

a. A directing head of the expedition should be designated as early as practicable before the scheduled sailing date of the task group. Five days is not sufficient time in which to properly coordinate an organization requiring such team work and precision as a commando expedition.

b. The senior officers of both the naval and the marine corps sections of the organization were charged not only with organization and training of their respective units but with the planning of the expedition as well. This is considered to be bad practice in organizations of this size, as no staff is available to work out the details of the enterprise and consequently either the planning or the training must suffer as such an arrangement throws too much detail work upon the shoulders of one man.

c. The troops carried on each submarine should not be required to transfer or receive personnel to or from other units of the expedition. This was one of the primary causes of difficulty during the current expedition, as it resulted in considerable delay and confusion at the time of debarkation. If the groups are of different sizes due to variations in the troop-carrying capacity of the individual submarine, the tasks assigned the various groups should be in accordance with this difference. In this connection, it is considered that the individual groups should proceed directly from their submarine to the landing beach assigned rather than to attempt to rendezvous with other groups prior to landing, the submarine to approach the assigned location as closely as practicable. The necessity for this was demonstrated when strong currents and wind along the beach rendered the accurate approach to a landing on a long beach most difficult. The debarkation and landing under the proposed change must of course be done on an absolutely strict time schedule.

TRAINING

It is considered that in the time available every opportunity for training was utilized to the utmost. The methods used however, seem to be susceptible of improvement in some instances. It is considered for instance that more day and night rehearsal of approach, launching of boats, landing and recovery, are very much in order, together, with the field test of various systems of communications. It is realized that practical difficulties in the form of security

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measures may prevent such drill from being held on Oahu, but other outlying islands of suitable terrain might be utilized.

Another suggestion is that the marines who were largely self-taught in the handling of their rubber boats in the surf, be furnished the most experienced instructors available from such sources as the navy, coast guard, and Hawaiian surf-men.

MATERIAL

Several deficiencies came to light on this score, the most important of which are set forth below.

Rubber Boats. While being admirably suited for riding surf in to a landing their buoyancy and light draft make them difficult to handle in a chop with any wind blowing and also renders their passage out through the surf difficult under certain circumstances. It is considered that here the use of a diesel driven submarine type boat would prove most valuable in towing the boats in to the surf line where they were experiencing difficulty, and in acting as a seaward anchor for them in getting clear of the reef. Such a boat would also prove invaluable at times for intership communication. The risk accepted in hoisting it out is scarcely more than that involved in handling the rubber boats, and can be carried on simultaneously with such evolution. If forced to dive, the boat and possibly the coxswain would be sacrificed.

The need for additional air conditioning equipment has been indicated earlier in this report and should receive the highest priority.

Urgent need is felt for bombardment type ammunition for the 6" batteries of the submarines of this type. It is recommended that such be obtained at the earliest practicable date.

In order to decrease the wash from the limber holes in the vicinity of the boat loading stations, it is recommended that experimentally limber holes in this location be blanked off.

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

This expedition, the first of its kind so far as is known, in history, is considered to have successfully accomplished its primary mission, i.e. the destruction of enemy troops and installations on

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The measure of this success is not as great as had been hoped, and the losses sustained in men and equipment by our own forces were greater than had been anticipated. The reasons for this are fairly obvious from a consideration of the narratives of the expedition, but may be briefly set forth as follows: (a) Semi-alert state of the enemy (b) change of landing plan, necessitated by debarking difficulties (c) failure of ship-shore communication (d) difficulties encountered by raider unit in clearing the reef upon attempted return to the ships (e) inflexibility of general plan (f) inexperience (g) lack of sufficient training.

It is considered that against weakly held enemy outlying stations and when surface patrols are weak or non-existent that this manner of raiding offers excellent chances of success. In this instance even though the enemy had been expecting the raid for three days, previous to its inception, the landing was effected undetected and had not an accidental discharge of one of our firearms occurred thus alerting the enemy, a complete surprise would have been attained.

With further experience, the strengthening of fire power on the part of the raider units, and an increase in the number of submarine units, it is considered that possibly enemy stations of considerable strength may be successfully raided; except where effective night surface patrols are encountered, the submarine being particularly vulnerable while debarking or embarking troops.

The experience had in this instance when efforts to reembark in the face of practically impossible surf conditions, almost resulted in disaster, indicated that the time and locality of embarkation within certain limits, should be designated by the commander of the shore forces, and not set forth arbitrarily in the operation order. In this connection it was revealed here that the time necessary to complete mopping-up operations is greatly in excess of that previously thought necessary. This might not be the case if accurate knowledge of terrain and enemy forces were available prior to the raid.

It is strongly believed that except for possible additional periscope reconnaissance, that only one objective should be attempted during any one expedition, as the chances of successfully carrying

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it through are greatly reduced in the face of enemy alertness, and the inevitable fatigue of the troops and dislocation of their equipment after the initial raid.

3. Finally the group commander is unable to adequately express his feelings in regard to the privilege accorded him in being placed in charge of this expedition. With the spirit existing among the officers and men of this task group, failure of the enterprise was impossible. In the face of lack of opportunity for adequate preparation and training, the spirit of cooperation existing between the units of the group and their determination to overcome difficulties large and small as they arose was inspiring to observe.

Although it is most difficult to single out from such a group of officers and men, where everyone from the unit commanders down to the newest mess cook or mess attendant, gave of their utmost towards the success of the expedition, the group commander submits for special consideration the performance of duty of the following named officers and men as indicated below:

Lt.Col. Evans Carlson, U.S.M.C.R. -

Commanding officer of Task Unit 7.15.3 for his splendid leadership and untiring efforts in organizing, training, and taking into successful action against an unexpectedly powerful enemy force, the Marine Raider Unit.

Lt.Comdr. Wm. H. Brockman, Jr., U.S.N. - Commanding Task Unit 7.15.1
and

Lt.Comdr. J. H. Pierce, U.S.N. - Commanding Task Unit 7.15.2 -

for their outstanding display of leadership and initiative, as well as their courage and resourcefulness.

Lt.Comdr. R. S. Rooney, U.S.N., U.S.S. NAUTILUS
and

Lt.Comdr. F. M. Parker, U.S.N., U.S.S. ARGONAUT -

for their outstanding performance of duty as navigators of the respective ships.

Lieutenant W. B. McCracken, (MC), U.S.N.P. -

Medical officer assigned Company "B" of the Raider Unit for his

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conduct under fire as described by his commanding officer, his rescue from drowning of two brother officer, and his outstanding performance of duty as a surgeon when for more than 12 continuous hours he carried on successfully a series of six major operations under most disadvantageous conditions as to facilities.

I. R. Wetmore, CRM(AA), U.S.N. - U.S.S. NAUTILUS -

for his outstanding performance of duty as sound and radar operator in manning his equipment almost without rest for a period of more than 72 hours.

F. R. Porterfield, CBM(AA), U.S.N. - U. S. S. NAUTILUS -

for his splendid performance of duty in taking charge of the unrigging and securing of the returned raiders boats and equipment over a period of 48 hours.

L. V. Kelly, CCStd(PA), U.S.N. - U. S. S. NAUTILUS -

for his outstanding performance of duty in meeting the unprecedented demands placed upon his commissary force in feeding more than double the usual number of men his organization is normally called upon to handle.

Robert V. Allard, Sgt., U.S.M.C.R. - Second Marine Raider Battalion

Dallas H. Cook, SGT., U.S.M.C. - Second Marine Raider Battalion

John I. Kerns, Pvt., U.S.M.C.R. - Second Marine Raider Battalion

Richard N. Olbert, PFC, U.S.M.C.R. - Second Marine Raider Battalion

Donald R. Robertson, Pvt., U.S.M.C. - Second Marine Raider Battalion

for their heroism in volunteering for duty in and manning a rescue boat sent to the aid of their commanding officer and comrades who were in a most dangerous position ashore. These five men knew they were in imminent danger of enemy air attack in an open boat, yet eagerly volunteered for the duty. After contacting their commanding officer they and the boat in which they were, was observed to be heavily strafed by an enemy plane. They are up to the present time missing.

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The cases cited above have all come to the personal attention of the group commander while on board the NAUTILUS. Other deserving cases may and probably do exist in the two other Task Units and if so will be made the subject of separate correspondence.

/signed/
John M. HAINES,
Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding Task Group 7.15.

Copy to:

ComSouPac (1)
CinCPac (1)
ComSubRon 4 (1)
ComTaskUnit 7.15.3 - (1)
CSD 42 - (3)

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TASK UNIT 7.15.3
Hd., on board USS NAUTILUS, at sea,
21 August, 1942.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander, Submarines, Pacific Fleet.
Subject: Operations on MAKIN, August 17-18, 1942.
Reference: (a) Operation Order No. 1-42, Task Group 7.15,
6 August, 1942.
(b) Operation Order No. 1-42, Task Unit 7.15.3,
7 August, 1942.
(c) Organisation of Task Unit 7.15.3
Enclosures: (1) Copy of reference (c).

1. In compliance with reference (a) this task unit proceeded to MAKIN on the USS ARGONAUT and USS NAUTILUS as the landing force component of Task Group 7.15. Reference (b) covered the plan for the landing, except that the time of landing was changed to 0500 when it was found that daylight began at 0525. Landing was actually made at 0500 on the 17th, and the last troops were withdrawn at 2000 on the 18th, at which time the island of BUTARITARI was in our control.

2. NARRATIVE:

(a) Approach to the debarkation point (Point Baker) was made on 17 August according to schedule. A strong on shore wind added to the difficulties of embarking in the boats. Heavy swells and the necessity for keeping the submarines moving in order to avoid being carried on to the reef made it impossible to assemble boats alongside the NAUTILUS for the take off, as had been planned. Failure of many motors to start augmented the difficulty of establishing control. The resulting confusion in the darkness of the night made a quick change plan for the landing imperative if we were to get in before daylight and have a semblance of control when we landed. I decided to take both companies to the same beach and passed the word as best I could for all boats to follow me. I headed on a course which would take us to a point generally opposite GOVERNMENT WHARF (Beach "Z"). Fifteen of the eighteen boats actually landed here. Two boats landed a mile north, the occupants joining our main force during the fire fight. One boat, containing Lieutenant Peatross and eleven men, landed over a mile to the south which placed this group in rear of the enemy when the battle started. I was without knowledge of it until about 1400.

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(b) Both companies were badly intermingled on landing. However, we had reached the shore undetected and there was no cause for alarm. Security was placed along the higher group (five feet) above the shore, and under this protection the force was reorganized. However, while the reorganization was in progress one man accidentally discharged his piece, giving the alarm. I immediately directed Lieutenant Plumley, commanding Company "A", to move his company across the island, seize the road on the lagoon side, and report our location with relation to the wharves. This time was 0530 and dawn was beginning to break.

(c) At about 0545 Lieutenant Plumley reported that his point was at GOVERNMENT WHARF and that he had taken GOVERNMENT HOUSE without opposition. I directed him to deploy across the island and advance south on the JAPANESE TRADING STATION. At the same time Captain Coyte, commanding Company "B", was directed to place his company in reserve, and to provide for the security of our left flank. A few minutes later the 1st Platoon of "A" Company made contact with the enemy along the lagoon road near the native hospital. It continued to advance until stopped by an enemy machine opposite our right flank. Enemy reinforcements came up by truck and were forced to unload three hundred yards down the road by our Boys .55 cal. anti-tank rifles. By 0630 our center and left were heavily engaged.

(d) Natives moving north from the village of BUTARITARI ahead of the enemy troops had reported to me that the bulk of the JAPANESE were at ON CHONG'S Wharf, while others were on UKIANGONG POINT in the vicinity of the lakes. Consequently, I requested the submarines to fire on the Lake area of UKIANGONG in the vicinity of the causeway, hoping to cut off any reinforcements which might move from that direction. This mission was carried out promptly though it was impossible to spot for the firing from ashore. Subsequently the submarines were requested to fire on two ships which entered the lagoon from the west. One ship appeared to be a small transport of about 3,500 tons. The other was a patrol vessel of about 1,000 tons. Both were set on fire and sunk.

(e) By 0700 the pattern of enemy defense was apparent. It was built around four machine guns, two grenade throwers, automatic rifles and a flame thrower, with infantry supporting the automatic weapons and with a corps of snipers operating from the tops of coconut trees. The snipers and machine guns provided the most effective part of the resistance. Snipers were cleverly camouflaged and their fire was extremely effective.

(f) Snipers and machine gun fire had taken a heavy toll on our right flank, and little progress was being made there. I then directed that one platoon from Company "B" enter the line on the left of "A" Company. This maneuver was skillfully executed by Lieutenant Griffith. By 1130 the line was able to move forward

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though sniper continued to be a problem.

(g) At this time (1130) the first enemy planes appeared, two Navy reconnaissance planes (Type 95) arriving to scout the situation. After fifteen minutes, spent in circling the zone of action, they dropped two bombs and flew north. At 1320 a flight of twelve planes arrived. It consisted of two Kawanishi flying boats (four motored), four zero fighters, four Type 94 Reconnaissance-bombers and two Type 95 seaplanes. Bombing and strafing continued for an hour and a quarter. One of the Kawanishi bombers and one Type 95 landed on the lagoon off KING'S Pier. Both were engaged by our machine guns and one Boys Anti-tank rifle (.55 cal.), on our right flank. The Type 95 caught fire and burned. The Kawanishi, evidently hit by the Boys gun, attempted to take off. After circling violently several times it managed to take off only to crash into the lagoon. The final air attack on the 17th began at 1630 and lasted for thirty minutes.

(h) At about 1430 I was informed by natives that the Kawanishi plane had brought thirty-five reinforcements for the enemy. Others were expected to arrive in the next flight. At that time the center of our line was located in an area thick with foliage which provided an advantage for snipers. I decided to attempt to draw these snipers on to the ground more advantageous to us by withdrawing my right and center two hundred yards to a line where there was a good field of fire, while leaving my left extended so as to enfilade the advancing snipers. This maneuver was successfully accomplished. The principal gain to us came during the subsequent bombing (1630), when the planes thoroughly bombed the area we had recently vacated, inflicting casualties on their own troops.

(i) When the planes departed, at about 1700, I estimated the situation to be as follows:

Our mission was to destroy enemy forces and vital installations and to capture prisoners and documents. We had not accomplished our mission but we had inflicted heavy damage on enemy troops and we had sunk two planes. Our submarines had destroyed two ships. The enemy still appeared to be strong in our front, and he was in a position to receive reinforcements. The time agreed on for our withdrawal was 1930 (2100 at the latest), and we were expected to raid LITTLE MAKIN on the following morning. I could adopt one of two courses; (1) Continue the attack and make as much progress as possible before withdrawing. By pursuing this course there would be a chance of taking prisoners and of destroying installations, but the short time remaining before the withdrawal hour meant that relatively little could be accomplished, and the task of breaking off the engagement would be most difficult. (2) I could hold my present position and provide for an orderly withdrawal by stages so as to get away at the appointed time. I decided to adopt the latter course.

(j) At 1840 our line was shortened by pivoting on our

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left flank and swing the right back to the GOVERNMENT HOUSE. Boat crews went to prepare the boats. At 1900, a covering force having been established closer to the beach, the bulk of the force was withdrawn to the boats. At 1915 the boats began to enter the water from the outboard flanks and working progressively towards the center. The covering force of one squad, with myself, embarked at 1730 from the center after all other boats had left.

(k) The hour of 1930 had been selected for the retirement because darkness would have set in and the tide would be high, enabling boats to get over the reef. The surf had given us no trouble when coming in in the morning. It did not look tough, not nearly as tough as other surfs we had worked in, though rollers followed each other rapidly. No one was apprehensive of difficulty in getting through the surf. However, I failed to take into account the speed of the waves and the rapid succession in which they followed each other. The following hour provided a struggle so intense and so futile that it will forever remain a ghastly nightmare to those who participated. The experience of those in my own boat was typical. We walked the boat out to deep water and commenced paddling. The motor refused to work. The first three or four rollers were easy to pass. Then came the battle. Paddling rhythmically and furiously for all we were worth we would get over one roller only to be hit and thrown back by the next before we could gain momentum. The boat filled to the gun-ghales. We bailed. We got out and swan while pulling the boat - to no avail. We jettisoned the motor. Subsequently the boat turned over. We righted it, less equipment, and continued the battle. All this time I thought ours was the only boat having this difficulty, for the others had left ahead of us. However after nearly an hour of struggle men swan up to our stern and reported that their boat had gone back because the men were exhausted. They intended to rest, then walk the boat up the beach and try another spot. I directed our boat be turned around and returned to the beach for our men were equally exhausted. On arrival at the beach I found that over half the boats were there and that all men were in a state of extreme exhaustion. Most of their gear had been lost in the surf. The wounded, of who there were four stretcher cases and several ambulatory, were particularly helpless. I directed that the boats be pulled well up on the beach and that the men rest. Security was established with such arms as could be scraped together. Subsequent attempts were made by individual boats at other spots along the beach, but without success.

(l) At about 2100 Private Hawkins, one of those posted as security above the beach line, was challenged by a Japanese patrol of eight men. He opened fire with his automatic weapon and was fired on from two sides, the bullets entering his chest from two sides, seriously but not mortally wounding him. Investigation showed that he had killed three of the Japanese in the instant before he was shot. This incident showed that enemy resistance was no means ended.

(m) The situation at this point was extremely grave. Our initial retirement had been orderly, but the battle with the

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left flank and swing the right back to the GOVERNMENT HOUSE. Boat crews went to prepare the boats. At 1900, a covering force having been established closer to the beach, the bulk of the force was withdrawn to the boats. At 1915 the boats began to enter the water from the outboard flanks and working progressively towards the center. The covering force of one squad, with myself, embarked at 1930 from the center after all other boats had left.

(k) The hour of 1930 had been selected for the retirement because darkness would have set in and the tide would be high, enabling boats to get over the reef. The surf had given us no trouble when coming in in the morning. It did not look tough, not nearly as tough as other surfs we had worked in, though rollers followed each other rapidly. No one was apprehensive of difficulty in getting through the surf. However, I failed to take into account the speed of the waves and the rapid succession in which they followed each other. The following hour provided a struggle so intense and so futile that it will forever remain a ghastly nightmare to those who participated. The experience of those in my own boat was typical. We walked the boat out to deep water and commenced paddling. The motor refused to work. The first three or four rollers were easy to pass. Then came the battle. Paddling rhythmically and furiously for all we were worth we would get over one roller only to be hit and thrown back by the next before we could gain momentum. The boat filled to the gun-ghales. We bailed. We got out and swan while pulling the boat - to no avail. We jettisoned the motor. Subsequently the boat turned over. We righted it, less equipment, and continued the battle. All this time I thought ours was the only boat having this difficulty, for the others had left ahead of us. However after nearly an hour of struggle men swan up to our stern and reported that their boat had gone back because the men were exhausted. They intended to rest, then walk the boat up the beach and try another spot. I directed our boat be turned around and returned to the beach for our men were equally exhausted. On arrival at the beach I found that over half the boats were there and that all men were in a state of extreme exhaustion. Most of their gear had been lost in the surf. The wounded, of who there were four stretcher cases and several ambulatory, were particularly helpless. I directed that the boats be pulled well up on the beach and that the men rest. Security was established with such arms as could be scraped together. Subsequent attempts were made by individual boats at other spots along the beach, but without success.

(l) At about 2100 Private Hawkins, one of those posted as security above the beach line, was challenged by a Japanese patrol of eight men. He opened fire with his automatic weapon and was fired on from two sides, the bullets entering his chest from two sides, seriously but not mortally wounding him. Investigation showed that he had killed three of the Japanese in the instant before he was shot. This incident showed that enemy resistance was no means ended.

(m) The situation at this point was extremely grave. Our initial retirement had been orderly, but the battle with the

SECRET

surf had disorganized us and stripped us of our fighting power. Planes would undoubtedly return at daylight, and it was probable that a landing force would arrive. My plan was to await daylight, move to the north end of the island and attempt to find sufficient outrigger canoes to take us to the submarines. A check showed that 120 men were still on the beach, and there was no assurance that others had not landed at points farther away. Rain and the fact that most of the men had even stripped themselves of their clothes in the surf added to the general misery. This was the spiritual low point of the expedition.

(n) Shortly after daylight one group of men requested permission to make another try through the surf. After a terrific battle they made it. Other groups were then organized and followed. It was useless to send the wounded, especially the stretcher cases, so I directed Major Roosevelt, my Executive Officer, to return in one of the boats and take charge of our force on the submarines. My duty was to remain until the last man could be evacuated. A total of four boats got through safely before an air raid put an end to this piecemeal evacuation. Seventy men were left on the beach.

(o) It is necessary at this point to mention the devoted efforts of the officers and men of the submarines to relieve us. We were in communication with both subs by blinker through the night, our radios being useless. Early on the morning of the 18th they moved close to the beach, remaining there until enemy air forced them to dive. At 0740 one rubber boat with a motor which was operating left the NAUTILUS with five Marines who volunteered to come to our relief. The boat came to a point just outside the reef and shot a line to us. One man swam in with a message from the Commodore that the subs would remain off the island until we were evacuated. Planes came over and the boat headed out to sea. The boat was strafed and nothing more was seen of it or of the crew. The NAUTILUS signalled just before diving that she would return at 1930.

(p) On the 18th a total of four flights of planes came over between 0920 and 1730. It was evident from their actions that the enemy was confused as to the situation. Heavy bombers bombed the island north of BUTARITARI as well as the length of BUTARITARI itself. Natives from the north reported that LITTLE MAKIN was also bombed. The heaviest bombing on BUTARITARI was in the vicinity of ON CHONG'S and KING'S Wharves. By this time I had learned that the enemy force ashore consisted of only a few men who were widely scattered. I sent patrols out to gather food and to destroy the radio station at ON CHONG'S. A patrol on the north end of the island discovered and shot one Japanese marine. The patrol which went to ON CHONG'S shot another. I took a patrol and went over the battle field of the preceding day, checking our own dead and inspecting the enemy dead, searching for papers and collecting equipment with which to arm our own men,

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Total enemy dead on the field was 83. Opposite our right flank, where the enemy had sought shelter behind coconut palms, our machine gun AP bullets had passed through the bodies of the trees, killing the men on the opposite side. Thirty enemy dead lay here on the lagoon side of the road. To the east machine guns were surrounded by their dead crews, killed by our grenades and riflemen. Our own dead on this northern front numbered eleven, including my intelligence officer, Lieutenant Holton, who had been up on the right flank looking for me. Our other three men killed in action were members of Lieutenant Peatross' boat crew, which landed behind the enemy lines to the south.

(q) It is necessary here to mention the part taken in the action by Lieutenant Peatross and his eleven men. I was without knowledge of his whereabouts until about 1400 on the 17th when one of his joined our main force, having penetrated through the lines. Peatross found himself east and south of the JAPANESE TRADING STATION after landing. He had missed the rest of the boats after leaving the submarines, and, heading for shore, the current carried him to the south. Firing began to the north as he landed. He moved inland and then turned north. When near the TRADING STATION he engaged enemy troops along the lagoon side road, killing eight. Three of his own men were killed. During the balance of the day he continued to harass the enemy's rear, searched houses, destroyed a small radio station, picked off messengers and burned a truck. At 1930 he reembarked and, after a difficult struggle with the surf, succeeded in regaining the NAUTILUS. The presence of mind, judgement, skill, courage and devotion to duty displayed by this your officer, who was under fire for the first time, are considered outstanding. Recommendation for commendation will be made the subject of a separate letter.

(r) Food in the form of canned meats, fish and biscuit had been found at the JAPANESE TRADING STATION. During the afternoon of the 18th I had moved our force back to the vicinity of GOVERNMENT HOUSE, where water and cover were available, and where the form of an old defense position provided added protection. Patrols were operated from here. Natives had assured men that there were no guns on FLINK POINT or KOTABU ISLAND. It was decided to evacuate the remainder of the force at 1930 by way of the lagoon and the south lagoon entrance. A small sloop with an auxiliary motor was anchored off the JAPANESE TRADING STATION. Lieutenant Lamb and two men one possessing experience with marine engines, volunteered to row out to the sloop and explore the possibility of using her for the evacuation. At the time, 1700, I had a patrol in the vicinity of the TRADING STATION destroying stores. We covered Lieutenant Lamb's approach to the sloop. As his boat arrived alongside shots were heard. The party boarded but departed a few minutes later. Lamb reported that when they arrived he was fired at by a pistol thrust through a porthole. The bullet going wild. A hand grenade was tossed through the port and after they boarded they finished off the Japanese marine who was guarding the ship. As the ship was half full of water and in a delapidated condition it was unusable.

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(s) The patrol I took to the south late in the afternoon was for the purpose of accomplishing what destruction of stores was possible in the time remaining. The most important job proved to be a quantity of aviation gasoline (Associated), estimated to aggregate from 700 to 1000 barrels. This was fired by shooting into the barrels and using TNT for ignition. On this trip the office of the Japanese Commandant, who had been killed in the battle, was searched and all available papers, plus a chart, were secured.

(t) The evacuation was executed from the lagoon side by carrying four boats (all of our own which remained serviceable) across from the sea side. Natives provided one outrigger, thus affording space for our seventy men, including the stretcher wounded. The evacuation was supervised by Captain Coyte and Lieutenant Lamb, the latter twice wounded and nearly drowned on the 17th, and narrowly missing death at the sloop on the 18th. All five boats were lashed abeam of each other. Two boats had motors, though only one worked throughout. With what few souvenirs of the battle our limited space could accommodate we set off across the lagoon at 2030. The NAUTILUS had previously been informed of our desire that she meet us off FLINK POINT. The passage was distressingly slow, but there was no surf to interfere. Ashore the only indication of life came from the billowing flames of the gasoline fire. OFF FLINK POINT we flashed a signal and received an immediate response from the NAUTILUS. At 2308 we arrived alongside.

3. COMMENTS: Our estimate of the situation at MAKIN was not far from the mark. The island was held by Japanese Marines numbering about 100, with a reserve force of about 100 (civilians available for active duty in an emergency). The defense consisted of lockouts along the beaches and a mobile reserve. The reserve was held at ON CHONG'S, for the attack was expected to come there or in the vicinity of GOVERNMENT WHARF. No guns were in position off the lagoon entrance south), and there was no evidence of mines. UKIANGONG POINT was in the process of being prepared for use as a dispersion area for stores, according to the natives. The AP which was sunk was reported by natives to have 60 marines on board.

A small radio station was located at the JAPANESE TRADING STATION, a larger one at ON CHONG'S, and it is believed that a third may have been located on UKIANGONG.

The lagoon off ON CHONG'S and KING'S Wharves provides a good anchorage for seaplanes and the Japanese used it as such. It is difficult to understand why a better defense had not been prepared, for no wire obstacles were observed. Natives reported that the sea beach opposite ON CHONG'S had been wired.

The natives reported that the enemy had three days advance notice of our arrival. In preparation the defending force had held maneuvers up and down BUTARITARI between ON CHONG'S and GOVERNMENT WHARF. The snipers which were located in the tree tops between GOVERNMENT HOUSE and STONE PIER were said by the natives to have been in position for three days.

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While this hardly seems credible it is true that when the troops arrived on our front they were fully clothed even to wrapped puttees.

The natives, incidentally, were most cooperative throughout. They cut coconuts that the men might quench their thirst with the milk. They carried ammunition for the machine gunners. On one occasion Corporal Barnes handed his Garand rifle to a native while he was correcting the position of the men of his squad on the firing line. The native shot two snipers from trees. Joe Miller, the native Chief of Police, and his cousin, William Miller, were unusually helpful. They instructed how to form a local constabulary and told to retrieve weapons which we lost in the surf and use them for this purpose against the Japanese. They promised to do so.

Our doctrine of defense against aircraft was to take cover and remain immobile. It was very effective for there were no casualties among our ground troops from attacking aircraft.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS: Probably the most important result of the raid was the experience gained and the opportunity now afforded to organize raids which will be more effective and less costly to us. Some of the errors made have been noted in the above narrative. Specifically I would list the following with recommendations for their correction:

(a) The plan should provide for the subdivision of task units moving directly to the landing beach from the submarine to which each is assigned. This movement must be executed precisely on a time schedule, and there must be sufficient drill in the operation to assure that it will go forward without a hitch.

(b) The SCR 536 radio-telephone is inadequate for ship to shore communication, probably due to the denseness of the foliage and because the submarine is so low in the water. The landing force must take a TBX ashore for this purpose.

(c) Raiding operations should not have an inflexible time limit imposed. The time for withdrawal should be determined by the commander ashore in accordance with the dictates of the situation there. As in the case at MAKIN, it is possible to take over a small island for one or two days and withdraw at will by the most feasible route.

(d) Rubber boats can be landed safely through quite a heavy surf and on beaches unsuitable for Higgins boats. But they cannot take off against such surfs without adequate power. From this truth derives the fact that if motors are available rubber boats with paddles can still be used for landing operations provided it is planned to take over the island and withdraw at will.

(e) The present type of gasoline operated outboard motor (Evinrude) is entirely inadequate for raiding jobs because of its unreliability. Men of these two companies had been thoroughly trained in the use of these motors. The motors had been meticulously overhauled immediately prior to the expedition. Yet most of them failed. It has been reported to men that there is an electric outboard motor on the market which is waterproofed. Such a motor

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would appear to fit our need. It is recommended that this matter be explored immediately and that a satisfactory motor be obtained.

(f) Our men must be trained in sniping from tree tops and in combating this type of sniping. Japanese sniping was excellent and their snipers were so well concealed that it was necessary to shoot off branches of trees in order to get the snipers -- a most uneconomical operation.

(g) In my own organization I intend to increase the proportion of Garand (M-1) rifles and Bars per squad, and decrease the proportion of Thompson sub-machine guns. The Thompson gun is not sufficiently accurate against snipers, while the Garand is both accurate and possesses a high rate of fire, which give an advantage over the Japanese.

(h) I am more convinced than ever of the value of raids in the conduct of war in the PACIFIC, especially raids from submarines. There is no question that the Japanese command in the Eastern MARSHALLS was confused by this raid. It did not know how our force got ashore, at what points it had landed, whether it was merely a raid or an occupational force or whether it was the spearhead of a larger force which intended to drive into the MARSHALLS. Such raids can be used to confuse the enemy, pull him off base and open the way for the drive of a larger force against vulnerable and vital points.

(i) Finally, I would invite the attention of all military leaders to the illustration provided by our situation at MAKIN on the night of August 17th which emphasizes a truth that is as old as the military profession: no matter how bad your own situation may appear to be, there is always the possibility that the situation of the enemy is much worse.

6. I cannot close this report without expressing the deep appreciation of the officers and men of this Task Unit for the magnificent cooperation and support afforded them by the commander of Task Group 7.15, the officers and men of the USS NAUTILUS and the USS ARGONAUT, and of those officers and men of the Submarine Base, PEARL HARBOR, who aided with the preparations for the raid. There was always a free and unrestrained exchange of effort and ideas. A harmony of spirit and of unremitting self-sacrifice reigned throughout the expedition which could not but induce a corresponding spirit in the men under my command. This unity of mind and effort brought success to the expedition.

As for the officers and men of this Task Unit, their action and attitude left nothing to be desired. During the action at MAKIN units were frequently intermingled, yet each individual displayed initiative, resourcefulness and willingness to work effectively in whatever team he found himself. None had been under fire before, but there was no hesitation about closing with the enemy. In fact, most of our casualties came from careless exposure to enemy fire in order to "take out" the opposition. There were

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many examples of extraordinary heroism which will be made the subject of special recommendation at a later date.

Special credit is due to the members of the Medical Corps, particularly to Lieutenants W. B. MacCracken and Stephen L. Stigler, (MC) USNR. On the night of the 17th Doctor Stigler managed to get aboard the ARGONAUT, and he took charge of the wounded there. Doctor MacCracken remained ashore until the final evacuation, and then spent the next twenty-four hours operating.

This operation justified in full the policy of assigning one medical officer to each Raider Company

/signed/

EVANS F. CARLSON,
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve.

Special Agent in Charge
 (SG) [unclear] [unclear]
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TASK UNIT 7.15.3
21 August 1942.

**ORGANIZATION OF TASK UNIT 7.15.3 for
 RAID ON MAKIN.**

<u>Task Unit Headquarters:</u>		<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
	Commanding Officer	1	
	Executive	1	
	Intelligence Officer	1	
	Demolition Officer	1	
	Interpreter		1
	Radiomen-runners		3
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		4	4
<u>Company "A"</u>			
Co. Hq.:			
	Company Commander	1	
	Demolition Officer	1	
	Gunnery Sergeant		1
	Radio operators		2
	Runners		3
	Demolition men		7
	Anti-tank riflemen		2
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		2	15
1st Platoon:	Platoon Leader	1	
	Platoon Sergeant		1
	Platoon Guide		1
	Radioman-runner		1
	3 Squads		30
2nd Platoon	Platoon Leader		1
	Radioman-runner		1
	Platoon Guide		1
	3 Squads		30
Weapons Platoon	Platoon Leader		1
	2 MG Sections		18
Medical Section	Medical Officer	1	
	Corpsmen		2
	TOTAL COMPANY:	<hr/>	<hr/>
		4	102
<u>Company "B":</u>			
Co Hq:			
	2 Rifle Platoons (1 Off & 33 Enl each)	2	15
	1 Weapons Platoon (2 MG Sec)	2	66
	Medical Section	1	19
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1	2
	TOTAL COMPANY	5	102
	TOTAL TASK UNIT:	13	208

Serial 01002

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
September 3, 1942.

SECRET

From: The Commander Submarines, Pacific Fleet.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
Subject: Report on Raider Expedition against MAKIN -
comments on.
Reference: (a) Comsubpac conf. despatch 270351 of
August 1942.
(b) Comsubpac conf. despatch 270354 of
August 1942.

1. This is the first operation of this type in which submarines of this task force have taken part. That is considered remarkable. Many lessons were learned by the submarine personnel concerned and the experience gained by the Raider Battalion should prove invaluable in later operations.

2. For expeditions of this type, the submarine makes an excellent transport for a task force of moderate size. Being able to arrive at the scene of operations with great assurance of being undetected and even observing the island before attack lends confidence to all hands. Surprise of the enemy is most essential.

3. Steps to be taken in preparing for an expedition of this type in the future are:

- (a) Communications-A more suitable radio should be provided for communication between the submarines and the battalion ashore. Training under service conditions should be held.
- (b) Air Conditioning-The two submarines used were poorly equipped in this respect for their normal complement. Additional units were added, but personnel were still uncomfortable.
- (c) Complete Raider Unit on each Submarine-That is, boats, etc., for a group of marines should be carried on their own submarine.

FF12-10/Al6-3

SUBMARINES PACIFIC FLEET

Ee

Serial 01002

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
September 3, 1942.

SECRET

Subject: Report of Raider Expedition against MAKIN-
comments on.

- (d) Training - As much night rehearsal and training as time and conditions permit should be held.
- (e) Boat Engines - The engines used in the rubber boats on this expedition were not satisfactory. It is understood that a better engine has been found. This should be given all possible attention. Slightly different conditions on the night of August 17 might have resulted in disaster for 120 men from this cause alone.
- (f) Ship's Boats - Diesel powered submarine boats would have been of great assistance on this expedition. In future operations, submarines should take at least one such boat.
- (g) Bombardment Ammunition - Six-inch bombardment ammunition was not available in Pearl Harbor for this trip. It is now available and is being placed on all submarines with six-inch guns. It should be carried on all future expeditions.
- (h) Periscope Reconnaissance - If time permits, more periscope reconnaissance should be provided for. In this expedition, time was not available.
- (i) Planning - Commander Submarines, Pacific Fleet, cannot concur with the Group Commander that it was bad practice to charge the senior officers of the marine and naval units with the planning of the expedition as well as the organization and training of their respective units. It is considered a fundamental principal that an officer a job work out his own details in accordance with a general directive which is not to restrictive.

SECRET
REF ID: A66800
SAFE-TOP SECRET

FF12-10/A16-3

SUBMARINES PACIFIC FLEET

Ee

Serial 01002

Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
September 3, 1942.

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Subject: Report of Raider Expedition against MAKIN -
comments on.

4. The Commander Submarines, Pacific Fleet considers that this expedition was carried to a successful conclusion. Recommendations for awards are being made in separate correspondence.

5. A list of casualties was reported in references (a) and (b).

/signed/
R. H. ENGLISH.

Copy to:
Cominch
ComSoWesPac
ComSubsSoWesPac
Comsubron 4
Comsubdiv 42
CO 2nd Marine Rdr. BN.
CO ARGONAUT
CO NAUTILUS

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

October 19, 1942.

WSP

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

For your information there are attached hereto a message from me to MacArthur and his reply, and also the previous messages of his to which he refers.

My communication to him was in an effort to see if there was any way in which further assistance might be immediately given to the Navy in the Solomons. His reply, as well as his communique of last night, indicate that apparently everything possible is being done to cripple the superior Japanese Naval force between Rabaul and the Shortland Islands in the southeast.

I had previously sent a confidential wire to General Harmon, our Air commander under Ghoraley, to find out if in his opinion there were any instructions that might be given from Washington to MacArthur to provide support for the Solomons operation. He replied there was nothing, that MacArthur's Air was doing all that numbers, poor communications and the difficult weather conditions permitted.

Yesterday we ordered a heavy bomber group from Hawaii to Australia to be replaced immediately by another and partially trained group from the States. The more difficult part of the transaction is the movement of the ground maintenance crews. That will be accomplished by the crews from the States, with all the necessary materiel, being shipped immediately from San Francisco to Hawaii, where the men will disembark but the materiel will remain aboard. The crews from the Hawaiian group, which will already have departed, will embark and the vessel will proceed to the Southwest Pacific.

Another move is being made transferring a fighter squadron of P-40 planes from Hawaii to the South Pacific and another fighter squadron (P-39's) from Christmas Island to the South Pacific. Meanwhile we are carefully resurveying the situation in Alaska to see if we are justified in removing a fighter group from there in order to find replacements for Hawaii.

A detailed report on MacArthur's New Guinea operation, now in progress, will be sent to you today.

William Case
Chief of Staff.



Incls.

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Office Chief of Staff
Telephone 3542

October 16, 1942

To: GENERAL MacARTHUR
CINC SWPA

Number 2716

I have just gone over Naval charts on Japanese Naval surface concentrations in Bougainville Ports and to the south, especially the Shortland Islands - Faisi Area, altogether totaling 5 or 6 battleships, 3 carriers and many cruisers and destroyers. Another carrier task force has been operating south and southeast of Guadalcanal but unlocated. Our Navy has but 1 carrier at present in the South Pacific.

Japs have outranged our artillery on Guadalcanal, keeping airfield under constant bombardment from land and occasional heavy bombardment from ships. Their Naval superiority is preventing reinforcement and resupply, especially gasoline. Situation therefore most critical.

It is evident that supporting action of some sort must be taken immediately and at the moment we can only see possibility of increased frequency of bomber activity from New Guinea directed against Naval task forces referred to. This apparently can only be managed by accepting the hazard of basing heavy bomber group at Moresby and operating medium bombardment from Milne Bay to maximum possible extent. Can this be managed and how quickly?

General Harmon reports this morning that Admiral Ghormley feels that Kenny's Air Force has cooperated with him so far as difficulties of communications, logistics, primitive operating conditions, enemy action and violent prevalent weather frontal systems would permit.

I suppose the foregoing proposal would mean some weakening of air support of your Ground operations in New Guinea. However the situation in the Solomons is so critical that such action seems imperative. Since the Japanese have committed themselves to the maximum effort in the Solomons can anything be done to expedite your operation to seize the airfields on the northeast Guinea coast?

MARSHALL

Originator: SGS

Info. Copies: OPD

CM-OUT-05130 (10-17-42) 1602Z ems

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C O P Y

From: Brisbane

To: General Marshall

October 17, 1942.

Re 2716, Oct.16

From inception I have been acutely aware of the critical situation in the Solomons and in fact anticipated it and reported jointly with Ghormley in radio O-81012, July 8, addressed to the Chief of Staff and COMINCH, and my C-381, August 30, to the Chief of Staff in which I invited attention to the acute danger developing and begged review of the question by the President and the Chiefs of Staff lest it become too late.

The action in the South Pacific has been supported to maximum capacity of my air force, employing all planes that can reach targets. Ghormley three times has radioed his appreciation. Turner has also communicated to that effect. While it is impossible to assess all damage it is believed that our bombardment missions have had a vital effect upon the success of operations to date by pounding hostile air and supply installations. The major effort has been expended in Rabaul area because it can be reached with full bomb loads while planes going to Solomons area must carry Bomb bay tanks, reducing bomb load by 50%.

I am in constant communication with Ghormley coordinating my reconnaissance with his and have given immediate priority to his requests for reconnaissance and attack. Airplanes capable of affecting his situation have been used exclusively to that end. Three times within the last week I have ordered missions on Ghormley's request, using every bomber available during the period. My own operations in New Guinea have been supported only by short-range aircraft. Two (2) heavy squadrons are now maintained constantly at Moresby. The existing landing strip at Milne Bay will not permit use of B-17's or B-26's, but we are rushing construction of another strip. B-25's have not sufficient range to operate from there, and B-26's are limited in number with practically no deliveries being made to SWPA.

My operations to capture the north coast of New Guinea are in full swing. I am greatly hampered by the total lack of light shipping, landing boats and barges which I have previously requested. In their absence I am moving overland and by air. Supply is the controlling factor and must be accomplished by native carrier and by air. Improvised landing fields have been and are being prepared. One regiment, transported by air to Wanigela is now moving up the coast. The Australians are moving slowly toward Kokoda. American troops are moving over a trail to the eastward. I expect to improvise at the proper moment a landing field in the Markham Valley to make possible the transport of a U.S. regiment. Supply difficulties are incredible and limit speed of movement and size of forces, and are of course multiplied by lack of shipping and shortage of transport planes. The possibility of success

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of the movement and the time factor are still unpredictable. Under severe pressure from this headquarters, much progress has been made beginning with the development of Port Moresby, which had initially a garrison of militia, 1 landing strip without even parking space for planes and a port capacity of only 500 tons a day. Reference is made to my radio Q-147.

I am impelled to refer again to my radio C-381, August 30. The situation anticipated then has now developed. It is now necessary to prepare action that must be accomplished beforehand in preparation for possible disaster in the Solomons. If we are defeated in the Solomons, as we must be unless the Navy accepts successfully the challenge of the enemy surface fleet, the entire Southwest Pacific will be in gravest danger. Information has already been derived from enemy sources that an attack on Milne Bay and possibly elsewhere in New Guinea is contemplated for mid-November.

I urge that the entire resources of the United States be diverted temporarily to meet the critical situation; that shipping be made available from any source; that 1 corps be dispatched immediately; that all available heavy bombers be ferried here at once; that urgent action be taken to increase the air strength at least to the full complement allotted for this area; that immediate action be taken to prepare bases for Naval operations on the east coast of Australia; that the British Eastern Fleet be moved to the west coast of Australia.

MacArthur

SECRET

GHQ Southwest Pacific Area Communique No. 190 October 19.

Northwestern Sector: Reconnaissance activity only.

Northeastern Sector: Solomons: Buin. In support of Solomons operations, Allied heavy bombers executed four coordinated night attacks on this enemy advance air and naval base. Flares were used to illuminate the targets in the first attack and twenty-two tons of bombs, including many 1,000 pounders dropped among cruisers, destroyers and transports. The first formation bombed and strafed the airdrome and struck at shipping. In the second attack, three enemy cruisers are believed to have been hit. The third group bombed a large seaplane tender and cargo vessels. In the final attack a cargo vessel was strafed and set on fire, and seven flying boats were destroyed or damaged. The last raid saw enemy vessels burning fiercely as the result of earlier attacks. Enemy fighters attempted interception but were unsuccessful and driven off. All of our planes returned.

Manus Island: An Allied armed reconnaissance unit strafed an enemy weather reporting vessel in Lorengau Harbor, setting it on fire.

New Britain: Allied medium bombers attacks and destroyed an enemy seaplane on the water off the south coast and bombed and set fire to the dock and village on Pilelo Island.

New Guinea: Mubo. Allied medium units bombed and strafed the enemy occupied village, causing fires and troop casualties.

Buna: Allied offensive reconnaissance units bombed the Wairopi area.

Owen Stanley Area: Our ground forces have forced the enemy north of Templeton. In sharp combat during the day, the enemy's casualties were relatively heavy. We captured mortars, light machine guns and other equipment. The enemy launched several local counter attacks in the evening, which were repulsed with heavy losses.

MacArthur

SECRET

August 30, 1942.

PRIORITY

From: CINC SWPA
To: Chief of Staff

No. C 381, August 30, 1942

With the greatest reluctance and only impelled by the gravest sense of duty, I wish to invite attention to the acute danger which is rapidly developing in the Pacific theater. The situation here has drastically changed during the last two months.

Warned by his defeats in the Solomons the enemy has definitely abandoned any present intent of striking in Siberia, has slackened his efforts in China, is thinning his forces in the pacified occupied zones and is moving the center of gravity of his forces in this general direction. His main battle front is now definitely in the South and Southwest Pacific areas. His potential air, sea and land is increasing and his relative strength is rapidly growing greater than the Allied potential in these areas.

I comprehend entirely the strategy that has been outlined, assigning present missions as holding ones to enable concentrations to be made elsewhere. It is fundamental, however, that holding areas must have sufficient forces actually to hold and that the strength of holding forces, with the initiative in the enemy's hands, can be determined only by a constantly changing accurate appraisal of the enemy's power. An arbitrary predetermined figure of strength will not ensure safety. Unless the strategic situation is constantly reviewed in the light of enemy current potentialities in the Pacific and unless moves are made to meet changing conditions, a disastrous outcome is bound to result within a short time. With the enemy forces increasing and his concentrations being effected it is no longer a question here of preparing a projected offensive. Unless additional Naval forces, either American or British, are concentrated in the Pacific and unless steps are taken to match the heavy air and ground forces the enemy is assembling to launch, I predict the development within a reasonable period of time of a situation similar to those which produced the disasters that have successively overwhelmed our forces in the Pacific since the beginning of the war. I beg of you most earnestly to have this momentous question reviewed by the President and the Chiefs of Staff lest it become too late.

MacArthur.

SECRET

Regraded Unclassified

14 October 1942

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL
Chief of Staff, United States Army

The President recently remarked to me that he wished I would convey to you his thoughts about the New Guinea area. They are substantially as follows:

1. That the New Guinea area offers great possibilities, and that it should be brought under complete control as soon as conditions warrant.

That as soon as the area is brought under control it will be possible to put real and constant pressure on the New Britain and New Ireland areas and from these areas, it may be possible to put pressure on Truk.

Very respectfully,

JOHN L. McCREA
Captain, U.S. Navy
Naval Aide to the President

10/24/42
Admiral Leahy's
office has memo
from Gen. Marshall
in reply to this
JLMcCrea:jh

17 October 1942

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL

MEMORANDUM FOR

SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 14, 1942

Please deliver this envelope, addressed to
General Marshall, to

Colonel Wm. T. Sexton, U.S.A.
Room 2026, Munitions Building

W. T. Sexton

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

October 10, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Bombing operations in Southwest Pacific.

The following communique has just been received from MacArthur. I think the facts related are of great importance in estimating the situation in the Southwest Pacific. For the first time heavy coordinated air operations are being carried out. Heretofore we have been sending small flights day after day. Apparently already General Kenney (now in command of the Air in that area) has succeeded in so organizing matters that operations can be conducted in the same orderly, efficient manner as is managed out of England over the Continent. The fact that we suffered no losses is little short of amazing, and if the report of destruction is reasonably accurate the Japanese are faced with a real dilemma.

"GHQ Southwest Pacific Area
October 10th.

Northwestern Sector. Saumlaki: Allied medium bombers attacked an enemy merchant vessel previously hit, completing its destruction.

Northeastern Sector. Solomons: Buka. Allied medium units bombed the airdrome runway and dispersal areas at night, causing numerous fires. All of our planes returned.

New Britain: Rabaul. A night attack on the enemy's main supply bases was successfully carried out by the largest concentration of Allied heavy bombers yet to operate in one raid in the Southwest Pacific area. The attack penetrated a barrage of intense antiaircraft fire and was delivered from low altitude. A preliminary incendiary sweep by Allied medium units lit up the target area, starting many fires and exploding fuel dumps whose flames, visible for many miles, led our main attacking force to the target areas. Sixty tons of explosives and incendiaries were dropped, scoring direct hits on jetties, machine shops, supply dumps, barracks, antiaircraft and searchlight positions. Fierce fires were started and remained visible for eight miles. All of our planes returned.

St. Georges Channel. An Allied reconnaissance unit was intercepted by three Zero fighters, two of which were shot down into the sea and the third driven off.




SECRET


SECRET

New Guinea: Lae. A formation of Allied medium bombers and fighters attacked the airdrome dispersal areas and installations in a coordinated effort. Sixteen tons of bombs were dropped in the target area. Supply dumps on the waterfront were hit and destroyed, the smoke and debris from the explosions rising hundreds of feet. Huts, buildings and antiaircraft positions were raked with cannon and machinegun fire. Heavy ground fire was encountered but there was no attempt at interception. All of our planes returned.

Owen Stanley Area. Our forward elements have established contact with the enemy's patrols in the Myola - Templeton Crossing Area."


Chief of Staff.

SECRET


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 9, 1942.

My dear General Wavell:-

Thank you very much for your letter of August 27th, 1942, in which you were good enough to enclose "ABDACOM" - An Official Account of Events in the South-West Pacific Command, January-February 1942, and a copy of your despatch on operations in the Southwest Pacific January 15th-February 25th, 1942. I have read these documents with much interest.

The difficulties with which you were faced in administering your important command are well set forth in these documents. The effective utilization of the small resources at your disposal and the serious losses you inflicted on the enemy, are a source of great satisfaction to me.

With every good wish for your success in your current important assignment, I am,

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Franklin D. Roosevelt.

General Sir Archibald Wavell, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.C., A.D.C.,
Commander-in-Chief in India
New Delhi

*"Abdacom" and "Despatch" Filed separately in
collection of printed reports that do not
lend themselves to perforation and filing
in jackets.*

S.

W. GERR. GEORGEY RAVAGI

WASHINGTON
THE WHITE HOUSE



NEW DELHI

the 27th August, 1942.

Dear Mr President

I send you herewith a personal copy of the despatch I have compiled on my tenure of the ABDA Command, together with a copy of the official account of events which I have had drawn up. You need not trouble about this latter, but you may like to look through the despatch.

I have sent the despatch officially to the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington and the Chiefs of Staff in London, as I was under their orders at the time.

I greatly appreciated the honour you did me in entrusting me with this Command.

With my best wishes

*Yours very sincerely
A.P. Wavell.*

Hon'ble Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of United States of America,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.,
U.S.A.



Copy.

NEW DELHI

the 27th August, 1942.

Dear Mr President

I send you herewith a personal copy of the despatch I have compiled on my tenure of the ABDA Command, together with a copy of the official account of events which I have had drawn up. You need not trouble about this latter, but you may like to look through the despatch.

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I greatly appreciated the honour you did me in entrusting me with this Command.

With my best wishes.

Yours very sincerely
A.P. Wavell

---oOo---

Note: Above is copy of a letter despatched from here by air mail bag on 1/9/42; intimation has just been received to effect that this bag is presumed lost.

26/9/42.

Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of United States of America.

A16-3
(Sw Pacific)

CANADIAN LEGATION
WASHINGTON

September 11, 1942

CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Mr. Minister,

This will acknowledge the receipt of your letter of September 10 and its enclosure from Major Thompson, both of which were shown to the President and were read by him with interest. He has asked me to thank you for making this information available to him.

Yesterday I also received your note thanking me in the matter of getting some extra copies of the pictures of the Pacific War Council to you. It was a pleasure for me to be of service.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN L. McCREA
Captain, U.S. Navy
Naval Aide to the President

The Honorable Leighton McCarthy
The Canadian Minister
1746 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, D. C.



CANADIAN LEGATION
WASHINGTON

Sept. 10th, 1942.

Dear Captain McCrea:

At the suggestion of the Prime Minister of Canada, I enclose herewith copy of a memorandum written by Major Arthur M. Thompson, retired, of the British Service, for the purpose of submitting same to the President for whatever action he may think wise in regard thereto.

The contents of the memorandum are being unofficially made known to the Netherlands Military Officials stationed in Washington.

Faithfully yours,

Stephen M. Carter

Captain John L. McCrea,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Strictly Private & Confidential

I was Provoked by
Singapore. Once the "Solomon" occupation has been completed, and the threat to Port Moresby removed, the most effective way to relieve Japanese pressure elsewhere, damage them materially, morally, and ease the economic situation for the Allied Nations, would be the seizure of Emmahaven (Padang) and the occupation in force of the Padang Plateau, thus securing a base that could deny the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal to Japanese surface craft, as the Straits of Malacca and Sunda would be well within bombing and mining range. Singapore is within 250 miles, as the crow flies, from Fortwood de Kock the former N.E.I. Military Station and administrative centre of the Central Sumatra Highlands. Every oilfield in the N.E.I. is within a 1500 mile range.

The Plateau, several hundred miles in area, is at an average elevation of 4000' and possesses the most wonderful climate in the tropics. There is an open cast coal mine, operated by native convicts at Sawah Loentah connected by rail and road to Padang 60 to 70 miles away. The only other approaches are by road from Medan over 400 miles away to the North, and by a gravel road from Pekan Heran a K.N.I.L.M. Station at the head of navigation on the Siak River (Mid Sumatra East Coast).

It does not seem to be appreciated that a very large proportion of "native" rubber comes from trees planted on the upper reaches of the Sumatra River - in the Indragiri Valley, for instance. I am interested in Ertater within 6 hours by road from Fort de Kock, yet between them and the foothills there are well over a million trees around Taloeck alone.

It is not likely the Japanese will have many troops in the mountains, but Padang would be a very hard nut to crack. Against this, the Dutch have the most intimate knowledge of the defences and approaches, and above all secrecy. The attack should come like a bolt from the blue as units of the invading force could be assembled at Durban, Freemantle, Bombay and Cochin without causing any suspicion of their ultimate destination.

Altho I may not know any particular area as well as many who have been stationed in them I think I know Southern

Asia as a whole much better than most professional travellers. I was Provost Marshal, and Administrator of Martial Law at Singapore for over three years. I met every distinguished stranger and suspect who passed through during that period. All the natives of India who gave evidence in the U.S.A. sedition trials were picked up by officers from my office. Some years ago I visited Indo China with Sir John and Lady Atters, before Angkor became a Cook's tourist attraction; and only three years ago I was at the Don Paser Hotel in Bali when Oliver Lyttleton and his family came there. I merely mention this to show I really know places and my knowledge is not that of a tourist. For 40 years the Earl of Marchwood and I have been good friends until his death. I was a regular correspondent, on matters which I thought should receive attention from the Home authorities, with F. H. McQuiston, M.P.

(Sgd.) ARTHUR M. THOMPSON (Major, Ret.)

Singapore.

A16/SWP



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 11th, 1942

Mr. President,

I have been asked by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable John Curtin, to convey to you the following message:-

"Dear Mr. President,

1. In my previous message I submitted for your urgent consideration my views on the situation and needs of the South West Pacific area.
2. I endeavoured to base my approach on a broad-minded and balanced view of the world strategy which recognised the pressing requirements of other theatres as well as the South West Pacific area.
3. I urged the importance of concentrating a superior naval force to Japan in the Pacific and the vital importance of providing aircraft for the Australian Air Force Programme and maintaining United States Air Force in the South West Pacific area at the strength laid down. Finally in referring to the military situation in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, I expressed the view that from the aspect of grand strategy, the importance of inflicting a decisive defeat on the enemy should be an agreed objective of the first priority.
4. I commended to the earnest consideration of yourself and your advisers the statement of the position in the South West Pacific area as I see it and the vital needs for which provision should be made. Since then the Commonwealth Government has made a review of the manpower position and has considered a report by the Commander-in-Chief of the A.M.F. who is also Commander of the Allied Land Forces.

You are probably aware that General Sir Thomas Blamey was Commander-in-Chief of the A.I.F. in the Middle East and returned to Australia with part of his Forces early this year. He has been carrying out a reorganisation and redistribution of the Australian Army and after a careful survey of the situation has advised the Government that an additional army Corps of three divisions is necessary for the defence of Australia as a base under the existing conditions.

5. For your information the present distribution of the Army in Australia is:

1. New Guinea - 2 Divisions
2. Northern Territory - 1 Division
3. Western Australia - 2 Divisions
4. 1st Army - 2 Divisions (one in Townsville; one in South Queensland).
5. 2nd Army - 2 Divisions (Sydney Newcastle Kembla area).
6. In New South Wales and Victoria the first and second armoured divisions are being organised. A third armoured division is to be organised.
7. Two American Divisions are with the First Army in Queensland.

6. Under a reorganisation at present in hand certain divisions will be reduced from a three Brigade to a two Brigade basis and this will lead to the reduction of a further division. Thus the total available army will be only eight Infantry and two armoured divisions by the end of this year with a third armoured division being prepared.

7. In an appreciation submitted by the Australian Chiefs of Staff early this year which was later endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief of the South West Pacific area the Government was advised that twenty-five divisions are necessary for the defence of Australia if superior naval and air forces are not available.

8. Of one million five hundred and twenty-nine thousand men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, six hundred and seven thousand enlisted in the fighting forces of whom forty-eight thousand are serving

overseas. In addition to the reduction in number of formations already mentioned the Government is confronted with the provision of reinforcements for operations in the South West Pacific Area and for the maintenance of the Ninth Division in the Middle East.

9. The Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces has pointed out that geographical factors such as long distances between localities and the lack of communications in Australia force to a dangerous degree dispersion of strength owing to the difficulty of transferring large forces rapidly. Furthermore the spearhead of the enemy's attack is directed against the most northern points such as New Guinea and this requires considerable concentrations in the forward area. Should the United Nations suffer naval losses in the Pacific and thereby be unable to dispose their naval and air forces in sufficient strength to prevent an invasion of Australia the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces considers that the Japanese would probably by-pass our isolated northern concentrations and attack nearer to the main centre of population in the south. He considers our forces are too thinly spread to meet such a contingency and places the minimum strength at three divisions more than we possess, including two American divisions in Australia.

10. In view of the reported strength of the Japanese forces in the Rabaul area and the determined resistance being offered in New Guinea there is every reason to believe that they will attempt to oust our forces from Milne Bay and Port Moresby. Continuous fighting in this region and incidence of tropical diseases will place a heavy strain on our limited strength in Australia without some replacement of forces withdrawn for service in New Guinea.

11. There is also the maintenance of the Ninth A.I.F. Division at strength in the Middle East. The Government realises it is impossible to withdraw this division at the present time though under the situation outlined by the Commander-in-Chief and in accordance with the decision for the return of the whole A.I.F. to Australia its need here is great. The demand for monthly reinforcements at "intense activity" rate is two thousand five hundred and forty-four, and this outflow cannot possibly be met indefinitely without

some compensating inflow to Australia. It is appreciated however that it would be better to allow this Division to remain in the Middle East and meet the need for land forces in the South West Pacific Area by additional forces from the U.S.A.

12. I shall therefore be grateful if in the review of the situation in the South West Pacific Area which I have already put forward you will simultaneously consider these further observations on the need for an increase in strength of the land forces in this region.

13. The additional requirements of the South West Pacific area to enable a decisive blow to be struck against Japan in this region are relatively small in relation to the resources of the United Nations and do not appear sufficient to have a vital influence in another theatre. On the other hand the results that can be achieved, not only in this region but by advantages that would accrue to other theatres are such that we feel a real opportunity to gain a definite ascendancy over the enemy is being missed. If nothing is done the Japanese will become more consolidated and the position will grow more difficult for offensive action on our part. The enemy's capacity for further aggressive action will have been strengthened and if exercised to the full may have disastrous results for us. Finally, Mr. Churchill has pledged the United Kingdom Government that if Australia is heavily invaded they will cut their losses in the Mediterranean to come to our aid. The strengthening of the situation now will act as a deterrent to invasion and preclude the possibility of having to fulfil this pledge.

Yours very sincerely,

John Curtin

Regraded Unclassified

"

A16/SW Pacific



AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 11th, 1942

Mr. President,

With reference to the Australian Prime Minister's message to you of today's date, I have been requested by Mr. Curtin to convey to you the following views which he has expressed to Mr. Churchill regarding the possibility of concentrating in the Pacific a superior Naval Force:-

"Dear Mr. President,

1. I have now received from Mr. Churchill a reply to the cable despatched to him on cooperation by the Eastern Fleet in the concentration of a superior Naval Force in the Pacific which was repeated to you as Annex "A" to paragraph 6 of my recent message.

2. Mr. Churchill gives reasons why in his view the possible transfer of British Naval Forces from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific is not yet opportune, and I desire to repeat for your information further observations which I have despatched to him:-

(a) It is learnt with considerable surprise that there has been a change in the views notified on April 9th which contemplated a strategic offensive action in the Pacific by the transfer of forces from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific when certain essential conditions had been fulfilled.

(b) It would now appear that instead of the Eastern Fleet being built up to the strength necessary for this purpose, it is being disposed in theatres other than the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

(c) If a superior Naval Force is not to be concentrated to inflict a decisive defeat on Japan and relieve Australia of the threat of invasion there is no alternative but to press for the land and air strength necessary for the local defence of the Commonwealth, the case being parallel to that referred to by you in paragraph 3 of your telegram relative to the defence of Indian and other territories in the Indian Ocean.

Regraded Unclassified

I have addressed to the President and yourself my representations on air requirements. In a separate communication the need for additional land forces is dealt with.

(d) Following will be recalled from the review of the United Kingdom Chief of Staff on Australian Defence which was transmitted in Mr. Bruce's cable of April 3rd:- A movement of the United States' main fleet into eastern Australian waters provides at present the only sure means of protecting eastern Australia and New Zealand, but the United States' fleet cannot undertake to remain in Australian waters indefinitely. The Allied aim should therefore be to build up land, air and local naval forces in Australia and New Zealand to a point where they can stand without the immediate support of the United States' fleet and can ensure that they will not be defeated before the United States' fleet is able to return to sever the enemy's communications with her invading forces. Whilst the security of the line of communication to the United States is of vital importance it is hoped that it is clear to those responsible for grand strategy that the interruption of this line is neither an essential preliminary nor even a necessarily desirable condition to a Japanese assault on the mainland of Australia if the local land and air defence strength is to remain at its present figure.

(e) If Japan succeeds in capturing Port Moresby, the way is open to a direct attack on the mainland under cover of land-based aircraft which may well defy all naval attempts to interrupt their line of communication and dislodge them.

(f) In view of the possibility that an attack may be launched against Western Australia by Japanese forces from the Netherlands East Indies, I would be glad to know the views of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff on the contemplated strength of the Eastern Fleet as a deterrent to such an attack, and the possibility of its use should such an attack eventuate having regard also to other commitments in the Indian Ocean.

Yours very sincerely,

SECRET

A16-3 (S.W.
Pacific)

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

September 2, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The following message from General MacArthur was received on August 30th:

"With the greatest reluctance and only impelled by the gravest sense of duty, I wish to invite attention to the acute danger which is rapidly developing in the Pacific theatre. The situation here has drastically changed during the last two months. Warned by his defeats in the Solomons the enemy has definitely abandoned any present intent of striking in Siberia, has slackened his efforts in China, is thinning his forces in the pacified occupied zones and is moving the center of gravity of his forces in this general direction. His main battle front is now definitely in the South and Southwest Pacific areas. His potential - air, sea and land - is increasing and his relative strength is rapidly growing greater than the Allied potential in these areas.

"I comprehend entirely the strategy that has been outlined, assigning present missions as holding ones to enable concentrations to be made elsewhere. It is fundamental, however, that holding areas must have sufficient forces actually to hold and that the strength of holding forces, with the initiative in the enemy's hands, can be determined only by a constantly changing accurate appraisal of the enemy's power. An arbitrary predetermined figure of strength will not ensure safety. Unless the strategic situation is constantly reviewed in the light of enemy current potentialities in the Pacific and unless moves are made to meet changing conditions, a disastrous outcome is bound to result within a short time. With the enemy forces increasing and his concentrations being effected it is no longer a question here of preparing a projected offensive.

"Unless additional Naval forces, either American or British, are concentrated in the Pacific and unless steps are taken to match the heavy air and ground forces the enemy is assembling to launch, I predict the development within a



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reasonable period of time of a situation similar to those which produced the disasters that have successively overwhelmed our forces in the Pacific since the beginning of the war.

"I beg of you most earnestly to have this momentous question reviewed by the President and the Chiefs of Staff lest it become too late."

In reply I sent General MacArthur the following message on August 31st:

"Your C 381 August 30th was read and discussed by me with the President last night. It has been furnished the U.S. Chiefs of Staff and will be formally considered by them. Your concern is entirely appreciated here I think.

"The trends and possibilities in the Pacific have been carefully weighed and reweighed in connection with recent decisions involving world wide strategy which were made on the highest level. You have recently been informed of reinforcements, ground and air, which are en route or are being prepared for the Pacific and Southwest Pacific areas. King has directed the return of Southwest Pacific Area Naval units to you. Every emphasis will be placed on uninterrupted flow of air replacements to these areas.

"The defense of the Pacific areas particularly in air and Naval matters will depend to a large degree upon the closeness of the cooperation and coordination of the forces now available to you, Nimitz and Ghormley."

Yesterday, September 1st, the foregoing message from General MacArthur was formally considered by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff and the entire matter is being carefully studied by the U.S. Joint Planning Committee for the Chiefs of Staff.

I might add that General Arnold has searched every available resource to provide additional planes, crews and air units for the South Pacific theater. We have moved ground troops to the West

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Coast for transportation to the South Pacific as rapidly as transports become available. An additional Infantry division sails for that theater at varying dates during September. As indicated in the foregoing message from me to MacArthur, Admiral King two days ago directed Admiral Ghoramley to return the Australian Naval contingent to Australian waters.

[Handwritten Signature]
Chief of Staff.

Very respectfully,

[Faint Handwritten Signature]
W. H. HARRIS

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Approved: _____
Date: _____

SECRET

A16-3/A9 (Su Pacific)

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
UNITED STATES FLEET

MEMORANDUM

Date August 27, 1942

From: Flag Lieutenant.

To: ADMIRAL LEAHY.

Inasmuch as Captain McCrea is out of town attending the launching of the IOWA, this paper is forwarded to you direct.

Very respectfully,


C. B. LANMAN.



COPY

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
FLAGSHIP OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

AL6-3/SOLOMON

Serial 02576

AUG 23 1942

Capt. M. O. O'Connell
for the President
via Adm. Leahy
lh
W.H.K.

SECRET

1st Endorsement on
ComSoPac Area and
SoPac Force AL6-3(3)
Serial 0053 dated
16 August 1942.

From: Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: Preliminary Report - Solomon Islands Operation.

1. The preliminary report of the SOLOMON ISLANDS operation is forwarded without delaying for full analysis. The outstanding features are the excellence of the approach and initial operations against strong shore and air resistance, the little damage incurred from large scale enemy air attacks, and our large losses on the night of 8 August when the Japanese delivered their highly successful night surface attack.

2. It is not possible from this correspondence and dispatches previously received to make a detailed study of the SOLOMON ISLANDS operation with complete narrative and conclusions. It appears, however, that the events as related hereafter occurred.

NARRATIVE - APPROACH AND LANDING, 7 AUGUST
(All times Zone - 11)

3. Having completed preparations, including landing exercises in the FIJI ISLANDS, and the concentration of the large number of units involved in Task Force 62, Rear Admiral Turner on the night of 6 August approached the TULAGI Area from the south and west. Apparently both preparations and the approach were so well concealed that the movement was a complete surprise, which is a notable achievement for a force of this size involving the concentration of troops, ships and material from widespread places.

4. The approach from the south on 5 August, up the meridian 159 east, was through bad weather which hindered air operations by both sides. Fortunately, on the night of 6 August, the weather cleared, permitting a navigational fix, and the force proceeded between RUSSELL and GUADALCANAL ISLANDS to take the enemy from the flank and rear. The approach was undetected, though the Japanese had radar equipment ashore.

CCPY

SECRET
A16-3/SOLOMON

Serial 02576

AUG 23 1942

SECRET

Subject: Preliminary Report - Solomon Islands Operation.

5. At 0610 (-11), 7 August, the screening force commenced heavy bombardment, coordinated with bombing and strafing by carrier planes, of the TULAGI - GUADALCANAL Area. The only vessel present, a small schooner, and 18 seaplanes were sunk. Most of the shore defenses were silenced by the effective bombardment.
6. After the shallow waters had been swept for mines, landings began at 0720 in the TULAGI Area and at 0910 on GUADALCANAL, 5 miles east of LUNGA POINT. Opposition to the landing was slight in most places. There was none on GUADALCANAL, where boats shuttled about 10,000 men ashore during the day. A large number were also landed on TULAGI against light resistance. After the initial confusion, the Japanese on TULAGI recovered and fought stoutly. At nightfall they still held about one-fifth of the island.
7. HALAVO on FLORIDA Island fell with no opposition. GAVUTU was also captured; but the forces attacking TANAMBOGO were repulsed with heavy losses. It is not clear whether this island received heavy bombardment and continued to be bombarded during the actual attempt at landing. Nor do present records reveal whether the bombardment was repeated after the first attack had failed. From despatches it appears that the island was taken during the night or early the following morning.
8. Both before and on the day of the attack B17's from the Southwest Pacific Command and the B17's and Patrol planes under Commander South Pacific were employed in scouting and search. Sea-planes operating from tenders at SANTA CRUZ and MALAITA pushed the area of search to the north in the SOLOMONS. Heavy bombers from the Southwest Pacific Command made attacks on Japanese ships and bases including RABAUL.
9. The first enemy counter-attack, other than the fighting ashore, was from 25 type 97 heavy bombers which at 1520 passed over the landing area, altitude 8,000 feet. Several dropped bombs; no hits. Most did not release, continuing in search of our carriers. Anti-aircraft fire from the ships shot down 2 and damaged 2 of the bombers.

~~SECRET~~

AL6-3/SOLOMON

AUG 23 1942

Serial 02576

Subject: Preliminary Report - Solomon Islands Operation.

It was reported that 2 were later shot down by carrier fighters. The bombers did not find our carriers. It is not clear whether or not we had fighters at the time over the transport area.

10. Soon after 1600 the next attack came, this time delivered by 10 type 99 dive bombers. Their bombing was little better than that of the first group. The MUGFORD received one 250 pound hit that resulted in considerable damage and loss of about 20 men but left her still capable of operating. Ship antiaircraft guns shot down 2 of the planes.

11. During various engagements between our carrier planes and the Japanese bombers, several of our fighters were shot down as well as one SBD. It is not known at this time how many enemy planes the fighters accounted for, but the number is probably considerable judging from previous battles. Japanese shore antiaircraft fire did not bring down any of our planes.

12. The first day was in our favor. About 10,900 men had landed on GUADALCANAL along a 3 mile beach front and had penetrated inland a mile and one-half. Locations on FLORIDA Island had been occupied. GAVUTU and most of TULAGI were in our hands. Only at TANAMBOGO had we been repulsed.

13. We had suffered moderate losses in men and some planes; the MUGFORD had been damaged. Enemy losses had been much higher both in men and in planes, as well as in large quantities of supplies and in surrender of positions. The advantage of the offensive was again demonstrated. As the commander of the Marines in these operations stated to his men, "God favors the bold and strong of heart".

8 AUGUST. DAY OPERATIONS.

14. Unloading continued during the night at GUADALCANAL so that by morning the beach was seriously congested; however, without any ill effects since enemy resistance was weak. The enemy air attacks in the TULAGI area had sufficiently disrupted our plans so that only limited amounts of supplies and equipment were ashore. Much of what was needed had not been unloaded.

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SECRET
16-3/SOLOMON

AUG 23 1942

Serial 02576

SECRET

Subject: Preliminary Report - Solomon Islands Operation.

15. Soon after 1100 information was received that a large number of planes had been sighted by a coast watcher flying southeast over BOUGAINVILLE. About noon they arrived, some 40 or more twin engined torpedo planes sweeping in at low altitude from behind FLORIDA Island.

16. The warning from this coast watcher was of the greatest value. On receipt of it, the transport group and screen got under way and were at maximum speed when the Japanese attacked. So effectively were our ships maneuvered and fought that only two ships were damaged. The JARVIS was hit forward by a torpedo and very seriously injured but was able still to operate under her own power. A torpedo plane crashed into the transport ELLIOTT starting a fire that ultimately got out of control so that she had to be torpedoed. As in previous actions, fire was one of our most dangerous enemies.

17. Of the 40 attacking planes, twelve were shot down in the vicinity of the ships by antiaircraft gunfire and fighters; the shore batteries accounted for two more. It is believed that our fighters to the westward destroyed others at a total cost to themselves of 7 planes.

18. There was another air raid alarm in the afternoon but no attack followed. After being subjected for two days to all the air power the Japanese could immediately muster, our forces had suffered only light losses.

19. A summary of our losses and damage in ships and planes by sundown of the second day, 8 August, is as follows:

LOST

ELLIOTT (Transport) - Destroyed by fire and our torpedoes.

18 carrier fighters - Lost in the 2 days operations.

1 carrier SBD - Lost in the 2 days operations.

(Plane losses are estimates from best information now available)

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19. (cont'd)

DAMAGED

- JARVIS (DD) - Seriously injured by torpedo hit forward. Able to proceed under own power.
- MUGFORD (DD) - Considerable minor damage from bomb hit. Still operating.

20. Except for the foregoing interruptions, unloading proceeded during the day and part of the night. On GUADALCANAL the controlled area was increased to include the air field. Enemy forces there had scattered under bombing and gunfire so that only minor resistance was still encountered. TULAGI and TANAMBOGO had been captured with many individual acts of heroism against snipers and Japanese troops holding out in limestone caves. Total Japanese casualties in the TULAGI area approached 1,000.

21. During the day MINDIV TWO mined MATAMASIKA Estuary, MALAITA Island, to bar one approach to the anchorage being used by the MACKINAC.

22. At 1807 Commander Task Force 61 sent a despatch to Commander South Pacific stating that the carrier fighter strength had been reduced from 99 to 78, that fuel was running low, and that because of the large number of enemy torpedo and bombing planes in the vicinity he recommended immediate withdrawal of carriers. This was approved by Commander South Pacific 081141.

23. Reconnaissance on the 8th apparently failed to track the enemy force whose 1127 position that day was later reported by Melbourne radio. The latter station at 1821 sent a message stating that at 1127 in the morning 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers, and two seaplane tenders or gunboats were in latitude 05-49 S, longitude 156-07 E, on course 120, speed 15. Just before midnight Commander Task Force 62 sent a message to Commander Aircraft, South Pacific estimating that this force might operate torpedo planes from REKATA BAY, Santa Isabel Island, and recommended that strong air detachments strike there next morning. Apparently this was the enemy force that later that night so successfully attacked our screening cruisers and destroyers near SAVO Island.

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BATTLE OF SAVO ISLAND - NIGHT OF 8-9 August

24. Forces were disposed this night as shown in overlay accompanying basic report. Cruisers and destroyers were divided into several groups and two destroyers were stationed on radar patrol to westward of SAVO Island.

25. At 2345 the RALPH TALBOT, patrolling to the north of SAVO Island, sighted a cruiser plane low over the island flying east. It was reported immediately on TBO and TBS. Several ships heard the report, including the BLUE. The latter picked up the plane by radar and heard the engines, as did the QUINCY. The report by RALPH TALBOT and later by BLUE did not get through to Commander Task Force 62.

26. The two groups of cruisers off SAVO were steaming around squares, 5 miles on the side, in column at 10 to 12.5 knots. Each cruiser group had 2 destroyers, one on each bow of leading ship at 1500 yards.

27. At 0140 BAGLEY on starboard bow of CANBERRA sighted unidentified ships close aboard slightly to port. The destroyer swung to fire torpedoes but could not get primers inserted in time. She later fired torpedoes at much longer range without results. She passed the enemy at 1500 to 2000 yards and identified them as 2 ASHIGARA CA and 2 TENYERU CL. Commander Task Force 62 in his serial 0034 of August 12, 1942 reported the probable presence of 3 Japanese cruisers and 4 destroyers. Commander South Pacific Force in the basic correspondence estimated that the enemy force consisted of 3 CA, 2 CL and 5 DD.

28. At 0146 the PATTERSON on port bow of CANBERRA also sighted the formation. Either she or the BAGLEY sent a warning signal which was not received by Commander Task Force 62, but neither ship fired a gun or rocket or turned a searchlight on the enemy ships. Consequently, the enemy steaming at high speed had all the advantage. His ships were fully prepared and ready to open fire instantly. Our forces were proceeding at slow speed and not at General Quarters. They were surprised by the contact and were brought under fire before they had time to get fully ready. The crews had been under the strain of active operations in support of our landings for the preceding 48 hours, and had undoubtedly been operating under conditions of strain ever since leaving the vicinity of the Fiji's.

29. At 0145-0150 the Japanese opened fire with main battery and torpedoes at about 3000 yards or less from CANBERRA and CHICAGO,

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the latter returning the fire at once. The Japanese concentrated their fire on the CANBERRA and hit with an early salvo, causing a heavy fire aft. Another hit followed on the bridge, and a torpedo struck in the boiler rooms, causing loss of power. The Executive Officer of this ship estimates that the range was under a mile and that the ship received 24 hits within a minute, all before his gun turrets could be trained on the enemy. CHICAGO was hit in the bow by a torpedo. In three or four minutes the cruisers of the southern division were badly damaged.

30. The HELM states that gunfire was observed at 0145, but the VINCENNES group of cruisers continued on the leg of the square they were then following, on steady course of 315, speed 10 knots, later increased to 15. The cruisers sounded general quarters about this time but stations were not fully manned when the enemy crossing from the port quarter illuminated with searchlights and opened fire, obtaining both 8" and 5" hits on all three of our cruisers. VINCENNES reports being hit "innumerable times", power and A.A. directors going out very early. The other cruisers had similar experiences.

31. Our cruisers got some hits on the Japanese at this time, though not many. Firing ceased, but was resumed at about 0210 when the Japanese formation, passing out to sea 2-3000 yards to the north-east, reengaged.

32. Shortly after the action started, VINCENNES ordered her two screening destroyers, HELM and WILSON, to attack. At sometime between 0210 and 0217 as the Japanese force retired to the westward, the RALPH TALBOT was illuminated and fired on by friendly ships, probably HELM and WILSON. One projectile struck number one torpedo tube, killing two men and disabling the tube. Fire ceased when her identity was established by TBS. The TALBOT was subsequently hit and badly damaged by Japanese gunfire, but was able to fire 4 torpedoes, one of which may have hit.

33. Both QUINCY and VINCENNES were so badly holed that they sank within an hour of being hit. ASTORIA burned throughout the night and despite valiant fire fighting by part of her crew sank the next day at noon. CANBERRA burned and was sunk by destroyer torpedoes about 0830 on the ninth.

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34. Special incendiary shells may have been fired by the Japanese, but the burning "grapefruit" fragments referred to in the QUINCY report may have been fragments of explosive from a low order detonation. The intense searing flame from a H. E. projectile bursting inside a ship has few if any equals in setting fires within confined spaces.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

35. Reports on subsequent events are so meager that beyond an estimated outline no effort can be made to cover them at this time. Task Force 61 departed to fuel during the night of the eighth-ninth. The enemy striking force got away without being attacked. The Japanese appear to have expended their energy temporarily, as no force of importance, aerial or surface, appeared off TULAGI for the next several days.

36. After continuing unloading during most of daylight of the ninth, the transports retired in two groups, one late in the afternoon and the other early in the evening. They were escorted by the combatant units. JARVIS, badly damaged, had departed during the night of the eighth, missed her escort, and has not been heard from since.

37. Total personnel left on GUADALCANAL were 10,900 with something more than 3 units of fire. The garrison for the TULAGI-FLORIDA area was 6100 with nearly 5 units of fire.

38. On the ninth, after CANBERRA had been abandoned, SELFRIDGE fired 4 torpedoes at her to expedite her sinking. All were fitted with magnetic exploders. The first exploded under the cruiser's bow. The other three, fired at ranges from 1900 to 1200 yards, with depth settings of 24 to 10 feet, passed under without exploding, though one did explode 5000 yards beyond. It is urgent that this be remedied as soon as possible.

COMMENTS

39. Based on the accounts at hand, which are fragmentary except for the fairly full account of the night engagement off SAVO Island, the following comment concerning Watchtower Operations up to darkness on 8 August is in order:

- (a) Preparation, approach, bombardment and landing were thorough and well conducted.
- (b) Performance of troops and of ships' personnel under fire was excellent.

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COMMENTS (Cont'd)

- (c) All the land based air the Japanese could muster caused our forces little damage, although our fighter support had to come from our carriers about 75 miles distant.

40. Except for the night action off SAVO Island which resulted in such heavy losses to our cruisers, our operations up to that time had proceeded as satisfactorily as could be expected. In the night action the Japanese force acted boldly and achieved a great success. Had they proceeded towards the transport areas after their action with VINCENTNES, QUINCY, and ASTORIA their boldness might have yielded even greater results.

41. The enemy in the SAVO action had the advantage of making the attack. He knew the general area in which our forces would be found. His crews were presumably fresh and alert, whereas our crews had had about forty-eight hours active operations in support of the landings, with the prospect of more to follow on the next day. Our forces were on the defensive and somewhat dispersed to cover the two transport groups. The enemy was concentrated. He knew that every ship he saw was an enemy.

42. It is perhaps premature and unfair to attempt a critical analysis of the night action off SAVO Island at the present time with the meager information available, but enough is known now to warrant the questions raised in the following paragraphs which the Commander South Pacific Force, by copy of this endorsement, is requested to clear up in his final report on the Watchtower operations.

43. The simultaneous departure of all the carrier task forces for fuel on the night of 8-9 August was most unfortunate because it left the unloading APs and AKs without air cover. This, no doubt, was an important if not deciding factor in the decision to withdraw the APs and AKs before they had completed the unloading of their all important war materials and food supplies. Was it practicable to fuel one carrier task force at a time, leaving two available for support of the operations?

44. The absence of all the carrier task forces on the morning of the 9th permitted the enemy to make a clean getaway

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without being subjected to carrier air attack during the early daylight hours of that day. Was it possible and practicable for such attacks to be made by our shore based planes?

45. The long delay between the sighting of the enemy striking force at 1127 on 8 August and the origin of the Melbourne radio despatch at 1821 was unfortunate. The further delay in the receipt of this information by Commander Task Force 62 in the critical area is also unfortunate. Chart plot of this information indicates that at moderate speeds it was within the capacity of the enemy to reach the SAVO Island area during darkness of that night to deliver surface attacks.

46. The information referred to in preceding paragraph is believed to have reached Commander Task Force 62 at least two hours before the attack arrived. Was this information given to the screening forces, and was consideration given to the possibility and probability of a surface attack that night?

47. An unidentified plane was reported by vessels in the SAVO Island area shortly before midnight on 8 August. What significance was attached to this information and how did it affect the readiness for action of the reporting vessels?

48. Radar search vessels were stationed in the approaches to the passages on either side of SAVO Island. Were radar operating conditions sufficiently favorable with relation to surrounding islands to warrant complete reliance on this method of detecting enemy approach?

49. Cruiser groups screened by destroyers were stationed in the passages on either side of SAVO Island. Taking into consideration the radar question raised in preceding paragraph, the fatigue of personnel and the geographical features of the area, was the best use made of the available cruisers and destroyers in guarding against night surface attacks?

50. Japanese are masters of amphibious warfare. They have demonstrated their ability to land large bodies of men and materials on open beaches with no facilities other than those brought with them. In the battle of SAVO Island they have proved their ability and capacity in night action. They have demonstrated again that an inferior naval force lead with boldness and resolution can undertake night attack against superior naval force with good prospects of success. It is to be hoped that we will profit by their example and in the future turn against them the lessons they have so ably taught us.

Copy to:
Comsopac
CTF 61, 62, 63

/s/ C. W. NIMITZ.

Regraded Unclassified

A16/SWP.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

IN LEGATION,
ASHINGTON, D. C.

SECRET

August 24, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE PRESIDENT

The attached papers were shown to Admiral Leahy ("No comment"), General Marshall ("It's a Navy undertaking"), and Admiral King ("Unless the President directs otherwise I shall continue to restrict information re military operations to those who need to know.")

Very respectfully,

John L. McCrea

JOHN L. McCREA

Aussies in Dark On Progress of Solomons Battle

News of Island
Campaign Never
Released in Dominion

By E. R. NODERER

SOMEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, Aug. 22 (C.T.P.S.).—The mysterious war going on in the Solomons a few hundred miles off the coast of this continent gives Australians the feeling that they are sitting on a powder keg which might blow up any minute.

No news of the campaign is ever released here, where military authorities claim they know nothing about it. What news there is comes from laconic Washington announcements or in quotations from provincial British papers, such as the Yorkshire Post, which although about 15,000 miles away from the scene of the battle, seems to have some better crystal gazers on its staff.

Study New Problems

While awaiting with great interest further reports of the Solomons engagement, Australians are pushing ahead with solutions to many new problems springing from the increased war effort.

Although the Australians have been in the war for three years, shortages of things like potatoes are only now beginning to be felt. Twenty-three bags were sold by lot in Sydney today when 200 people stormed a fruit and vegetable market. The customers put their names in a hat and winners greeted their good fortune with cries of delight. Each 145-pound bag sold for about \$3.95.

New Ideas on Menus

Sydney cafes are coming up with a lot of new wrinkles on menus to disguise the fact that potatoes are missing. Some diners find a heap of finely shredded lettuce beside their meat. Sliced beets on lettuce is another, as is a mixture of cauliflower and fish, strangely intertwined. Rice and spaghetti appear frequently.

There is some talk of meat rationing but nothing has been done about it yet.

In the "wanted to exchange" column in a Melbourne paper a woman offered to barter 6 pounds of butter, 6 dozen eggs, 6 pounds



John Curtin

Solomons Lull Attributed To Monsoon

Sea Struggle May
Flare at Any Moment

By QUENTIN POPE

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug. 21 (Delayed) (C.T.P.S.).—The Solomons lull was traced to the monsoon here today and New Zealanders were warned not to take the diminished activity as a sign that the conquest was completed or that the Japs were content to fall back on desultory action.

A struggle for control of the sea may flare up at any moment and it is assumed that weather conditions are partly the reason for the present reduction in the tempo of operations. It is believed that the Allied fleet is ready to meet a Nipponese challenge.

The current Jap strategy is seen as a struggle for delay in order to give the fleet time to strike to the south and bring relief or enable the development of a counter-offensive elsewhere for the purpose of drawing off Allied naval units which now stand between the garrison and material reinforcements.

Control of the sea lanes is now believed to have enabled the United States to complete its local organization for maintenance of the Solomons force. However, unofficial advices continue to urge that despite the marked preliminary successes and continued progress, the operation should be viewed as still in the balance.

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In the "wanted to exchange" column in a Melbourne paper a woman offered to barter 6 pounds of butter, 6 dozen eggs, 6 pounds of honey and a pair of dressed fowls for a frock, a pair of low heeled shoes and a wide-brimmed hat.

Prime Minister John Curtin said that clothing rationing has increased savings bank deposits by the equivalent of half a million dollars each week. The government expects the national saving to reach 150 million dollars a year as a result of the rationing. Officials expect most of this to go into war bonds.

Plan Farm Increase

Two British representatives to the Australian Food Council are en route here to help Australians develop this country into a great long-range food storehouse. The plan involves placing thousands of Australian men back on the farms. The Britishers were invited to impress them with the seriousness of the Australian man power problem. The government hopes to impress on the British government the need of making more man power available for rural industries if any food is to be grown for Britain and America.

The only two ways to increase the labor available for farms is to release men now in the Australian armed forces or to import workers from the United States or Britain.

Australian officials are said to hope that Britain and America will send greatly increased land, sea and air personnel here so Australians can be released for important farm work.

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AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

TELEGRAM from Dr. Evatt to the Australian Legation, Washington
dated 19th August 1942 and marked MOST SECRET and MOST IMMEDIATE.

The Solomon Islands operations are, as you know, in
the South West Pacific Area under the command of Admiral Gormley.
The naval task force of American and Australian vessels from the
command of the Commander-in-Chief of the South West Pacific Area
was made available to Admiral Gormley for these operations.

Absolutely no information has been received by
the Australian Government about the engagements save that which
has been announced to the world in United States communiques from
Washington.

The Government feels that in view of the Australian
forces engaged and the casualties which have been sustained, it
should receive authoritative information about the trend of events
in such cases. Such information would, of course, be treated as
most secret.

I should be glad if you would take up with the
President and the Chiefs of Staff of the United States the question
of making an arrangement whereby the Australian Government will be
kept informed of the progress being made in all operations in
adjacent zones which affect its security or in which any Australian
forces are taking part.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Memo
to file* *d*

August 20, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Operations began at 011800 when Task Force 62 departed from a position 30 miles south of Kandava in the Fiji's, covered by Task Forces 61 and 62. Course was set at 281° to 159° East in order to avoid the enemy and take them from the rear.

At 050100 the Force proceeded North through bad weather which hindered air operations. The weather cleared on the night of the 6th. Position was fixed on this night and Task Force 62 passed between Guadalcanal and Russell Island. Complete radio silence was maintained during the whole cruise and there were no enemy contacts. The approach was a complete surprise.

Shore bombardment of Guadalcanal and Tulagi areas opened at 070610 by guns and CV planes. 18 enemy seaplanes were destroyed, as well as one schooner. Landings were begun on Florida at 0720 on the 7th. Hala~~vo~~ was occupied without opposition; four fifths of Tulagi was occupied after stiff opposition. Gavutu was captured but heavy losses sustained in an attempt on Tanamboga. Several carrier VF and one VED shot down by enemy VB. On Guadalcanal, landings were begun at 0910 at a point 5 miles east of Lunga Point. Shallow areas were swept for mines but none were found.

At 071520 about 25 enemy type 97 bombers passed overhead and dropped several bombs from 8,000 feet. They then went after our CV's, but did not locate them. Task Force 62 shot down 2 planes and damaged 2. Carrier VF counted for others. One hour later 10 bombers attacked 2 of our destroyers, and got one 250 pound bomb hit on the Mugford. 2 of these bombers were shot down.

By 072000 all troops were landed on Guadalcanal; total about 10,000. They occupied a beachhead about 5,000 yards across by 3,000 yards deep. No enemy contact.

By the morning of the second day (the 8th), the beach was badly congested but by the end of the day, the Kukun area and the airfield were occupied with slight opposition. Enemy troops (300) and construction workers (2,000), having scattered due to gunfire and bombing. Tetare (radio station) still in hands of enemy. During night of 8 - 9 of August, unloading

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

continued. Every effort was made to unload the maximum of food and ammunition because of apparent retirement the next day due to increased enemy action and necessity of carrier groups refueling. Insufficient food was landed during the night, however, and unloading continued the next day until the departure of the transports at 1600 on the 9th. 507,000 rations were landed, and in excess of three units of fire.

Little equipment and supplies were landed in the Florida area because of enemy opposition. At the end of the second day (8th) all points were captured except for snipers. Total personnel ashore totaled 6100, with 49,000 rations, unbalanced ammunition, but totaling nearly 5 units of fire.

At 081200, 40 type 97 twin engine torpedo planes approached from behind Florida Island and attacked transports and screen at Guadalcanal. These had gotten away in a defense formation at best speed, having received word 40 minutes earlier from a coast watcher at Bougainville. The attack was pushed through at low altitudes, the drops being from heights from 20 to 100 feet. All ships avoided by maneuvering except the Jarvis which received one hit. One torpedo crashed on the George F. Elliott (APD) starting a bad fire and resulting in the eventual loss of the ship. Attempts were made to salvage without success. The ship was torpedoed by our own forces but drifted on a shoal before sinking. She was still burning when last seen. At least 12 enemy planes were shot down in this attack by AP's and 2 by landing boats when attacked at the beach. Part of these were shot down by VF, which probably destroyed more to the westward. About 7 of our VF were lost. A second air raid alarm on the 8th interrupted landing of the cargo but it proved to be a false alarm. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

of August 8th and 9th

During the night/an enemy surface raid occurred with the obvious intention of destroying the transports. The night protection of the transport areas was as follows: the Ralph Talbot and the Blue were on radar patrol 5 miles north and 9 miles west of Savo respectively.

5 to 8 miles behind the radar patrol, in the northern half of the area, a Crudiv of the Vincennes, the Quincy, and the Astoria, screened by the Wilson and the Helm. In the south one-half of the area 10 miles to the southwest of the Blue, second Crudiv was situated consisting of the Chicago and the Canberra, screened by the Bagley and the Patterson.

The Australia was normally with this division, but this night was with the transport area because of a conference between

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WASHINGTON

the commanders of TF 62 and 44, and the Commanding General of the Marines on the situation. In the Tulagi area, the transports were screened by several destroyers and 4 APD's plus the San Juan on patrol 5 miles to the westward. The southern transports were screened by the Hobart and several destroyers with 5 DMS forming a sound screen. In case of alarm all the destroyers, except those screening cruisers, were ordered to concentrate 5 miles northwest of Savo as torpedo striking forces.

At about midnight the radar patrol of destroyers reported several small enemy planes. These reports got through to the Crudivs but not to either transport group. At 0145 an excellent spread of aircraft flares was dropped southwest of the Guadalcanal transports, silhouetting them for enemy attack. The transports departed north and east. Com TF 44 concentrated the Australia and the Hobart north of Lunga Point, and ordered a concentration of screening destroyers.

At 0140 the Bagley, right hand screening destroyer, on course 315, saw several enemy vessels approaching at high speed, close to the south coast of Savo. She gave warning and fired her torpedoes. The Chicago and the Canbarra had just reversed course to 115°. The enemy consisted of 3 cruisers and 4 destroyers heading east. They passed our CA's at 4,000 yards, firing both guns and torpedoes, the gunfire being returned by our CA's. The Chicago was hit in the bow by one torpedo and a few projectiles. The Canbarra was hit heavily by gun fire and one torpedo. It caught fire and was immediately out of the action. It later sank at 080930.

The enemy turned northeast and at 090155 opened fire on the north cruiser division, which bore 010° from them at a distance of 5000 to 8,000 yards. Our cruisers were on course 315°, speed 10. Heavy gunfire dueling ensued until all 3 of our CA's were heavily struck by projectiles and torpedoes. The Vincennes and the Quincy were out of action within 15 minutes. The Quincy sank at 0240, and Vincennes at 0245 after explosions. The enemy circled the rear of the north cruiser division and headed northwest and fired heavily at the 3 cruisers beginning at 0210. The Astoria was put out of action and later sunk at 1215 the next day. The Wilson and the Helm were engaged with gunfire but no damage ensued.

The Ralph Talbot, at 0215, headed south at high speed, was illuminated and hit by one of our own vessels, possibly a destroyer. At 0218 she engaged the enemy, firing her torpedoes, first from the port, and then from the starboard sides. At least one hit was made on the enemy. The Talbot was

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badly damaged but was later able to retire with the force to Noumea.

Fire ceased at 0230, and the enemy was not seen again. Believe the enemy was hit as gun duels witnessed from the transport area did not appear entirely one sided. Enemy used search lights once or twice, but apparently no star shells. They are believed to have an excellent system of scouting and gunnery, radar, and possibly IFF for use against ships. Enemies gunfire was very rapid, extremely accurate from the first salvo, and did not diminish in accuracy. The night was very dark with low hanging clouds, and on flares being dropped through the clouds they provided excellent illumination. Consider it possible that enemy planes may have homed on the radio station at Tetare.

~~SECRET~~ AIG/SWP
Capt MacArthur
Very secret file

SECRET

**WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON**

August 12, 1942.

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT:

The following cable interchange between General MacArthur and me with relation to the recent press comments here and in Australia may be of interest to you. General MacArthur in a message to me on August 8 quoted an editorial which had appeared in the New York World Telegram some weeks ago and commented vigorously on its unfortunate effects in Australia. The first message which appears below is my reply to him, and the second message is his answer to me which I received this morning.

"August 10, 1942.

"For General MacArthur's eyes alone.

"The publication in Australia of editorials such as the one you quote in your No. C219 of August 8 is damaging to morale. The last statement 'Australia no longer can count on priority' is untrue and seriously detrimental in its effects. The delivery of troops and munitions to Australia is made under allocations determined by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in accordance with the over-all strategic concept. The needs of the Southwest Pacific Theater are weighed against those of all other theaters and once determined they have equal priority with those of other theaters.

"You can do much to counteract the ill effects of this editorial through the medium of press releases emanating from your headquarters. General Richardson was sent to inform you of the broad Allied strategy proposed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and approved by the President and the British War Cabinet. You are aware of what has been done and what is being done to supply your theater to meet the needs of the strategy adopted. You are also familiar with American newspaper practice regarding freedom of the press with particular reference to the editorial page. Editorials have no official status or approval and as yet our government has not set up censorship control in regard to them.

"Under dateline from your headquarters of August 6 the Washington Post and other papers have published an article by Lee Van Atta. He stated that his information was from 'authoritative military and civilian circles', the spokesmen for whom made seven points which Van Atta listed categorically.



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Each of the seven points was designed to deprecate the part played by the United States in aiding the war effort in your theater. This press release originating from your headquarters can only serve to fan the indignation and resentment that has resulted from the editorial of which you complain.

"Your problems are appreciated by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and by the Secretary of War and me personally. We know that opportunities are not taken advantage of because of our inability to provide you with additional means. You must feel assured, however, that these factors have been carefully considered.

"Van Atta's article mentioned above creates the impression that you are objecting to our strategy by indirection. I assume this to be an erroneous impression. You should be aware that the pressures to meet the growing dangers of the situation in the Aleutians, to build up again the depleted air force in Hawaii, to meet the debacle in the Middle East, not to mention Russia, China, the losses in ocean tonnage, and the urgent necessity of creating new air squadrons sufficiently trained and equipped to go overseas, make our problem exceedingly difficult and complex.

"MARSHALL"

"August 11, 1942.

"For General Marshall's eye alone.

"You are entirely correct in your assumption that this headquarters is not by indirection attempting to influence strategic control from higher headquarters, replying your 664, 10th. The complete opposite is the case.

"A false impression had almost universally developed as a result perhaps of our close censorship with reference to the American strength in this area. The public had gradually grown to believe that American Forces were of massive proportions. As an example of the stories in circulation, an officer just arriving from Washington is reported to have told a newspaper man who journeyed in the same plane with him that he knew of his own personal knowledge that the American Forces here were in excess of one million.

SECRET

"The almost universal belief by the Australian people of overwhelming American strength here led to a growing dissatisfaction that a more aggressive attitude was not assumed. The opposition seized upon this as a great opportunity and criticism of the present Australian Government and the general strategy of the war as dictated from Washington and London became the ruling political issue.

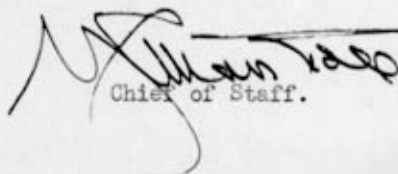
"By dint of extreme reserve and patience it appeared the matter might not reach a breaking point, but the news item which was released carrying the World Telegram editorial caused its explosion. The attack was levelled largely at the strategic handling of the war based upon a neglect to use the practically unlimited forces that were thought to be available.

"The only part this headquarters had to do with the matter was an attempt to protect governmental and military leaders by showing that sufficient resources were not available to do what was believed possible by the public and demanded by the opposition. This office was not only not trying by indirection to criticize the strategy of the Combined Chiefs of Staff but loyally to support it. If a different impression was given in American papers it was certainly not the case with the Australian press which has fallen into line almost completely.

"If a mistake was made it was not one of intent. The only purpose of the Prime Minister who was practically forced into public statement and other Governmental sources and of our Public Relations Office was to rectify a completely false impression restoring it to truthful perspective and proportion and thereby protecting governmental and military leaders charged with grand strategy from unjust attack. It was not in complaint of or intended in any way to deprecate American effort but was meant to explain the true scope of Australian effort which they felt had been greatly minimized and to defend Australian honor which rightly or wrongly they believed jeopardized. That American papers have taken a different attitude astonishes me.

"The Solomons attack has completely silenced all criticism.

"MacARTHUR"


Chief of Staff.

- 3 -

SECRET

Regraded Unclassified

*A18-3 (S.W. Pacific)
Copy to file*

SECRET

**WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON**

August 6, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area.

I have just received from General MacArthur a detailed report containing an estimate of Japanese air and ground forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, enemy capabilities, and Allied preparations and plans for the execution of offensive operations.

Attached hereto are three inclosures which will give you a brief analysis of his report. Tab A is a chart on which the Japanese air and ground strengths and dispositions have been posted; Tab B is a statement of enemy capabilities; and Tab C outlines the preparations that have been made to counter the Japanese offensive operations and finally to enable our Allied Forces to undertake operations to secure the SOLOMONS-NEW GUINEA-NEW BRITAIN-NEW IRELAND Area.

The joint directive from the U. S. Chiefs of Staff referred to in Tab C was issued to Admiral Ghormley and General MacArthur on July 2, 1942. The execution of Task One of this directive is scheduled for initiation immediately.

W. H. H. H.
Chief of Staff

3 Incls.
Tabs A, B, and C.

*a chart marked in detail accompanies
this memo. G.E.M.*

8/11/42

** This chart posted on Multiplex chart display
in White House Map Room.*

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SECRET

ENEMY CAPABILITIES

Steady reinforcement of Japanese occupations north-east of Australia and accelerated development of Air bases together with recent operations in the NEW GUINEA and TULAGI-GUADALCANAL Sectors all indicate the growing strategic importance attached to this area by the enemy.

Radio intercepts and captured documents clearly mark PORT MORESBY, SAMARAI and the remainder of the SOLOMON ISLANDS for early enemy occupation.

Heavy air concentrations in the CELEBES contribute threat to NORTHWEST AUSTRALIA from KOEPANG.

Growing potential and command of sea routes permit freedom of movement and concentration by the enemy.

Tab B

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Regraded Unclassified

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ALLIED PLAN OF OPERATIONS

I. DEFENSIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

1. Development of air bases northeast Australia, including YORK PENINSULA.
2. Strengthening PORT MORESBY garrison with ground and anti-aircraft forces and development of air facilities:
 - 2 Australian Brigades
 - Heavy and light antiaircraft
 - 2 Fighter Squadrons

II. OFFENSIVE PREPARATION:

1. Construction of airbase at MERAUKE for flank protection, still in progress - small protective garrison.
2. Secured crest of OWEN STANLEY RANGE from WAU to KOKODA - 600 men well forward at WAU, and 500 men vicinity of KOKODA. Severe conditions of hardship and supply.
3. Construction of airbase at MILNE BAY to secure southern tip of NEW GUINEA; near completion and occupied by fighter aviation and garrison of 5,000.
4. Movement to occupy airbase at BUNA forestalled by enemy landing in GONA-BUNA Area.
5. Movement of 41st United States Division to ROCKHAMPTON completed and movement of 32nd United States Division to vicinity of BRISBANE will be completed in a few days. These moves made for training and preparation for further forward movement.

III. FOLLOWING STEPS BEING INSTITUTED:

1. Dispatch of 7th Australian Division to NEW GUINEA as follows:
 - a. One brigade to MILNE BAY with mission of infiltration toward BUNA.

Tab C (1)

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b. Remainder to PORT MORESBY with mission to push small elements over mountain trail toward BUNA.

2. Immediate reinforcement of KOKODA and WAU area with one independent guerilla company each.

NOTE: This heavy concentration in NEW GUINEA dependent on Navy keeping supply routes open. Problem of shipping is extremely acute and every possible means must be used.

IV. EXECUTION OF TASKS TWO AND THREE OF THE JOINT DIRECTIVE OF U. S. CHIEFS OF STAFF:

1. Order of Execution.

Phase One. Capture of BUNA, LAE, SALAMAUA, and GASMATA.

Phase Two. Capture of MADANG, CAPE GLOUCESTER, and TALASEA.

Phase Three. Capture of LORENGAU and BUKA ISLAND.

Phase Four. Capture of KAVIENG.

Phase Five. Capture of RABAU.

2. Plan for Execution:

Phase One. Marine Task Force will seize objectives under cover of land based airplanes from MILNE BAY, PORT MORESBY and YORK PENINSULA, supported by carrier force in GULF OF PAPUA and land attack across OWEN STANLEY RANGE. Immediate relief of Marine Force by part of 41st Division.

Phases Two, Three, Four and Five.

Marine Force will be divided as follows:

a. A portion, operating with 41st Division using westward route through VITIAZ and DAMPIER STRAITS, to complete Phase Two and capture LORENGAU under cover of land based air support.

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Tab C (2)

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b. Remainder, operating with 32nd Division and supported by carrier Task Forces, will work northward along SOLOMONS to capture BUKA and KAVIENG in successive stages. Land based air of SOUTH PACIFIC to support both operations by interdiction of RABAU.

c. All forces will combine in final assault on RABAU.

V. Further preparations are necessary for Task Three, but Task Two, which is essentially Phase One above, should be initiated immediately after the successful conclusion of Task One if the Marines with their amphibious equipment can be used with the support of task forces.

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Tab C(3)

A16-3/A9
(S.W. Pacific)

A16-3

UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

Serial 0219

Melbourne, Australia,
June 2, 1942.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: The Commander U.S. Naval Forces,
Southwest Pacific Area.
To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Subject: Report of Aerial Combat and Resultant
Experiences (Ensign William W. Hargrave,
A-V(N), U.S.N.R.).
Enclosure: (A) Copy of the subject report.
1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith.

/s/ J. H. Carson

J. H. CARSON,
Chief of Staff,
Acting.

Copy to:
Cincpac

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ALLIED NAVAL FORCES
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

May 30, 1942

From: Ensign William W. Hargrave, A-V(N), U.S.N.R.
To: Commander Allied Naval Forces,
Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: Report of Aerial Combat and Resultant Experiences.

1. On February 5, 1942, we were based on the U.S.S. HERON, in Saemlocki Bay, Tanimbar Islands, N.E.I.. At 0645, PBY-5-22-P-6, with Lieutenant (jg) Richard Bull in command, Ensign W.W. Hargrave, second pilot; OLIVER, ACMM(NAP); C.S. NELSON, RM1c; R. CUSACK, RM3c; MULLER, AMM2c; BEAN, AMM2c; and SHARPE, AMM3c, as the crew, took off for patrol as prescribed by Patrol Wing TEN. We flew to the southeast tip of Ceram and at that time Lieutenant (jg) Bull said that we would fly over Ambon, drop our bombs and then go on with our patrol.
2. Lieutenant (jg) Bull took over the bombsight and I was flying the plane. We climbed to about 17,000 feet and there, just outside the Ambon Harbor, sighted a Japanese cruiser. At this point we were unable to see inside the harbor. We eventually reached a point where we could see into the harbor and we could see that it was full of ships. I thought that I saw two aircraft carriers and many smaller ships. Although the ships were not counted, I would estimate there were about twenty ships in the Ambon Harbor. NELSON transmitted to Patrol Wing TEN that there was an enemy force with carriers in Ambon Harbor.
3. We were actually in the bombing run when Lieutenant (jg) Bull said: "There are too many ships here, let's get into the clouds." I immediately turned for the clouds which were off to our right and down around 12,000 feet. At this stage, all the ships were firing with anti-aircraft fire and I could see planes coming up to intercept us.
4. We were just about to the clouds when the planes, which I believe were type "O" fighters, reached us and opened fire. I attempted to slip the plane toward and down under them, but we were hit many times in the wing and tail. Just after we were hit, we made the clouds and lost the fighters. Although I saw only one plane fire on us, I gathered that there were four planes of the "O" type engaging us at the time we flew into the clouds.

C O P Y

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Subject: Ensign W.W. Hargrave, A-V(N), U.S.N.R. - Report of
Aerial Combat and Resultant Experiences. - Page No. 2.

5. In the clouds, the port motor quit and gasoline commenced pouring into the hull; actually gassing the crew members. I feathered the port motor and dropped the bombs (unarmed) in an attempt to keep altitude and stay in the clouds. Unable to keep any altitude and due to the terrible gas fumes, I informed Lieutenant (jg) Bull that we had better land. He gave me the O.K., and we landed on the north coast of Ambon, near the little village of Hila.

6. Upon landing we learned that SHARPE, a waist gunner, had jumped sometime between the engagement and the time we landed. CUSACK, the tail gunner, was injured. He had a bullet wound in his right arm, slugs in the left leg and some shrapnel wounds.

7. We weren't sure where the Japanese were so we set about destroying all communication codes and the bombsight. I myself attempted to give CUSACK first aid as he was bleeding very badly. Unable to stop the bleeding, NELSON and I got out one of the rubber boats intending to get CUSACK ashore and try to find a doctor. CUSACK, NELSON and myself got into the rubber boat and I told the rest of the crew to come along. They said they would use the other rubber boat.

8. Just as we were leaving the plane, a Japanese seaplane (single float engine) spotted us and immediately attacked. We, in the rubber boat, were under the wing of the plane when the Jap plane opened its guns. The three of us dove into the water and started swimming. On the second pass of the Jap plane, 22-P-6 blew up and sunk almost immediately. The Jap made two more strafing attacks at we swimmers and then flew off in the direction of Ambon.

9. NELSON, CUSACK, MULLER and myself reached shore safely. MULLER was burned from head to foot with gasoline burns and CUSACK was wounded as mentioned above. Through friendly natives, we learned that no doctor was available. Natives brought us coconut oil and some bandages and we did about the best that we could for the two injured men. NELSON and myself had a few scratches but nothing serious.

10. Two days later, February 7, the natives reported a body floating in the water. I identified the body as that of OLIVER. He was buried at sea by the natives. On the 8th of February another body was identified by NELSON as that of BEAN. He was buried at sea too. Lieutenant (jg) Bull's body was never sighted.

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11. MULLER and CUSACK were given every care that we were able to render with the meager medical supplies which the natives gave us. Through the natives we learned that there were some Australian soldiers farther along the coast and NELSON went to find them to get medical supplies if they had any. I remained with the injured men. During this time both men were growing worse, MULLER especially. He was out of his head most of the time. I was up with him practically night and day. On February 14, NELSON returned with one A.I.F. man who had no medical supplies, that would do the injured any good. I informed MULLER that we had done about all we could for him and he should really go to the hospital. CUSACK needed a doctor's care too, so on the afternoon of the 14th, MULLER and CUSACK started for hospital at Ambon in a canoe manned by natives. Natives reported later that MULLER died before he reached the hospital and the Japanese buried him. CUSACK reached the hospital as far as we know.

12. NELSON, the A.I.F. soldier and myself then walked along the coast where we joined another A.I.F. soldier, sick with malaria. We four decided to pool our resources in an attempt to reach Australia as soon as the A.I.F. man was able to travel.

13. We finally obtained a canoe from a Rajah and on February 23, (at night), we set out of Ceram. Two natives were with us and we paddled across about fifteen miles of water, reaching Ceram early the next morning. Again we found friendly natives and learned that there were no Japanese in the vicinity.

14. From here my recollection of dates and time are hazy due to sickness and hardships. We reached Piroe two or three days later by walking and paddling canoes from village to village. There was a Dutch Controller at Piroe who gave us food, money and some canned goods to take with us on the next journey. We found the radio station at Piroe blown up. We were informed that our best chance was to go to Geser, Ceram, where we could probably get a sailboat. He gave me a letter to all the Rajahs in the villages, telling them to help us.

15. We traveled along from village to village, sometimes walking, sometimes paddling and in our lucky moments we sometimes got outriggers with sails on them. I myself got an attack of malaria and a bad case of dysentery, which lasted until we reached Geser, which is about 250 or 300 miles from Piroe.

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16. I recall we were in Amahai, Ceram, on March 2, as it was my sister's birthday. At Amahai we rested with the Dutch Controller who fed us very well. NELSON made a trip to Saporus to attempt to send a radio message, but the station was blown up while he was enroute. His trip, however, was not in vain as he obtained some money and four bottles of beer, which really tasted good. We obtained some more canned goods at Amahai and the Controller got some natives to take us to the next village. We were on our last leg of the trip to Geser.

17. We reached Geser about the 19th or 20th of March. By this time three more A.I.F. soldiers had joined us and the seven of us made the last twenty miles to Geser together. Again at Geser the radio station was out of commission. The Dutch Controller, although short of food, did feed us plenty of fish and rice and I got some shots from the native doctor for my case of dysentery. It cured me, I suppose, because I haven't been bothered since. We obtained some more canned food and a very nice sailboat from the Controller at Geser and with four natives as a crew we set sail for Tuell in the Ke Islands. That part of the trip, which lasted about 6 or 7 days, was the only part of the three months where we all had enough to eat. I recall we stopped at one little island before reaching Tuell and a Chinese shopkeeper gave the seven of us a chicken dinner. It was as good as I had ever eaten any place in my life.

18. When we reached Tuell the radio station was working but Java had been invaded or taken then and the Controller at Tuell had no communication with anyone other than surrounding islands, and they couldn't do us any good. He told us that a ship was at Dobo to pick up some soldiers and our best chance was to sail for Dobo immediately. He radioed Dobo to hold the ship for us, but we learned later that the ship had left Dobo when they received the message.

19. We left Tuell the same day that we arrived there. We sailed for Dobo, hoping to reach there in two days at the most. We had two days supply of food; it took us five days to make the trip. When we arrived there we were out of both food and water. During the five days we sailed directly over a reef, got into a channel which turned out to be very shallow and we were aground several times.

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20. At Dobo we set about repairing a sailboat for the trip to Merauke, Dutch New Guinea. While there we really ate good food, deer, plenty of beef and actual bread. Before leaving Dobo we received a message from Tuell that six more soldiers were on their way and to wait on them. When they arrived, there were four A.I.F. men who had already escaped from the Japanese prison camp at Ambon and two Dutch soldiers they had picked up on their trip.

21. On April 3, 1942, thirteen of our party, with four natives for a crew to sail the boat back, set sail for Merauke, N.G. We reached there twenty-six days later. I never consider 13 an unlucky number, but if there was much luck in that trip, I can't see it. When we left Dobo the monsoon was just right and would have put us in Merauke in ten days or two weeks. We had two weeks supply of food of two meals per day. I more or less did the navigating. I had a compass and a small map I had gotten out of a school house. Two days out of Dobo the wind dropped and for the next two days we drifted with the sea. On the 5th day the wind came up from the southeast, just the direction we wanted to sail. On top of this, one of our 40 gallon water drums had had a leak in it and was empty; we had about thirty gallons of fresh water left. We immediately rationed ourselves to two drinks of tea or coffee per day, one in the morning and one at night.

22. Of course none of us knew that the monsoon had really changed for good, but it had. I set a course as near to east as we could possibly sail, knowing that we would hit New Guinea some place. The wind blew from east around to south all the time and we kept the nose pointed always as close to Australia as possible.

23. In about ten days we started running into storms and we got plenty of rain which we were thankful for. We caught water off the sails in any and all receptacles that we had. The water situation improved and our hopes rose very much. Our food supply was short however and we were eating a couple of handfuls of rice per day. Tobacco was out, and some of us smoked tea and coffee after it had been cooked.

24. When we finally hit the New Guinea coast I didn't know where we were as we had to tack quite a bit and storms had blown us all over the sea at times. I knew, however, that if we followed the coast line we would hit Merauke sometime. Along the coast we ran in to some natives which we learned later were head hunters. They didn't speak Malay and wore no clothing whatsoever. They came

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close to us one morning in canoes; they had long spears in one hand and darts in the other hand. We kept right on sailing down the coast.

25. Several times we ran aground and we would all jump out and push the boat off the bottom. One night about eleven o'clock we ran aground and before we could push her off, the tide had gone out too far. We awoke the next morning high and dry and still we were over a thousand yards from the actual shore line. Some of the boys took rifles that we had with us and attempted to shoot ducks and geese, which were plentiful, but had no success. About ten that morning the tide started coming in and small fish by the hundreds were at hand. One of the native boys with us took a long knife and went after them. Swordfish about three or four feet long followed the small fish in and this native boy got eight swordfish and shirtfull of small fish. The rest of us got absolutely nothing although we were all trying. We had a feast that day and that night. With some of the remains as bait we caught two sharks with our one lone fish hook. The sharks were both about five feet long and we had fish the next day too.

26. We were in the straits of Marianna for two days before we finally decided that was actually where we were. We got through in five days on nothing but tides. We would drift with the tide, anchor and wait for the next tide. There was no wind in the straits. Finally, through the straits we found a friendly native village where we got a good feed of rice. One native went with us to show us Merauke. He wore a shell as clothing, nothing else. We reached Merauke two days later on the 29th of April and it was really a relief to be there at last.

27. The Dutch Controller at Merauke was in radio communication with Thursday Island. He wired, asking for a ship and I sent a message to Patrol Wing TEN. I never heard from the message while we were at Merauke. The Australian cutter Paloma picked us up at Merauke and brought us to Thursday Island. We reached there the night of 7 May. From Thursday Island I sent a full report of 22-P-6 and its crew to Patrol Wing TEN. Two days later NELSON and myself went over to Horn Island where the R.A.A.F. flew us to Townsville.

28. At Townsville I reported to U.S. Army Headquarters and was informed the best thing to do was to proceed to Melbourne. They were to furnish me air transportation. I waited four days and nothing happened through Army Headquarters. I got a chance

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for a ride to Brisbane with some of the Army pilots and Headquarters told me I had better take it.

29. We were forced down at Rockhampton with two bad motors. After two days in Rockhampton I secured passage for NELSON and myself on the commercial airlines for Brisbane. I signed for the seats. On reaching Brisbane I reported to Commander Task Force 42 who gave me traveling orders to proceed to Melbourne.

30. The paymaster at Brisbane took up our accounts and paid us some money. We secured some clothing through the Army and proceeded to Melbourne by train. Arriving Melbourne May 22, I immediately reported to Naval Headquarters, Victoria Branch.

William W. Hargrave,
Ensign A-V(N), U.S.N.R.

Copy to:

Comatwing 10.

COPY

AK-3/A9 (Reports of Action
S.W. Pacific Area)

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On board PB2Y-2 No. 36
Enroute from Sydney to
Pearl Harbor, T. H.,
May 22, 1942.

Memorandum to: Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Notes on the Coral Sea Action May 4-8, 1942.

1. In the absence of Commander Cruisers, Pacific Fleet, I desire to submit this memorandum direct to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, in order that any comments worthy of consideration may be available as early as possible. For the same reason, copies are being forwarded to other interested commands. These notes are being made from memory of actual events and from information obtained from eye witnesses. I took part in all the dive bombing attacks conducted by VS5 in YORKTOWN. Unfortunately I was not present during the Japanese air attack on Task Force 17 on May 8. I left YORKTOWN before I was able to obtain much information on the gunnery and air attack phases of the action. Accounts of the action of Task Group 17.3 on May 7, I obtained from conversations with officers from H.M.A.S. HOBART, U.S.S. CHICAGO and PERKINS. Some features of the actions that I obtained by hearsay may not be in complete agreement with forthcoming reports but I will mention those which may be of interest at this time.

Air attack on Tulagi Island by YORKTOWN on May 4.

2. Dive bombing and torpedo accuracy was poor. Three attacks by each squadron were required where one should have sufficed. This was the first time in over a year that VP5 had dropped a torpedo. The first dive bombing attack, started from 17,000 feet, resulted in a majority of misses on anchored ships because of fogging of the telescopes and windshields. Subsequent attacks were started from about 9,000 feet and fog did not occur. The fogging of telescopes is being covered in a separate YORKTOWN report and merits the most urgent consideration by the entire service. It is considered that dive bombing is the only effective method of bombing surface ships and fogging of telescopes may well mean the difference between victory or defeat of an entire task force.

3. No efforts should be spared to afford task forces at sea with daily gunnery practices of one form or another. Gunnery practices should be held even at the expense of some security. The gunnery practices now being conducted by task forces during short stays at Pearl Harbor are invaluable but their benefits soon become nullified unless gunnery training in all phases is continued at sea. Task forces must carry the necessary target practice equipment and/or facilities should be made available at bases near operating areas (such as high speed sleds for bombing and surface targets at Noumea for task forces operating in the Coral Sea area). I submit that had our bombing and torpedo accuracies been up to peace time standards, the enemy losses would have been tripled. And had the task forces had opportunities for adequate gunnery training the peace time standard would have been maintained if not surpassed even considering the hazard of combat.

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4. Nine SED's sank a steamer of about 1500 tons by machine gun fire in less than twenty minutes.

5. Japanese AA fire was encountered from all types of ships. It was very slow and inaccurate and was apparently all local control barrage fire. The ratio of bursts to dud splashes (duds did not detonate on water impact) was about one to three. Fire from time fuzeed projectile guns was not continuous; it was apparent that fire was checked and a new set up made whenever shifts were made to new targets. The highest bursts were at about 12,000 feet. These were black and smaller than our 5". Smaller white bursts at a constant altitude of about 5,000 feet indicated self-destructive pom-pom projectiles. One large AK fired a 2 to 4 gun salvo at each of thirteen dive bombers - off in deflection.

6. The necessity of a quick rendezvous by the planes of a bombing or torpedo squadron cannot be too strongly emphasized. In the later actions against the Japanese carriers a quick assembly was imperative for mutual protection against enemy fighters. At Tulagi the weather was extremely thick throughout most of the day and any delay at the rendezvous meant stragglers and possible lost planes.

7. One Japanese type 95 seaplane ran afoul of VS5 at the rendezvous but averted destruction for about ten minutes by incredible maneuvering. Our SOC's, by comparison, are veritable turtles.

Air attack against enemy carrier (believed to have been RYUKAKU) by LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN on May 7.

8. The bombing and torpedo practice by YORKTOWN on May 4, improved the effectiveness of the squadrons immeasurably. The enemy carrier was sunk within twenty minutes. In fact, it is believed that one half the bombs and torpedoes expended would have accomplished the job. One of the pilots in the last of the dive bombers, realizing that the destruction of the carrier was a certainty, took his bomb and dropped it on a nearby light cruiser which sank in a few minutes after the carrier.

9. On this attack, started from about 16,000 feet, neither the telescopes nor the windshields fogged up. No changes had been made in the telescopes; cloud formations, however, were considerably less.

10. AA fire was definitely more accurate than at Tulagi but seemed deliberate. The first black bursts (about the size of our 5") were seen at 16,000 feet and would have hit the squadron had not a marked change of course been made a few seconds before. After the attack and while assembling at the rendezvous, black bursts appeared close aboard, always on in range but off in deflection. The bursts

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Subject: Notes on the Coral Sea Action May 4-8, 1942.

10. (cont'd)

appeared in groups of 3 or 4 with about twice that number of dud splashes. As before duds did not detonate on water impact. Apparently director controlled fire was being used, firing about 2 shots per gun and then checking fire to apply a new set up. When the squadron was squared away on the return course and about 20,000 yards from the nearest large enemy ship, four major caliber (appeared to be larger than 8") splashes were observed directly beneath the planes (planes at about 800 feet). These projectiles detonated on impact.

11. The enemy task force consisted of one carrier with five other ships. Two of these ships were large, one medium and two small. It is believed that the two large ships were CA's or one BB and one CA, the medium sized ship was a large CL and the remaining ones, two small CL's. When this force was sighted, the ships scattered at high speed, making no apparent attempt to maintain formation. It is estimated that the extreme distance between ships on opposite sides of the disposition was 8 miles. There was no attempt to concentrate for AA fire support. Even after the carrier sank none of the other ships appeared to approach for possible rescue of personnel. Because of the rapidity of the attack and the short time before the carrier was entirely enveloped in flames, it is believed that there were no survivors. At the time of the attack, planes were seen to take off; other planes ready for take off covered the after half of the flight deck.

12. The YORKTOWN torpedo squadron made its attack through heavy concentrated AA and machine gun fire from the carrier and adjacent ships. Ships on the carrier's flank also fired surface projectiles to land ahead of the planes. It was evident that the fire of all adjacent ships was concentrated on the torpedo planes and later shifted to all planes retiring from the attacks. The accuracy of the AA bursts was fairly good but for the most part over in range.

13. On this carrier and on the one attacked May 8, machine gun and AA fire was observed to issue in an unbroken line from bow to stern just below the level of the flight deck.

Air attack on enemy carrier (believed to be the SHOKAKU) by LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN on May 8.

14. In this attack the windshields and telescopes of the dive bombers again fogged up and the percentage of hits was small. In two of the nine planes that composed VS5, the telescopes, for an unknown reason, remained clear and these two planes got hits. The exact number of hits obtained by VB5 and the dive bombers from LEXINGTON is not known. Both torpedo squadrons were subjected to heavy fire during the attack but no planes were shot down.

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Subject: Notes on the Coral Sea Action May 4-8, 1942.

15. While VS5 and VB5 were maneuvering over the enemy force at about 17,000 feet waiting to start the attack in coordination with VT5, enemy type OO fighters attacked the rear of the VB5 formation. Several SED's were hit but none brought down. As the bombers completed their attack and were forming up at the rendezvous, they were attacked by about 12 enemy fighters. Six of these fighters were shot down by two YORKTOWN fighters accompanying the SED's and at least one was brought down by a rear seat gunner. It is considered that the rear seat gunner has better than an even chance against a single fighter approaching from high astern. But he must have practice. Because of the larger number of rounds carried and the greater ease in shifting magazines, a twin .30 caliber mount is considered more desirable than a single .50 caliber mount. The fighters dove in from high astern and if they were trying to hit gas tanks their marksmanship was excellent because the majority of the SED's had punctured gas tanks and wings riddled by bullets from astern. Only one of these SED's was lost by fire. The value of leak proof gas tanks cannot be over emphasized.

16. As on the previous day, most of the heavy AA fire was concentrated on the torpedo attack. A few black bursts were observed at about 17,000 feet near the side of the YORKTOWN's SED formation away from the Japanese fighters. A few groups of black bursts were observed among the dive bombers after the attack. Numerous rain squalls and heavy clouds probably prevented heavier and more effective AA fire. An appreciable number of planes were hit by machine gun fire from the ships during the dive. Ragged holes in tail and wing surfaces resulted from impact-fuzed projectiles, presumably of about 20 mm caliber.

17. On the return to YORKTOWN, a formation of 12 SED's passed 6 enemy fighters returning to their carrier. At the time, the SED's were at about 6,000 feet and the fighters passed below them. Had these fighters been flying at a higher altitude they would have been in an excellent position to attack. As it was, they eluded in the clouds that existed between 4,000 and 5,000 feet.

18. The enemy force consisted of 2 CV's, 6 CA's or CL's and 3 DD's. At the time the enemy was sighted by the YORKTOWN attack group, the Japanese force was divided into two groups about eight miles apart. The leading group was in a disposition with the CV in the center, surrounded by 5 cruisers and with one DD about 10,000 yards ahead and 20° on each bow. The second group consisted of the other carrier followed close astern by a DD and about 2,000 yards astern, by a cruiser. When sighted, all ships were on a steady course at high speed. When the enemy sighted the YORKTOWN planes, the leading carrier turned to the right, or away from our air group, and the other ships maintained their course. Because of the heavy cloud formations, this unit was not seen again.

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18. (cont'd)

The second carrier with the two following ships turned, by simultaneous movement, to the left or towards the attacking planes. Neither carrier had planes on deck. The second carrier was chosen as the objective by the YORKTOWN air group because it appeared to be the larger of the two carriers, it was closer to the torpedo squadron, and it could be more easily singled out for a coordinated dive bombing and torpedo attack. When last seen, shortly after completion of the YORKTOWN attack, the carrier was burning heavily amidships and in the bow.

Enemy air attack on Task Group 17.3 (AUSTRALIA (Rear Admiral Grace, RN), HOBART, CHICAGO, PERKINS, WALKER, PARRAGUT) on May 7.

19. As stated before, my information on the two enemy air attacks on our forces was obtained through conversations with the ships' officers. I submit here such items which may be of timely interest.

20. Fourteen enemy shore-based, twin engine, mid-wing, monoplane bombers (similar to our B26 and similar to the plane that attempted to crash on LEXINGTON off Raboul about Feb. 20) made a simultaneous torpedo attack on the three cruisers of the force. None of the ships was hit; five of the enemy planes were shot down by AA fire and one other severely damaged. The torpedo attack was followed immediately by a horizontal bombing attack at 23,000 feet by two close groups of nine planes each in close V formations. The bombs were dropped simultaneously and the pattern precisely straddled the AUSTRALIA without hits or damage. These planes were fired on but none was brought down.

21. The torpedo planes leveled off beyond about 6,000 yards and came in very low - some at about 40 to 50 feet. Four torpedoes were fired at CHICAGO - all near misses, though one was believed to have passed under the ship. Torpedoes were dropped at about 1,000 - 1,500 yards distance. One torpedo circled in CHICAGO's wake. After dropping torpedoes, the planes flew close aboard the target ships and strafed with free machine guns. The only casualties in the target ships resulted from this strafing. Similarly, the enemy suffered most of his losses during this phase.

22. CHICAGO used her 8" guns against the torpedo attack. The effect of the shell fragments is not known but the splashes and resultant explosions obscured the approaching planes indicating that they were well placed and offer some defense against a torpedo attack. A lookout in CHICAGO reported that one plane crashed making a green splash! (CHICAGO's 8" dye color is green). 1 1/2" fire seemed most effective (CHICAGO did not have her full allowance of 20 mm guns).

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23. Shortly after the enemy air attack, the AUSTRALIA was bombed without damage, by high horizontal bombers believed (not confirmed to my knowledge) to have been our army bombers from Townsville. The possibility of our shore-based aircraft bombing our own forces in this area indicates the necessity of keeping our shore bases informed of the composition and location of our forces operating within the range of the bombers.

Enemy air attack on Task Force 17 on May 8.

24. In my opinion, the outstanding feature of this action was the handling of YORKTOWN to avoid torpedoes.

25. The Japanese had a preponderent superiority in fighters. YORKTOWN had an anti-torpedo plane patrol of 8 SBD's in the air at the time of the attack. These planes were to dive on and machine gun enemy torpedo planes as they leveled off for the approach. However, the SBD's were immediately attack by enemy fighters. Four SBD's were shot down and the others saved themselves by remaining in clouds.

26. The enemy torpedo planes dropped their torpedoes while still in a glide or after a short level-off. The attack was executed with great determination; some torpedoes were dropped as near as 800 yards. Dive bombers came in at about 45° and pulled out, in most cases, to just clear the target ship.

27. I desire to point out that these comments are my own and have not been discussed with or approved by Commander Cruisers, Pacific Fleet.

W. G. SCHINDLER,
Commander, U. S. Navy,
Staff Gunnery Officer,
Commander Cruisers, Pacific Fleet.

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Cominch
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AY-3/A9

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CV2/A16-3/(0100)

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

10-fd

May 15, 1942.

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LEXINGTON.
To : Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander Task Force ELEVEN.
(2) Commander Task Force SEVENTEEN.
Subject: Report of Action - The Battle of the Coral Sea,
7 and 8 May 1942.
Enclosure: (A) Approximate Track Chart of LEXINGTON 7 - 8
May, 1942.
(B) Set of Photographs showing damage to
LEXINGTON and various stages of the attack.
(C) Sketch of torpedo hits made by VT-2 on
RYUKAKU, May 7th.
(D) Sketch of torpedo hits made by VT-2 on
SHOKAKU, May 8th.
(E) Sketch of tracks of Torpedo Squadron Two
on May 7th.
(F) Sketch of Track of Torpedo Squadron Two
on May 8th.
(G) Pictures of Enemy CV Attacked by LEX. Gr.
on May 7th.

1. On the 7th of May 1942, the LEXINGTON was operating in the Coral Sea as part of Task Force SEVENTEEN, with Rear Admiral Aubrey W. Fitch on board as Commander Air. The Air Task Group consisted of the LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN and accompanying destroyers. Various actions took place during that day and the next, May 8th. The following report is submitted:

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS, MAY 7th.

2. At early dawn May 7th the YORKTOWN launched 10 scout bombers to search a hundred and twenty degree arc to a distance of 250 miles, modian 025° true, for enemy forces. At 0835 contact report was received from YORKTOWN of two enemy carriers, two cruisers and two destroyers in a position in the vicinity of the Misima Island, the distance being about 170 miles from the ship. So far as reported, the rest of the search was negative. The scout in the eastern arc reported low visibility in that area and turned back at 150 miles, the rest of his arc not being searched.

3. The LEXINGTON attack group was launched for attack about 0925. It consisted of 10 VF, 28 VSB, and 12 VTB. Eight SED's were retained at the ship for anti-torpedo plane patrol. After the group was well on its way, YORKTOWN reported the

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scout making the contact had corrected his report when he returned to the ship to 2 CA and 2 CL. This implied to me that there was no carrier present. However, the group was allowed to continue.

4. About 11:30 the group made contact with a carrier of the RYUKAKU type and started their attack. VS-2 consisting of 10 SEDs loaded with 1-500 and 2-100 lb. bombs, attacked first and obtained 2 500-lb bomb hits as follows:

- 1 on stern about 50 feet from ramp.
- 1 about 2/3 aft on flight deck, center.

These later were confirmed by independent observers, including Commander of Fighting Squadron Two.

5. VB-2 attacked at 1145 and obtained 5-1000 lb. bomb hits as follows:

- 1 about 2/3 aft on stbd. side flight deck.
- 1 aft on flight deck amidships.
- 1 aft on port side flight deck.
- 1 amidships about 1/2 way aft.
- 1 near stbd. side aft.

Sixteen pilots participated in that attack and it is not practicable to determine which ones definitely made direct hits. However, the number of hits was confirmed not only by the participating pilots and the Squadron Commander, but also by the Commander of Fighting Two and others who were in excellent position to observe. The ship was a mass of flames from bomb hits and covered by splashes from the later torpedo hits.

6. VT-2 attacked at 1145 and obtained 9 torpedo hits by planes as follows:

- 2-T-1, pilot, Lieut. Comdr. J.H. Brett, Jr., USN.
- 2-T-2, pilot, Lt(jg) L.F. Steffenhagen, USNR.
- 2-T-4, pilot, Lieut. R.F. Farrington, USN.
- 2-T-7, pilot, Lieut. E.W. Hurst, USN.
- 2-T-8, pilot, Ensign C. Hamilton, USN.
- 2-T-9, pilot, Gunner H.E. Talkington, USN.
- 2-T-10 Pilot, Lt(jg) L.W. Thornhill, USN.
- 2-T-11 pilot, Rad. Elect. J.E. Mattis, USN.
- 2-T-12 Pilot, C.A.P. M.M. Georgius, USN.

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7. Photographs were obtained during the latter phases of the attack, showing only the bow of the carrier with the rest of it completely enveloped in smoke, splashes, and flames. It is difficult to conceive any other result than complete destruction of this carrier and the personnel loss must have been close to 100%. From the bow silhouette in the photographs plus the cut away flight deck, the pilots descriptions, and radio intelligence it is believed that this carrier was the RYUKAKU. These photographs were saved when the LEXINGTON was abandoned.

8. One of our planes was lost in this attack. Lieutenant ALLEN, executive officer of VS-2, was definitely seen to go into the water as the result of enemy fighter action. Another SBD, Lieut(jg) QUIGLEY, of VS-2, was damaged by AA fire, reporting his control wires shot away and his plane became unmanageable. He was directed by his Squadron Commander to bail out or land on Rossel Island in the Louisiades Archipelago. This was friendly territory and it is hoped he made a safe landing. Air Headquarters at Townsville was notified with the idea of his rescue, results so far unknown.

9. The rest of the group returned and landed about 1345. A second attack on enemy ships in the De Boyne Island area was ready at 1450 but was not ordered by the Task Force Commander due to the possibility of other enemy carriers being in our vicinity and not yet located. Evidence existed that we were being shadowed by enemy planes and enemy radio was intercepted giving our approximate position and exact course and speed. The weather in our area was squally, with about 90% overcast, frequent rain squalls, in which ceiling and visibility were zero. Wind varied from 15 to 22 knots from southeast.

10. About 1745, very close to sunset, radar contacts gave a group of enemy planes to the westward. Fighter Control directed fighters in the air to intercept and additional fighters were launched. These planes intercepted a formation of nine enemy zero fighters and engaged them in combat. Results were as follows: Four zero Jap fighters shot down, two other zero fighters damaged as evidenced by smoke and gasoline leakage. YORKTOWN fighters claimed three which would account for the entire formation of nine, if there was no over-lapping.

Our losses: One VF, Lieut(jg) P.G. Baker, pilot, failed to return. It is believed that he collided with a zero fighter, included in the above enemy losses.

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11. While landing the combat patrol, well after sunset and almost completely dark, strange planes appeared flying around our formation. They were challenged and I received one report that they answered correctly and it was presumed at first they were YORKTOWN planes approaching to land. One observer reported they were two-engine torpedo planes. YORKTOWN reported they were enemy planes. Some ships opened fire on them. YORKTOWN and LEXINGTON planes were still circling to land. However, these strange planes made no hostile move, were burning running lights and eventually moved off thirty miles to the eastward, where radar showed them circling and apparently landing on an enemy carrier. They were definitely enemy planes and apparently mistook us for their own force. The indicated presence of enemy carriers only thirty miles east was reported to the Task Force Commander. It was estimated that these carriers were the SHOKAKU and the ZUIKAKU of Cardiv FIVE, which until that time had been unaccounted for.

12. It is believed that this day's action resulted in the complete destruction of the enemy carrier RYUKAKU with practically all personnel and ultimate loss of all her planes. In addition, during the day, the following enemy plane losses were inflicted:

- 6 zero type VF at 1745.
- 4 "97" type VF at scene of enemy carrier.
- 1 VF near scene of enemy carrier.

Total 11 planes. This does not include planes shot down by YORKTOWN group.

Our losses during the day were: 2 SED, 1 VF. The pilot and radioman of 1 SED may be safe on Rossel Island.

SECOND DAYS'S NARRATIVE

13. The Task Force Commander's decision was to proceed during the night to southwestward and search for and attack the enemy carriers at dawn. The LEXINGTON was directed to search 360°, 200 miles in the northern semicircle and 150 miles in the southern semicircle.

14. Contact was made by LEXINGTON scout, 2-S-2, Lieut (jg) Joseph Smith, about 0820, with a formation of two CV, 4 CA, and 3 DD 170 miles to the northeastward. Attack group consisting of 24 SEDs, 10 VF, and 12 VTS was launched between 0900 and 0920, and proceeded immediately. At 0832 radio intercepted enemy trans-

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mission giving our position, course and speed and we knew definitely we had been located. I predicted enemy attack would come in about 1100. All preparations to receive it were made. Ship was at General Quarters; condition Zed was set; returning scouts were launched as anti-torpedo plane patrol; additional fighters not already in the air were launched at 1030 and 1100; and all stations were warned to be ready.

15. The weather in our vicinity was clear, unlimited visibility and ceiling, few clouds, no rain squalls, wind about 15 knots, from southeast. Radar reported at 1100 many enemy aircraft approaching from northward, distance about 75 miles. First enemy planes were sighted from the ship at 1113. They were torpedo planes. They were at about 6-7000 feet altitude and split and came in from both bows. Ship's speed had been built up to 25 kts. at 1100 when the attack was expected and was immediately increased to 30 kts. when the hostile aircraft were sighted.

16. Our combat patrol, under the Fighter Director, was patrolling at 10,000 feet. Exact altitude of the approaching enemy was not determined, but was known to be over 10,000 feet. The fighters made contact 20-30 miles out but the enemy bombers were at 17,000 feet and the performance of our fighters was not sufficient to gain enough altitude to attack them before they reached the "push-over" point. The bombers intercepted were accompanied by 18 protective fighters, which our fighters subsequently engaged in combat and shot down or damaged six. They were Me-109, 00, 96, and 0 types.

17. The Anti-torpedo Plane Patrol was on station at 2000 feet, but about 6000 yards out. This patrol always has a tendency to get too far out, probably due both to concern over AA fire from surface ships and an eagerness to intercept torpedo planes well out. From this position the enemy torpedo planes at high speed came in over them. Even so, the SED's on the port side intercepted; shot down 4 VT with torpedoes, 4 without torpedoes, 1 VB and 2 accompanying VF. One SED was shot down by enemy VF.

18. Anti-aircraft fire from this force was opened generally about 1113. Torpedo planes made the first attack, the first approaching from port and others circling to come in from starboard bow. Most of these planes came in at about a 40 or 45° dive from 6-7000 feet, making high speed and dropping their torpedoes in the dive attitude from altitude of 300-500 feet, although some were seen to level off just above the water and make a normal drop. The range at the dropping point varied from 500 to 1200 yards. I turned to port with full rudder to bring the first torpedoes ahead. From then on torpedoes were coming

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from both starboard and port and I maneuvered with full rudder both ways as I considered best to avoid torpedoes. Some from starboard crossed ahead; two others ran parallel to the ship, one on each side; some from port ran ahead; two ran under without hitting. At 1120, first torpedo hit ship and exploded just forward of port forward gun gallery; at 1121, one hit a little further aft about opposite the bridge. In the meantime, dive bombers were making their attack from about 70° dive angle. They were pushing over from high altitude, 17,000 feet, and were not visible until they were in the final stages of their dive. One bomb estimated at 1000 lbs. hit the after end of the port forward gun gallery in the ready ammunition locker just outside the Admiral's cabin. Two other near misses hit close aboard after on the port side and at first were mistaken for torpedo hits. Another bomb estimated 500 lbs. hit the gig boat pocket on the port side, and one 100 lb. hit the stacks and exploded inside. There were one or more near misses after on the starboard side, fragments killing and injuring a number of men in the stack machine guns, sky aft, and the after signal station. I personally saw a flaming bomb, approaching the ship from port, and burning with a reddish colored flame. I am unable to say whether or not it hit.

19. Apparently there were seven explosions against the LEXINGTON, two of which are thought to have been torpedoes, 1 1000-lb. bomb hit, 2 1000-lb. bomb very near misses on the port side, and 2 smaller bombs. Fires were started in the main deck near the Admiral's country, beneath the incinerator, near the gig boat pocket and one in the forward starboard marine compartment near the forward elevator. The ship was listing about 6° to port. Damage control reported they were shifting oil to correct the list and fire parties were fighting the fires. Main Control reported all units in commission. Number 2, 4 and 6 fire rooms were partially flooded, but water was being controlled by the pumps. Steering gear was intact and the ship was making 25 kts. under good control. Both elevators at this time were reported out of commission, jammed in the up position, due to machinery casualties in the wells, probably from shock.

20. At about 1300, Damage Control reported the ship on an even keel, that three fires were out and the other one in the Admiral's country under control. The ship was periodically turned into wind to land and reservice aircraft. The attack group returned and was landed, the torpedo planes about 1400.

21. The attack group reported two 1000-lb. bomb hits on enemy carrier of the SHOKAKU class made by Commander W.B.Ault,

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USN, Group Commander, and three other SBD8s operating with him.
5 torpedo hits were made by VT-2 as follows:

2-T-3, pilot, Ensign N.A. Steerie, USNR.
2-T-5, pilot, Ensign T.B. Bash, USNR.
5-T-6, pilot, Ensign H.R. Mazza, USNR.
2-T-7, pilot, Lieut. E.W. Hurst, USN.
2-T-12 pilot, C.A.P. B.C. Shearn, USN.

They further reported when last seen she was on fire, settling and turning in a circle. It is believed that this ship was sunk. Radio intercepts later tended to confirm this belief. She was rapidly losing headway.

22. In the meantime, Damage Control was gradually getting all damage checked and cleared up. At 1247 a heavy explosion shook the ship. It appeared to come from amidships well down in the bowels of the ship. Communication with Central Station was immediately lost, all telephones except the JV line went out including the ship's service phones, and a bad fire broke out from the main deck down to the vicinity of Central Station just forward of the main elevator. All pressure was lost in the fire main forward. Rudder indicators on the bridge went out, although steering control was working. By using the JV line to truck wheel to receive reports of the position of the rudder, steering was retained on the bridge. The forward gyro compass system was out, but after gyro compass and repeaters were satisfactory.

23. This heavy explosion at 1247 was what caused the loss of the ship. Until that time everything was well under control. Full propulsive power was available, steering was O.K., the ship was on an even keel, and all fires were either out or under control. The cause of this explosion was uncertain. At first it was thought to be a "sleeper" dud 1000-lb bomb which went off in the bowels of the ship. However, further study indicates that small gasoline leaks from the heavy pounding the ship had received had caused accumulation of gasoline vapors in the lower regions and they were set off by spark of unknown origin. In any event, from this time on the ship was doomed.

24. Hoses from the after section of the fire main were led out and every effort was made to combat the fire. The fire spread after and additional communications were gradually being lost. The fire main pressure dropped to 30-40 lbs. Minor explosions were recurring at frequent intervals, increasing the fire. Whether these were from 5-inch ammunition going off or from further gasoline

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vapors could not be determined. All lights forward were out and the main deck and below were full of smoke. It was a losing fight to control the fire. The JV line to trick wheel went dead and I steered for a while with the engines. Both gyros and repeaters were out and we used the magnetic compass.

25. At about 1600, the one remaining phone working to Main Control was getting very weak. Main Control had reported the forward bulkhead of Afirm unit was so hot the paint was peeling off in large blisters. I gave them permission to shift to the after spaces. Finally, about 1630, fearing I would lose all communication with them I ordered engineering personnel to secure the plant and get up on deck. The safeties were opened and the ship came to a stop. I ordered life rafts made ready and preparations made to abandon ship. Fire fighting efforts were still being made until the engineering plant was abandoned, when all water pressure was gone. At this time I asked Admiral Fitch for destroyers to come alongside and pass over fire hoses, thinking we might control the fire if we got water. The Admiral directed DD's to come alongside and also directed me to disembark excess personnel to the destroyers alongside. In response to this the USS MORRIS came alongside and passed two hoses over, which were put to work, and excess personnel went down lines to her deck. However, by this time the fire was beyond control. Additional explosions were occurring; it was reported the war heads on the hangar deck had been at a temperature of 140° F; ready bombs storage was in the vicinity of the fire and I considered there was danger of the ship blowing up at any minute. I had previously directed sick and wounded to be disembarked in our whale boats and excess squadron personnel had gone on lines to the destroyer alongside.

26. At 1707 Admiral Fitch directed me to abandon ship. I issued the orders and orderly disembarkation began. Boats from accompanying ships came alongside and assisted. Preference was given to lowering wounded and injured into the boats. Most of the men went hand over hand down lines over the side and into the water on life rafts. Most of the men were off by 1800. Admiral Fitch and myself were the last to leave the bridge. He disembarked forward where practically all had gone and I made a final inspection aft. I found a number of men aft on the starboard side and in the port after gun gallery where there seemed to be some difficulty; men in the water were having trouble getting away from the ship due to drift. I directed those men still on board to shift to the starboard side aft where getting away was easier. I made a final inspection and went aft where my executive officer, Commander Seligman, reported to me all men were off the ship. At this time a tremendous explosion about the vicinity of the elevator shook the ship and we had to duck to

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avoid falling debris. I directed Commander Seligman to disembark. I saw him in the water swimming toward an approaching motor whale boat. Having assured myself there was no other living person on the ship, I went down a line hand over hand and dropped off into the water, to be picked up by a motor whale boat of the USS MINNEAPOLIS. This boat took me to the USS MINNEAPOLIS where I reported to Admiral Fitch.

27. The picture of the burning and doomed ship was a magnificent but sad sight. The ship and crew had performed gloriously and it seemed too bad that she had to perish in her hour of victory. But she went to a glorious end, more fitting than the usual fate of the eventual scrap heap or succumbing to the perils of the sea. She went down in battle, after a glorious victory for our forces in which the LEXINGTON and her air group played so conspicuous a part.

28. The PHELPS was directed by the Task Force Commander to sink the LEXINGTON by torpedoes. Five torpedoes were fired, at least three hit, and she finally went under on an even keel. As she went under a tremendous explosion occurred which rocked ships for miles around. It was the end of the LEXINGTON. These circumstances were reported to me verbally by the Commanding Officer of the PHELPS.

29. The survivors were scattered among nearly all of the accompanying ships. Check-ups by signal disclosed a total of about 2735 survivors. There were no drownings in the water due to abandoning ship so far as known. All losses of personnel were due to air combat in the air group or to the bomb explosions and fire on the ship. The preliminary total of personnel losses subject to final check is 26 officers and 190 men out of a total complement of 2951. This in itself is considered to be a remarkable achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

30-1. Air offense is definitely superior to the defense.

30-2. Combat patrols must patrol at 20,000 feet to insure interception prior to attack of high-flying enemy dive bombers.

30-3. Anti-torpedo Plane Patrols must keep in close to the torpedo release point, at about 3000 feet altitude, to insure interception of either high or low approach torpedo planes. This em-

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ployment of SED's is a make-shift at best; the best defense would be to have sufficient fighters for both a high and low patrol. This condition will seldom be realized. In this particular attack, the Anti-torpedo Plane Patrol of SED's was partially effective. They shot down nine torpedo planes, four with torpedoes aboard, four without, and one undetermined. They also shot down two fighters. One SED was shot down by enemy fighters. The Anti-torpedo Plane Patrol on the port side of the formation made all the intercepts. It was in position 3000 yds. outside of screen at 2000 feet. If it had been at the designated altitude of 3000 feet, it's position would have been more effective. It is considered that the Anti-torpedo Plane Patrol of SED's is amply justified as better than nothing.

30-4. Our personnel are superior in quality and skill to the Japanese.

30-5. The ship was completely ready for the attack in every respect. A total of 11 fighters were in the air for defense against bombers, and 14 SED's for defense against torpedo planes, in addition to planes in the air for defense from the YORKTOWN. All guns were manned and ready. Material condition Zed to meet the attack was completely set. Twenty-five to thirty knots speed was being made. All personnel were alert.

30-6. This battle definitely represented the simple problem of carrier against carrier. Both air groups were attacking the other's carrier at about the same time. I predicted ahead of time that it was possible for both attacks to be successful and for both opposing carriers to be destroyed. That is what happened. But few of our attacking planes were destroyed in the attack itself, whereas many of the Japanese planes were destroyed by our fighters and AA fire in their attack on us. The LEXINGTON remained afloat for over seven hours and rescued about 92% of her personnel, whereas the enemy carrier is believed to have sunk within the hour and to have lost a heavy percentage of its personnel.

30-7. In this battle, the enemy had the advantage of weather. The LEXINGTON was in a clear area, whereas the Japanese were in a rain squall area. Nevertheless, the major part of the LEXINGTON air attack group was able to find its objective.

30-8. Our own AA fire was, as usual, only partially

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effective. The general tendency was still to use insufficient lead and to fire under the target.

30-9. The loss of the ship was caused by an internal gasoline vapor explosion near Central Station below the armored deck in the vicinity of the forward torpedo hit. This explosion resulted from minor gasoline leaks gradually accumulating highly explosive vapor in the area. It was undetected, due to the complete sealing of the ship in Condition Zed. The adjacent gasoline control room had been flooded and sealed with CA₂ as a preventive measure. For means of preventing see recommendation 31-8 below.

30-10. The material performance was in general excellent. No gun stoppages or material failures were reported by the planes. The damage control features of the design of the LEXINGTON speak for themselves; she remained afloat for over seven hours after sustaining two torpedo hits, three bomb hits and two near misses and had to be finally sunk by additional torpedo hits.

30-11. The performance of all personnel was magnificent. I cannot say too much in praise of the conduct of the personnel, of the officers and men of the LEXINGTON and her squadrons. The finest traditions of the Naval service were upheld in every respect. Many cases of individual heroism occurred, and they are too numerous to mention in this report. In accordance with Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet Instructions, separate letter is being submitted with recommendations for suitable awards in these cases. However, I wish to emphasize that every last officer and man performed his duty with the greatest credit to himself, his family and his country. The country can well be proud of their performance.

30-12. Our present methods of training and tactics are sound, as proven by this engagement. Our attacks were successful and except for the gasoline vapor explosion the ship would have been saved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

31-1. That a new carrier, the first available, be re-named the LEXINGTON to carry on the traditions of that great ship.

31-2. That the officers and men survivors of the LEXINGTON and her air group be retained together as a unit, to man the new LEXINGTON. This will be of the utmost value for morale, not only of these men but for the country as a whole, and will best utilize

S-E-C-R-E-T

May 15, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action - The Battle of the Coral Sea,
7 and 8 May 1942.

this group of well-trained, seasoned, and tested officers and men.

31-3. That all carriers be immediately filled to their allowance of 27 fighters.

31-4. That combat patrols patrol at 20,000 feet when enemy dive bombing attack is expected.

31-5. That Anti-torpedo Plane patrols be stationed at not more than 3000 yds. from the carrier at 3000 feet altitude for protection against both high and low level torpedo planes. Fighters should be used for this if available.

31-6. That fighters and torpedo planes of greater performance be provided to carriers as soon as possible.

31-7. That every effort be made to strengthen the air defense of carriers without sacrificing their offensive strength.

31-8. That damage control instructions to all ships contain the following:

Whenever structural damage occurs in the general vicinity of gasoline tanks, possibility of accumulation in confined spaces of dangerous concentrations of gasoline vapors exists. The following immediate steps must be taken to prevent destructive explosions:

1. Pump all gasoline tanks in the vicinity overboard or to tanks in an undamaged area and keep them flushed with salt water.
2. Take all steps practicable to prevent sparks anywhere near the damaged area.
3. Ventilate the damaged area thoroughly by all practicable means, including bilge pumps, even though it involves partially breaking material condition Zed in that area.

31-9. That additional fire fighting apparatus be installed on carriers, preferably separated units of diesel powered fire pumps and hoses, so that entire reliance is not placed on the fire mains.

31-10. That more rescue breathing or oxygen smoke helmets be provided. Several hundred should be the minimum and all men trained in their use.

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May 15, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action - The Battle of the Coral Sea,
7 and 8 May 1942.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS32. Enemy Damage May 7th:

By LEXINGTON Air Group:

- 1 carrier (RYUKAKU) sunk. In addition probably all her planes were lost and practically all personnel.
- 4 zero enemy fighters (type zero) shot down at 1745.
- 2 probable enemy zero destroyed at 1745.
- 1 type 97 VF at scene of carrier attack (VB-2).
- 1 type 97 VF at scene of carrier attack (VB-2).
- 1 3-place seaplane probable, near scene of carrier attack (VF-2).
- 2 VF type 97 by VF 2 at scene of attack on enemy carrier.

Total:

- 1 CV, (presumably 80 planes); 11 planes additional in combat (part of 80). These losses do not include planes shot down by YORKTOWN planes.

Our losses, May 7th:

- 1 SED shot down by enemy fighters at scene of attack.
- 1 SED damaged at scene of attack, force-landed on Rossel Island. Pilot and gunner may be safe.
- 1 VF shot down by zero fighters at 1745.

Total:

- 3 planes, crew of one of which may be safe.

33. Enemy losses, May 8th:

- 1 carrier (SHOKAKU) probably sunk with all planes and heavy loss of personnel.
- 4 VT shot down in vicinity of LEXINGTON (by AA).
- 1 VT shot down in vicinity of LEXINGTON (by VB-2).

By VF-2: Certain:

- 2 VS at enemy carrier.
- 1 VF, type 00, at enemy carrier.
- 1 VF, Me-109, over LEXINGTON.
- 1 VF, 00, over LEXINGTON.
- 1 VF, 0, over LEXINGTON.

S-E-C-R-E-T

May 15, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action - The Battle of the Coral Sea,
7 and 8 May 1942.

Probable:

- 2 VF, type 00, at enemy carrier.
- 1 VF, Me-109, over LEXINGTON.
- 1 VF, 96, over LEXINGTON.
- 1 VT, over LEXINGTON.

By VB-2:

- 4 VT with torpedoes near LEXINGTON.
 - 4 VT without torpedoes near LEXINGTON.
 - 1 VT or VB without bombs or torpedoes near LEXINGTON.
 - 2 VF near LEXINGTON.
- 2 VF, type 97, shot down by VT 2 on return from attack.

Total:

- 1 CV, (presumably 80 planes) probably sunk; 29 planes additional in combat (part of 80). These losses do not include planes shot down by YORKTOWN planes (or AA fire in vicinity of YORKTOWN).

Our losses, May 8th:

- 1 carrier (LEXINGTON) sunk, but with 92% personnel and 18 planes saved (planes landed on YORKTOWN).
- 7 VF shot down at scene of attack on enemy.
- 1 VT lost, out of gas returning; personnel may be safe.
- 3 SED lost, out of gas returning; personnel may be safe.
- 1 SED lost, shot down as anti-torpedo plane patrol at LEXINGTON.

Total:

12 planes, personnel of 4 of which may be safe.

34. It is believed the above figures speak for themselves and that on the 7th and 8th of May, the LEXINGTON and her air group achieved two great victories in our country's cause and that her performances will go down in the annals of the Navy as an outstanding example of devotion to duty and successful accomplishment of a mission.

CV2/A16-3(0100)

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

10-fd

S-E-C-R-E-T

May 15, 1942.

Subject: Report of Action, The Battle of the Coral Sea,
7 and 8 May 1942.

35. This report of these actions is as accurate as I can determine at this time. I have obtained written statements from key personnel and can elaborate on any points if further details are desired, especially on material matters. If my recommendation to keep the officers and crew together is approved, it will facilitate supplemental reports.

36. The question of whether or not the SHOKAKU is sunk may be controversial at this writing. No report of any sighting of the SHOKAKU since the attack has been received. All information in my possession points to the probability of the only carrier proceeding away from the area being the damaged ZUIEAKU, which has been reported from radio intelligence. From the reports of pilots at the scene, stating she was settling, on fire, circling but rapidly losing all way, unless positive information otherwise exists, I believe the SHOKAKU sank shortly after the attack.

FREDERICK C. SHERMAN.

Copies herewith for:

Cominch.

Opnav.

ComTaskFor-17

By separate registered mail:

ComTaskFor-11.

ComCarPacFlt.

CO YORKTOWN.

BuAer.

NA16-2/S.W. Pacific
~~25-1~~ (The President-
General MacArthur

May 15, 1942.

CROSS-INDEX SHEET

For comment from General MacArthur on that
part of President's message to him of May 6, 1942,
regarding establishment of adequate censorship
of messages coming out of Australia see file

A7-2

A16-3 (S.W. Pacific)

SECRET

From: General Patch
To: General Marshall
May 8, 1942.

May 7th at 7:04 a.m. enemy submarine attacked OS "Chloe" 34 miles southwest of Noumea enroute Bern with commercial cargo. "Chloe" sent SOS giving position and stating attack. Attack continued until 9:15 a.m. when "Chloe" was sunk by gunfire, 80 shots in all being fired. Submarine cast 3 tins of biscuits into water near boats containing survivors and remained on surface in vicinity of sinking until about 9:45 a.m. then submerged.

Free French gunboat "Chevreuil" left vicinity Noumea on southerly course at 5:~~00~~15 a.m. May 7th and was ship closest to "Chloe" at time of SOS and also during attack.

Free French Mission here were requested at 9 a.m. to send special message to "Chevreuil" directing her to proceed to scene of attack and execute necessary naval action. They refused to comply and have since stated "the intervention of the Chevreuil could have no efficacy" also quote that the help of Chevreuil would have only a most insignificant military value, and that it would not outweigh the serious inconvenience that there is in exposing Governor Sautot to so great a danger." Chevreuil with Governor Sautot a prisoner aboard is reported proceeding to Auckland, New Zealand.

"Chevreuil" was in position to be of greatest possible value in military way as she is better equipped for antisubmarine warfare in all respects than any vessel available and was within easy cruising range of an area wherein Japanese submarine remained surfaced for more than 2 hours.

This action is indicative of attitude previously reported in my messages May 6th and 7th political situation here.

NoSig

memo. for the President: Command control of New Caledonia passed to the Navy (Nimitz) on May 7th, and Admiral King is following through on the problem of the Free French in accordance with your directions. b.c.u.

SECRET

Regraded Unclassified

SECRET

+ A163 | SWP
(President Mac Arthur
Personal Messages)
C O P Y

From: GHQ, SWPA

To: Chief of Staff

No. NE 176, May 8, 1942. (attached)

In reply to President Roosevelt's radiogram of the 6th, contained in your Number 31, I feel in order to properly answer his query that I should give my estimate of the general strategic situation in the Pacific.

The fall of Corregidor and the collapse of resistance in the Philippines, with the defeat in Burma, brings about a new situation in this theatre. At least 2 enemy divisions and all the Air Force in the Philippines will be released for other missions. Japanese troops in Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies are susceptible of being regrouped for an offensive effort elsewhere since large garrisons will not be required because of the complacency of the native population.

The Japanese Navy is as yet unchallenged and is disposed for further offensive effort. A preliminary move is now under way, probably initially against New Guinea and the line of communications between the United States and Australia. This series of events releases an enormously dangerous enemy potential in the Western Pacific.

That the situation will remain static is most improbable. I am of the opinion that the Japanese will not undertake large operations against India at this time. That area is undoubtedly within the scope of their military ambition but it would be strategically advisable for them to defer it until a later date. On the other hand, the enemy advance toward the South has been supported by the establishment of a series of bases while his left is covered from the Mandated Islands. He is thus prepared to continue in that direction. Moreover, operations in these waters will permit of the regrouping of his Naval and Air Forces to meet a threat from the East. Such is not the case in a movement toward India. He must thrust into the Indian Ocean without adequate supporting bases, relinquishing the possibility of concentrating his Naval strength in either ocean.

The military requirements for a decisive Indian campaign are so heavy that it cannot be undertaken under those conditions. On the other hand, a continuation of his southern movement at this time will give added safety for his eventual move to the west. In view of this situation I deem it the utmost importance to provide adequate security for Australia and the Pacific Area, thus maintaining a constant frontal defence and

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a flank threat against further movement to the southward. This should be followed at the earliest possible moment by offensive action or by at least a sufficiently dangerous initial threat of offensive action to affect the enemy's plans and dispositions. This would meet the demand of the immediate strategic situation and would satisfy American public opinion by providing an adequate effort in the only theatre which is charged exclusively to the United States.

I agree with the President as to the tredomprevent (?) its maximum support. Only limited assistance, however, can be transported there so that the necessity for a 2nd front is self evident. That front should be in the Pacific theatre. Nowhere else can it be so successfully launched and nowhere else will it so assist the Russians. The Siberian pressure now exerted on him by Japan will be at once released, permitting him either to utilize his Siberian resources in direct support of his European front or to join his allies in the Pacific attack. In addition, it would protect Australia; it would protect India since the best defence for India is provided in the Pacific rather than in the Indian Ocean, and it would have the enthusiastic psychological support of the entire American nation.

The first step in the execution of this conception is the strengthening of the position in this area. At this time there are present all the elements to produce another disaster. If serious enemy pressure were applied against Australia prior to the developments of adequate and balanced land, sea and air forces the situation would be extremely precarious. The extent of the territory to be defended is so vast and the communication facilities are so poor that the enemy, moving freely by water, has a preponderant advantage.

My radio of May 1st numbered 558, ^(attached) presented a brief account of the present inadequacy of the forces now here. In view of the enemy potentialities I consider it essential for the security of this country that it be reinforced as follows, taking as a point of departure the Australian land and air forces in priorities of development as outlined in my radio number 441, and United States forces now allocated to this area:

2 aircraft carriers in order to provide a balanced sea force and a reasonable coverage of the adjacent sea areas;
on an increase from 500 to 1,000 front line planes in United States air forces with an adequate flow of replacement personnel and materiel to maintain table of organization strength;

1 United States Army Corps of 3 first-class divisions capable of executing a tactical offensive movement.

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Such a force will give reasonable assurance of a successful defence of Australia and will provide an adequate base for counter offensive action. I cannot too strongly represent that the defensive force here must be built up before hostile direct pressure is applied for it would then be too late. We must anticipate the future or we will find ourselves once more completely outnumbered.

The attrition policy, while sound, is susceptible of dangerous applications and in this case can lead to the gravest difficulties. The resources of Japan, while diminishing in some respects, are increasing in others by virtue of her acquisitions through conquest. However her ultimate potential strength may diminish, her success during the next year will be determined not by her basic potential but by her strength at the point of application of power. At that point, as has always been the case since the beginning of this war, she has the advantage in both numbers and quality of troops. Due to her unchallenged command of the seas she is able to concentrate on a chosen objective and overwhelm the defenders through superiority of means although the actual numbers of the forces she utilizes may not be large.

MacArthur.

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C O P Y

Number 31, May 6, 1942.

Personal from the President, for General MacArthur

I have seen your telegram No. 151 of May third to George Marshall and I want you to know that I fully appreciate the difficulties of your position. They are the same kind of difficulties which I am having with the Russians, British, Canadians, Mexicans, Indians, Persians and others at different points of the compass. Not one of them is wholly satisfied but I am at least succeeding in keeping all of them reasonably satisfied and have so far avoided any real rows. I am especially trying to avoid any future public controversies between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Curtin.

The Pacific War Council, under my Chairmanship, has now met in Washington for a month and a half and all is still serene.

In the matter of grand strategy I find it difficult this Spring and Summer to get away from the simple fact that the Russian armies are killing more Axis personnel and destroying more Axis materiel than all the other twenty-five United Nations put together. Therefore, it has seemed wholly logical to support the great Russian effort in 1942 by seeking to get all munitions to them that we possibly can, and also to develop plans aimed at diverting German land and air forces from the Russian front.

I know that you will feel the effect of this. But at the same time, we will continue to send to you all the air strength we possibly can and secure, if possible, the chain of Islands on the line of communications. We will also strike as quickly and as often as possible against the Japanese supply line between Japan and Australia. One of our submarines got a 22,000 ton Japanese aircraft carrier a few days ago.

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to put out of action each month more Japanese ships, naval and commercial, and more Japanese planes than they can build. This process of attrition, if continued, will make later operations on our part progressively more certain of success.

I wish you would let me have your personal guess on whether Japan will continue large operations against India and Ceylon or will stop at approximately the Calcutta line. Also, as to whether an all-out attack will be launched against Australia or New Zealand.

- 1 -

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The only difficulty I am having here is a good deal of loose newspaper talk coming out of Australia, and I suggest you do all possible to get a censorship on out-going messages from Australia and possibly New Zealand also.

I see no reason why you should not continue discussion of military matters with Australian Prime Minister, but I hope you will try to have him treat them as confidential matters and not use them for public messages or for appeals to Churchill and me.

Also, I very much hope the Australians can leave their personnel in the Near East, as this will make a big difference in preventing Germany from making a serious drive against Turkey, Syria, Egypt or Libya. This is especially important because of the increased turn-around in shipping involved in moving these troops to Australia and replacing them from Great Britain. It would mean a reduction in strength of 60,000 men in the Middle East, creating a most serious hazard.

I well realize your difficult problems, and that you have to be an Ambassador as well as Supreme Commander.

My warm regards. Good luck.

ROOSEVELT.

SECRET

1/1100

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USNA
May 1942
3:59 PM

WAR DEPARTMENT
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

INCOMING MESSAGE

From: USAFIA
To: General George C. Marshall
No. AG 558

The directive to the commander in chief in the Southwest Pacific area was delivered by Colonel Ostrander on April 25th. With the limited forces at my disposal the missions assigned must be construed in large measure as a pattern for future development. None of the three elements of Naval, air or ground strength are at present adequate. The situation with regard to each is as follows;

(1) The Naval force has direct air support due to the absence of a carrier and is therefore suitable only for operations of a minor and subsidiary nature.

(2) The Australian Air Force will require many months for its development. This force will always be absorbed to a large extent in the defence of the very extensive coast line of this continent.

The United States Air Corps strength comprises 2 heavy bombardment groups, 2 medium bombardment groups less 2 squadrons, and 3 pursuit groups with 100% T/O operating aircraft plus 50% in reserve, no specific number having been assigned for wastage. Air Corps organization and training are far below the required standard and it will require at least 4 months of the most intensive effort to reach a satisfactory condition.

(3) The ground troops are not prepared.

The Australian Army has one division and one division less two brigades which have returned from the middle east which are undoubtedly effective troops. One additional division in the home force is approaching combat condition. The remainder of the Army is composed of a militia in a very indifferent state of training and equipment which can be prepared for combat only by prolonged and intensive methods. It will be several months before these ground troops are ready.

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WAR DEPARTMENT

The two United States Army divisions here or en route are assumed to be in a satisfactory state of organization, training and equipment.

In view of the assigned mission and the size and composition of the forces now available or allocated I find myself in need of the following additional basic information in order to perfect my plans:

(1) The nature of the offensive that is contemplated to be launched from this and adjacent areas.

(2) The size of the force that is expected to be eventually allotted for its accomplishment.

(3) An approximate idea of the date when such an operation could be expected to be initiated.

With this information regarding the basic strategic concepts of the allied nations I will be in a position to perfect local plans EYD

MacArthur

Action Copy: OPD
Info. Copies: TAG
File
ONI
SGS
G-2
A-2
JIC
Maj. Hammond
CGAAF

CH-IN-0186 (5-1-42) PM 8:35

FILE

42

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1A16/SWP
(President - MacArthur)

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

May 6, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Your proposed message to General MacArthur meets the situation perfectly. However, I suggest an addition to the third paragraph from the end, which emphasizes the importance of the matter. The whole message, with the change suggested, is reproduced below:

"For General MacArthur - Personal from the President:

I have seen your telegram No. 151 of May third to George Marshall and I want you to know that I fully appreciate the difficulties of your position. They are the same kind of difficulties which I am having with the Russians, British, Canadians, Mexicans, Indians, Persians and others at different points of the compass. Not one of them is wholly satisfied but I am at least succeeding in keeping all of them reasonably satisfied and have so far avoided any real rows. I am especially trying to avoid any future public controversies between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Curtin.

The Pacific War Council, under my Chairmanship, has now met in Washington for a month and a half and all is still serene.

In the matter of grand strategy I find it difficult this Spring and Summer to get away from the simple fact that the Russian armies are killing more Axis personnel and destroying more Axis materiel than all the other twenty-five United Nations put together. Therefore, it has seemed wholly logical to support the great Russian effort in 1942 by seeking to get all munitions to them that we possibly can, and also to develop plans aimed at diverting German land and air forces from the Russian front.

I know that you will feel the effect of this. But, at the same time, we will continue to send to you all the air strength we possibly can and secure, if possible, the chain of Islands on the line of communications. We will also strike as quickly and as often as possible against the Japanese supply line between Japan and Australia. One of our



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submarines got a 22,000 ton Japanese aircraft carrier a few days ago.

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to put out of action each month more Japanese ships, naval and commercial, and more Japanese planes than they can build. This process of attrition, if continued, will make later operations on our part progressively more certain of success.

I wish you would let me have your personal guess on whether Japan will continue large operations against India and Ceylon or will stop at approximately the Calcutta line. Also, as to whether an all-out attack will be launched against Australia or New Zealand.

The only difficulty I am having here is a good deal of loose newspaper talk coming out of Australia, and I suggest you do all possible to get a censorship on out-going messages from Australia and possibly New Zealand also.

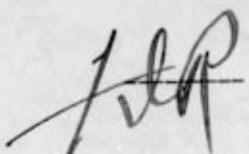
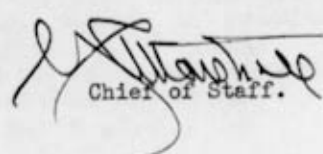
I see no reason why you should not continue discussion of military matters with Australian Prime Minister, but I hope you will try to have him treat them as confidential matters and not use them for public messages or for appeals to Churchill and me.

Also, I very much hope the Australians can leave their personnel in the Near East, as this will make a big difference in preventing Germany from making a serious drive against Turkey, Syria, Egypt or Libya. This is especially important because of the increased turn around in shipping involved in moving these troops to Australia and replacing them from Great Britain. It would mean a reduction in strength of 60,000 men in the Middle East, creating a most serious hazard.

I well realize your difficult problems, and that you have to be an Ambassador as well as Supreme Commander.

My warm regards. Good luck.

ROOSEVELT"

Chief of Staff.

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Box 10
May 5, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL MARSHALL

In view of "all kinds of things", what would you think of my sending something like the following to Douglas MacArthur?

"For General MacArthur - Personal from the President:

I have seen your telegram No. 151 of May third to George Marshall and I want you to know that I fully appreciate the difficulties of your position. They are the same kind of difficulties which I am having with the Russians, British, Canadians, Mexicans, Indians, Persians and others at different points of the compass. Not one of them is wholly satisfied but I am at least succeeding in keeping all of them reasonably satisfied and have so far avoided any real rows. I am especially trying to avoid any future public controversies between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Curtin.

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Japanese aircraft carrier a few days ago.

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to put out of action each month more Japanese ships, naval and commercial, and more Japanese planes than they can build. This process of attrition, if continued, will make later operations on our part progressively more certain of success.

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I well realize your difficult problems, and that you have to be an Ambassador as well as Supreme Commander.

My warm regards. Good luck.

ROOSEVELT"

F. D. R.

RAA9
Filed 3/1735
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WAR DEPARTMENT
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CSWD
May 3,
544A

INCOMING MESSAGE

PRIORITY

From: Australia
To: Chief of Staff

No 151 May 3rd, 1942

attached T-101

I am embarrassed by your number 8 30th which seems to imply some breach of frankness on my part. I can assure you that nothing is further from my thoughts. I naturally know nothing of communications between the Prime ministers of Great Britain and Australia and do not know the content or purport of the message to which you refer. My position here is a delicate one. The Prime minister, who is also minister for defense, states that by law as well as obligation he is responsible not only to his parliament but to the people for all measures affecting the security of his country and therefore insists he upon his right to summon me to conference where he expects to receive complete information regarding the situation. It is my conception that my position requires me to be available to the head of this government in equal manner as to the head of my own government. I have attended these conferences, explaining fully the limitations placed upon me by my directive to the effect that I am responsible neither for grand strategy nor for the allocation of resources from the British Empire or from the United States. The Prime minister has asked my opinion on many specific questions and I have given it freely but with no idea that it was for other purpose than his own personal information. I wish to assure you that I have no idea of bringing pressure to bear through any channels open to the Australian government in order to support indirectly any views that I may hold. He recently brought up a definite question that had previously been raised by the Prime minister of England regarding the possibility of the allocation of 1 British infantry division and a British armored division to Australia in place of the approximately 48000 Australian troops now being held in the Middle East. I was also asked as to the advisability of the fulfillment of the English promise of an air carrier to supplement the naval forces in this area. I unhesitatingly gave as

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WAR DEPARTMENT
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

INCOMING MESSAGE

From Australia to Chief of Staff No 151 Page 2

my professional opinion that both of these measures should be accomplished if possible. I know of nothing else which dealt with British reinforcements for this area. In my reports to you over the last 5 months I have frankly outlined my strategic concepts but have addressed such communications to no one else. I have endeavoured to observe scrupulously proper channels of communication and have invariably accepted without reservation such directives and policies as have been communicated to me. I am not conscious, even by indirection, of any taint of disloyalty in this regard. I am not responsible in any way for any heresay observation no matter how high a source which may without my knowledge be connected with my name. Such observations as I make upon military matters I have made and will continue to make to you as the properly constituted authority. Our government should pay no attention to anything attributed to me except that which I communicate to them over my own signature. Even a loose interpretation of your radio would preclude my discussing military matters with the Australian Prime minister, for any communication from him might then be colored by my opinions and it might be construed that I was a party to them. I believe it would be unwise to limit me in such discussions as he may initiate. To do so would unquestionably endanger the whole fabric of unified command here. I apparently at present have that confidence not only of the Australian government but of the Australian people which is due largely to the lack of any attempt on my part at intrigue or reservation. The complete absorption of the Australian government is to attain security and long before I appeared upon the scene here their views to that effect were made of record. They are fearful that the forces now here are insufficient for the purpose and professional military opinion cannot fail to support that

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INCOMING MESSAGE

From Australia to Chief of Staff Page 3

view. It is hard to conceive the unanimity and intense feeling which animates every element of Australian society in its belief that proper protective measures for the safety of this continent are not being taken. It represents an avalanche of public opinion that nothing can suppress.

MacArthur

FOOTNOTES: Radio 8 (CM-OUT-6034 4/30/42) Origin of request for reinforcements for Australia.

ACTION COPY: OPD

INFO. COPY: TAG FILE SGS

CM-IN-0667 (5/3/42) 12:18 PM

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OUTGOING MESSAGE

April 30, 1942

To: CINC, SWPA
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

WDWPD

W. D. No. 8

The President has just received from the Prime Minister of Great Britain a cablegram containing the gist of a message reaching London from Mister Curtin on the subject of reinforcements desired for Australia. It is realized that you are not concerned in the nature of communications passing between the 2 Prime Ministers but where these take form of definite request for reinforcements for Southwest Pacific area they create confusion unless originated by you as Supreme Commander and transmitted directly to the U. S. War Department which acts as Executive for US Joint Chiefs of Staff in controlling that area. Routine supply of all nationalistic forces is expected to follow accustomed channels, but it is requested that all communications to which you are a party and which relate to strategy and major reinforcements be addressed only to the War Department.

Statement of requirements recently submitted by you is under thorough study.

MARSHALL

Originator: OPD

Info. Copies: File
TAG

CM-OUT-6034 (4/30/42)

FILE

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SECRET

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Regraded Unclassified

A16-3/A9(S.W. Pacific)

CROSS-INDEX SHEET

For Narrative of Events in S. W. Pacific
Area prior to 14 February, 1942, see
Admiral Hart's Narrative in file

A16-3/A9 (Philippine Area)

SECRET

Vice Admiral Glassford's Narrative
(S.W. Pacific)

SECRET

From: Rear Admiral William Glassford, U.S.N.
To: The Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.

SUBJECT: Narrative of events in the South-West Pacific from
14 February to 5 April 1942.

Enclosures: Two (2) Volumes of SECRET dispatches, partially *Missing*
covering the period of this report.

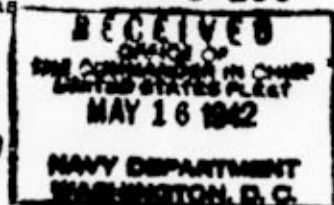
1. This narrative purports to be a continuation of the narrative of events in the South-West Pacific prepared by Admiral T. C. Hart, U.S.N., who according to my understanding has covered the subject including my own subordinate activities up to the day of his departure from BANDOENG, JAVA, 14 February 1942. This report carries on from that date at which time I became the senior U. S. Naval Officer in the ABDA area and the "de facto" Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet. I had already been designated (31 January 1942) the "Commander U.S. Naval Forces S.W. Pacific" - with rank of Vice Admiral. It had been my privilege to serve with Admiral Hart successively until his departure from the ABDA area as:

(a) Commander Yangtze Patrol basing SHANGHAI and HANKOW CHINA for approximately two and a half years previous to the opening of hostilities with the Axis Powers (7 December 1941).

(b) Commander Task Force Five composed eventually of the surface and air combatant forces of Admiral Hart's Asiatic Fleet including tenders, from the day war was declared (17 December 1941) until 31 January 1942; and as

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(c) Commander U.S. Naval Forces South West Pacific from 31 January 1942 until Admiral Hart's departure from JAVA on 14 February 1942.

Thereafter I continued as Commander U.S. Naval Forces S.W. Pacific under Vice Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich, Royal Netherlands Navy, who succeeded Admiral Hart on the above date (c), as Commander Allied Naval Forces South West Pacific, until 1 March 1942 on which date the Allied Naval Command in the South West Pacific, but specifically in JAVA was dissolved and I retired with my forces to AUSTRALIA.

2. In AUSTRALIA the Headquarters of my command was established eventually at PERTH from which place the operation and administration of my forces were continued until I was relieved by Rear Admiral W. R. Purnell, U.S.N., 3 April 1942.

3. Thus this narrative covers the period 14 February to 3 April 1942, an interval of forty-nine days during which time the enemy in greatly superior force and with complete control of the air, occupied the NETHERLAND EAST INDIES and forced the Allied Naval units defending the Islands to retire from JAVA out of the area. Generally the British and Dutch forces retired to INDIA; the United States forces to AUSTRALIA.

4. Forces Especially Involved

1. U.S. Navy

(a) Cruisers (4)

HOUSTON
MARBLEHEAD
BOISE
PHOENIX

(c) Aircraft Tenders (4)

LANGLEY
CHILDS
PRESTON
HERON

(d) Submarine Tenders (2)

HOLLAND
OTUS

(e) Destroyer Tender (1)

BLACK HAWK

(f) Oilers (3)

PECOS
TRINITY
GEO. G. HENRY

(h) Supply Ship (1)

GOLD STAR

(j) Submarines (32)

27 large and 5 small

(k) Aircraft (30)

Patrol Wing Ten - 30 PBY's

(b) Destroyers (13)

PAUL JONES
ALDEN
J. D. EDWARDS
FORD

BARKER

BULMER

EDSALL

WHIPPLE

PARROTT

PILLSBURY

POPE

STEWART

PERRY

(g) Gunboats (4)

ISABEL (ex-yacht)

LANAKAI (ex-yacht)

TULSA

ASHEVILLE

(i) Minesweepers (2)

LARK

WHIPPORWILL

2. British Navy

(a) <u>Cruisers</u> (3)	(b) <u>Destroyers</u> (3)	(c) <u>Submarines</u> (1)
EXETER	JUPITER	TRUANT
PERCH (Aus.)	ENCOUNTER	
HOBART (Aus.)	ELECTRA	

3. Dutch Navy

(a) <u>Cruisers</u> (2)	(b) <u>Destroyers</u> (3)	(c) <u>Submarines</u> (3)
DE REUTEM	TROMP (leader)	O-19
JAVA	KORTINAER	K-8
	EVERTSEN	K-10

(d) Aircraft

1 Squadron Catalinas (PBY type)

4. U.S. Army

(a) Aircraft

1 Squadron heavy bombers (B-17 type)

1 Squadron fighters (P-40 type)

(b) Artillery

197th Regiment A.A.

5. Command

The area involved was designated ABDA, and included generally the NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES, MALAYA and waters containing them. General Wavell of the British Army was in supreme command of the Allied Forces therein, - land, air and sea. He had set up his headquarters at LEMBANG, JAVA shortly before the fall of SINGAPORE. His short title was ABDACOM. Under him the allied high commanders were: of the land forces, Lieutenant General

Ter Poorten (ABDARM), of the Netherlands East Indies Army; of the allied air forces, Lieutenant General Brett, U.S.A. (ABDAIR), and of the allied sea forces, Vice Admiral Helfrich of the Royal Netherlands Navy (ABDAFLOAT), who had just relieved, February 14th, Admiral T. C. Hart, U.S.N.

The principal allied sea forces involved are set forth in the preceding paragraph. Rear Admiral Von Staveren, R.N.N., commanded the Dutch Naval Forces, (CZM), Commodore Collins, R.A.N. (CCCF), the British Naval Forces, and I (COMSOWES) commanded the U.S. Naval Forces, continuing in the same subordinate capacity under Vice Admiral Helfrich as previously under Admiral Hart.

Vice Admiral Helfrich previous to his elevation to the high naval command, commanded the Dutch Naval Forces only as CZM, under Admiral Hart. His Chief of Staff was Rear Admiral Von Staveren, mentioned above, who now took over as "CZM" - that is, the Dutch Naval Command, from Vice Admiral Helfrich.

Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N., who had been Chief of Staff to Admiral Hart, was retained in this capacity by Vice Admiral Helfrich.

Admiral Hart, when ABDAFLOAT had established himself with General Wavell at supreme headquarters in LEMBANG in the interior of JAVA, ten km. from BANDOENG, at which latter place the Dutch Army Headquarters already had long been established. BANDOENG is about 50 miles south and east from BATAVIA. The Dutch naval headquarters was in BATAVIA as was the British. I had already established myself at SURABAYA on arrival in JAVA the middle of December before the creation of the ABDA unified command. Thus the

respective allied commanders under Admiral Hart were widely separated. It had always seemed advisable that we three subordinate commanders should be together. It had been my intention to move to BATAVIA in order to accomplish closer cooperation with our allies and in fact I had written to Vice Admiral Helfrich proposing that I do so, when the change in the high command altered the situation.

Admiral Helfrich moved at once on the 14th from BATAVIA to LEMBANG to be with his chief, General Wavell. I proposed to the Admiral that I move my own headquarters from SURABAYA to BANDOENG and that the Dutch and British naval headquarters likewise be moved there from BATAVIA. The reasons BANDOENG was at this time chosen for the concentration of the three subordinate allied naval commands were two-fold, - first, preparations had been in progress for some time to accommodate the Dutch naval headquarters at that place and it had been expected that sooner or later the Dutch naval high command would move to the mountains to be with the Dutch Army, both thus readily accessible to the then Commander in Chief, the Governor General; and, second, although it was considered desirable that we should be physically separated from the high command on the principle that operations should be distinct from planning, our joint presence at BANDOENG offered the possibility of frequent personal contact, conferences, etc., with the high command.

Admiral Helfrich concurred in the above suggestion, and instructions were issued at once accordingly both with regard to my

own shift from SURABAYA and Van Staveren's from BATAVIA. Commodore Collins did not come to BANDOENG but remained at BATAVIA until the evacuation. The constant presence of Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N., at LEMBANG with the high command made it appear that Commodore Collins' presence in BANDOENG with us was unnecessary. In fact, events disclosed that the operations of British naval forces rested largely in the hands of Palliser.

The above described set-up should have accomplished a real unity of command under General Wavell. The fact of the matter is that a true unity of effort was impracticable, due to various contributing factors - but principally for the reason that the supreme command did not formulate plans for naval operations JOINTLY with the naval and air staffs, in order that a proper directive might be promulgated by that supreme command. However, the critical situation which confronted the defenders of the N.E.I. lent to a desperate desire on the whole to effect collaboration in so far as possible. Except that the allied naval command controlled its own efficient air reconnaissance, it can be said without fear of contradiction, that at no time was other air cooperation assured in making plans for operation of naval forces and in their actual operation. It was found necessary under the circumstances, for the Naval High Command to formulate plans and place these in effect at once without previous consultation with the air command. The latter, however, was ever advised. Never to my knowledge was an operation designed by the Naval Supreme Command in which the sea and air

forces collaborated together in accordance with a directive from the supreme commander to that end. On the contrary, the naval operations were designed exclusively in my experience by the Naval High Command and made effective by it alone, after which the air was "requested" to assist as practicable. The vital necessity for an active supreme command or control in such war operations as these was most apparent and possibly never more lacking in emergency.

6. The shift to BANDOENG.

I relieved Admiral Hart at LEMBANG and did not return to SURABAYA, but remained at BANDOENG - LEMBANG after Admiral Hart's departure that day. I was in constant touch thereafter with Vice Admiral Helfrich until JAVA was evacuated. I established myself at BANDOENG at joint Dutch - United States naval headquarters in a small temporary building adjacent to an elaborate underground ARMY-NAVY bomb-proof in which we had our joint communication center. Rear Admiral Von Staveren and myself went daily to LEMBANG for consultation with Vice Admiral Helfrich. The U.S. radio communication set-up was adequate and efficient. Traffic to ships including eventually the submarines was by Baker schedule with Cavite. Night traffic with submarines originally was direct. Radio communication with reconnaissance aircraft was direct. Communication with SURABAYA and other ports was by means of the secret (green) telephone and was not satisfactory. Combat intelligence was excellent.

At SURABAYA where as previously stated I had had my own headquarters, was now set up as my administrative office under the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Purnell, U.S.N. I had with me at BANDOENG

only a small operational staff. It was ever the intention thereafter to maintain an administration office with the Chief of Staff in charge located along our own line of communications ready at all times to take over the operation of the force if for any reason my own operational headquarters became inoperative.

7. The shift of the Administrative Office to TIJLATJAP.

The situation at SURABAYA was becoming more critical each day, on account of the daily bombing attacks. It was becoming increasingly evident that SURABAYA would soon be untenable as a base for our surface ships. Especially did it appear that SURABAYA was definitely threatened when it became evident the enemy would attempt to establish an air base on the adjacent Island of BALI. Accordingly on the 15th of February I was authorized by General Wavell to shift my administrative office to TIJLATJAP. Together with this shift which was accomplished the 18th, there was a corresponding shift of base to this southern port to which the large tenders had already been sent previously. The minesweeps and the small yacht tenders also gradually found their way south. Some submarines continued to base at SURABAYA, submerging during air raids. The dry docks were not used during the routine daylight air raid hours. It was not without great reluctance that we abandoned SURABAYA as our main base. Navy yard and dock yard repair facilities had been excellent. Provisioning could be accomplished. The submarine base was especially useful to our own boats. Fuel was to be had in unlimited quantities (50,000 tons). Besides SURABAYA was an excellent liberty port and

provided ample recreation and relaxation for our hard worked and most active personnel during the all too short periods ashore. Gradually, however, SURABAYA became less and less efficient as a base on account of the native labor taking to the hills as the air raids intensified.

Through the energy and foresight of a dock yard company at PRIOK, a floating dock (7,000 tons lift) and some dock yard repair facilities were previously moved from PRIOK to TIJLATJAP. These proved invaluable especially when the MARBLEHEAD and HOUSTON made that port after being seriously damaged by air attack off the north coast of BALI. Otherwise TIJLATJAP was quite unsatisfactory as a base. The harbor entrance was difficult to navigate on account of the sharp turns and swift currents. Berthing space alongside piers was very limited. There was meager oil storage. It was remarkable, however, how many ships could in emergency find shelter at TIJLATJAP. At one time 62 blue-water ships of all sizes and description were accommodated. Both the HOLLAND (sub tender) and BLACK HAWK (destroyer tender) had been moved there from DARWIN, but at no time was TIJLATJAP considered safe from attack from the air. The only advantage was its relative remoteness from the then enemy air bases in BORNEO and the CELEBES. The comparative security of TIJLATJAP disappeared when the enemy established himself later at PALEMBANG in southern SUMATRA and in BALI, both islands being adjacent to JAVA, respectively to the West and East. However, we proceeded with the short tender and at-anchor overhauls of the destroyers and submarines at

this place, ever alert for and even apprehensive of air attack - but the repair work had to go on some place. TIJLATJAP was the last port of refuge in JAVA and even this was becoming rapidly untenable. These were anxious times. It was appreciated that soon TIJLATJAP too would have to be abandoned. The next place along our line of communications and support by the Pacific Fleet was in AUSTRALIA. DARWIN had become untenable. It was a long way to the northwest coast of AUSTRALIA. There was realization that if we should be driven out of TIJLATJAP by the enemy air, our operations against the enemy would necessarily be reduced in effectiveness with base so far distant from the theater of actual operations. For this reason we clung to TIJLATJAP until the end, until the enemy actually landed on the north coast of JAVA some ten days later. In the meantime the port suffered little if at all from enemy air attacks. A kind providence only saw to that. The failure of the enemy in not attacking vigorously, the - at times - huge concentration of shipping in this port is not readily understood. This shipping in the main other than our ships based there, consisted of merchant ships with non-essential, non-military cargoes routed to this port for lack of another. Ships could not land their cargoes and were at a loss accordingly as to their future movements. These ships we gradually cleared, filled with refugees and with orders mostly to AUSTRALIAN and INDIAN ports for further routing.

Orders were given by me that no ship in TIJLATJAP should endeavor to leave port during an air attack for fear a ship would be caught and sunk in the entrance, thus effectively blocking the

harbor and bottling us within. Ships simply had to sit tight and take what few raids were made on the place. But no one could tell when the big attack would come, the attack that never did come until after practically all shipping had been cleared.

When the administrative office was shifted from SURABAYA to TIJLATJAP, there was left at the former place on the same premises the U.S. Naval Port Office, with Commander Joseph A. Murphy, U.S.N. (Ret.), Naval Observer in Charge. Already there had been set up in TIJLATJAP a U.S. Naval Port Office under Captain Lester J. Hudson, U.S.N. The new administrative office there simply absorbed Captain Hudson's port activities until the force administrative office was again shifted, this time to AUSTRALIA and Captain Hudson, U.S.N. resumed his former duties.

The reconnaissance activities of Patrol Wing Ten continued to be controlled from SURABAYA to the very end. The few planes that were left in a serviceable condition in JAVA, when not in the air, were dispersed for safety in the vicinity of SURABAYA, and operated from that point in spite of incessant enemy daylight bombing.

8. Logistics

The value of our tenders, submarine, destroyer and air became more patent upon our practical abandonment of the Naval Base at SURABAYA. The HOLLAND, the BLACK HAWK and small aircraft tenders were at TIJLATJAP. Apprehension for their safety from enemy bombing attack while in that congested port was felt more and more as the days passed. It was known that the enemy would attempt a

landing on the Island of BALI in the near future. Activities in the west pointed clearly to an enemy attack for the occupation of the southern oil fields of SUMATRA, at PALEMBANG. We seemed in JAVA about to be squeezed in a pincer movement on both our flanks. There had been no air bombing on or off the south coast, but the establishment of enemy air fields on these islands adjacent to JAVA would certainly point to the early untenability of TIJLATJAP. We simply did not have force in the air to stop them.

Accordingly it was determined to make at this time (15th of February) the initial move away from JAVA, by getting my tenders in a more secure position along our line of communications - the West Coast of AUSTRALIA. Little was known of that coast and practically nothing of value to me could be determined either from the sailing directions or from inquiries made of the AUSTRALIAN authorities. EXMOUTH GULF, inside N.W. CAPE was decided upon eventually as the initial point at which to base our tenders. Adequate charts were not available and it was not without some misgivings that the tenders were ordered there. Misgivings, arising out of a total unfamiliarity with N.W. AUSTRALIA as well as the reluctant conviction that we must retire before the enemy advance. EXMOUTH GULF, out of range of the enemy shore based bombing aircraft, was the nearest point from which we could still hope to keep in touch with the enemy.

The HOLLAND departed from TIJLATJAP February 19th. The BLACK HAWK followed the next day, the 20th. Authority for this move was obtained personally from General Wavell with whom Admiral Helfrich

and I discussed our naval situation in detail. With the HOLLAND went two submarines due for overhaul. The BLACK HAWK was accompanied by the destroyers BULMER and BARKER, both due for overhaul after being seriously knocked about in a bombing attack in the vicinity of BANKA (off East Coast SUMATRA).

The tender PECOS also was at TIJLATJAP and my concern for her safety there was included in that for the tenders. My desire was to lift bunker oil from the stock ashore at TIJLATJAP, into the PECOS, and send her to sea complete with fuel where she could fuel our ships at sea - a procedure which appeared far more desirable than to require our ships to fuel at TIJLATJAP under constant threat of air attack while immobilized. The Dutch naval authorities did not agree to this plan until too late, when at the last minute desperate effort was made by them to lift all the oil possible from shore tanks at all ports into bottoms and get these in comparative safety to sea. The whole situation with regard to fuel oil was in truth becoming exceedingly critical. Especially did we view as unfortunate that no effort had been made to lift some 50,000 tons of oil out of SURABAYA, in spite of repeated recommendations that this be done. The Dutch really never gave up hope that JAVA could be defended successfully until it fell at their feet like a house of cards. It was impossible to persuade them that the oil should be removed to a place of safety away from JAVA.

At this time a Captain Phillips, R.N., on the staff of Admiral Helfrich was in charge of allied naval fueling arrangements, having

taken over these duties from the fuel board previously at the instance of Admiral Hart. Captain Phillips appreciated the situation thoroughly. On February 19th all ships were now warned, largely through his efforts, that the fuel situation was very serious and instructions were given that the bunker fuel at SURABAYA should be moved to PRIOK (BATAVIA PORT) and to TIJLATJAP. That was the best he could do under the circumstances. Of course it was too late. All that fuel was lost.

Arrangements had been made for the PECOS and TRINITY when empty to proceed to CEYLON and PERSIA respectively for cargo fuel. The latter had already sailed. I was still endeavoring to lift oil out of JAVA itself into the PECOS. Finally on the 20th definite arrangements were made for a tanker to proceed to SURABAYA to lift at least some oil from there. Either the PECOS or the British tanker BRITISH JUDGE was to be sent. It was decided to send the latter as she was larger, and more expendable than the former, a regular naval tanker equipped to fuel vessels at sea.

Accordingly the BRITISH JUDGE recently arrived at TIJLATJAP full from SUMATRA, was ordered to discharge into the PECOS, which ship was then to clear TIJLATJAP, and proceed to a prescribed rendezvous at sea. The BRITISH JUDGE via PRIOK (for orders) was then to proceed to SURABAYA under U.S. destroyer escort. For some reason never explained to me the Dutch authorities at TIJLATJAP failed to carry out these orders from ABDAFLOAT. The BRITISH JUDGE was discharged the 24th into the shore tanks. I concluded at once to

abandon efforts to lift JAVA oil in my own tanker, and to send her forthwith empty to CEYLON. The PECOS got away safely the 25th after discharging what little oil was left in her before departure.

In the meantime on the 19th of February the U.S. Navy-chartered empty tanker ERLING BROVIG departed PRIOK, destination CEYLON for cargo fuel. It has been mentioned above that the TRINITY, a U.S. Navy tanker already had been sailed empty to PERSIA for the same purpose. The GEO. D. HENRY, another U.S. Navy-chartered tanker had been filled at DARWIN and had been sailed to FREEMANTLE where she remained in reserve awaiting orders. Such was the critical situation with respect to availability of fuel that on the 23rd plans were laid for moving the GEO. D. HENRY north to meet the tenders at EXMOUTH GULF and on the following day the 24th she was ordered by authority of ABDACOM to fill to capacity with dry stores at FREEMANTLE and proceed at once to EXMOUTH and there join the tenders. These orders were never carried out as will be seen in continuation of this narrative.

Much earlier the GOLD STAR had been dispatched to East AUSTRALIA for provisions and supplies. This ship found itself in PHILIPPINE waters on the outbreak of hostilities with JAPAN. She had a cargo destined GUAM. She never got there. We retained the ship, emptied her at DARWIN and assigned her as provision ship in the Base Force of the Fleet. The GOLD STAR did not rejoin us until our arrival in West AUSTRALIA early in March at FREEMANTLE, at which time she became known in the fleet as the GOLD MINE.))

The PRESIDENT POLK was the only ship to arrive JAVA (SURABAYA early in February) with much needed provisions, supplies and munitions, including aircraft torpedoes and bombs. She brought 50,000 pounds of frozen beef both for the U.S. Army and Navy. About 30,000 pounds of this beef could not be landed as there was no place to store it properly. Fresh beef is used altogether in JAVA. Refrigerated storage is accordingly very limited. We took out of the POLK all provisions we could lay our hands on. These were allocated exclusively to the submarines. Their continued operations required this. Provisions for the fleet were running extremely low at this time, and the JAVA markets were practically exhausted.

After our arrival at FREEMANTLE, several ships duly arrived with all manner of provisions, stores, supplies and ammunition for the Force - enough provisions for the Fleet for one year. The Fleet Base Force which had already been established at FREEMANTLE upon arrival there in the LANGLEY of the then Base Force Commander, Captain W. E. Doyle, U.S.N., was reorganized under Captain H. L. Grosskopf, U.S.N. It required eighteen storehouses to accommodate the vast amount of material which arrived for us.

9. Surface Operations - 14th February - 20th February, 1942.

The allied striking force under Rear Admiral Doorman, R.N.N., had been operating in the Western Java sea in vicinity of BANKA, GASPAR and KARIMATA Straits against an enemy advance in the direction of PALEMBANG obviously for the purpose of occupying the oil fields and installations in that area. The enemy followed his usual procedure, softening the objective areas by air bombing supported by seaplane

fighter aircraft followed by landing of troops. In regard to his use of seaplane fighters rather than carrier-based fighters for the initial drives into enemy country, this was done it is presumed in order not to endanger his carriers by thrusting them into range of our own land based aircraft, such as they were.

The striking force under Doorman made several efforts to close the enemy as the later advanced from the North through BANKA Straits. The troop convoys were the main objectives. He failed to make any impression on the enemy due in part to restricted waters in which to operate during bright moonlight, but especially to enemy air attacks. On two occasions the striking force was heavily bombed but without serious damage to our ships. The BULMER and BARKER were badly shaken, their condensers invariably springing leaks when bombed with resultant reduction in speed. These two destroyers were withdrawn from the striking force and were replaced by two others. Effort was made to keep six of this type available to Doorman in his force. It was becoming increasingly difficult to keep our destroyers on the firing line, due to machinery derangements, especially to condensers, which might be expected in such old ships on which such extraordinary war-operating demands were made. That they were able to carry on at all reflects great credit on their builders, their own personnel and our maintenance forces established in the tender BLACK HAWK and at the Dutch Naval dock yard at SURABAYA.

It became apparent from reconnaissance reports soon after the 14th of February that an enemy move in force would be made from the

Eastward, that is from the direction of the CELEBES. The enemy objective was soon disclosed to be the Island of BALI. It was assumed correctly he would attempt a landing on the Southeast Coast in the Straits of BADOENG between BALI and BESAR.

Accordingly the striking force was ordered from the West JAVA SEA where it had been basing at PRIOK, to the Eastward with base at SURABAYA. The Force now consisted of Dutch and U.S. ships only. The British ships that had participated in operations to the Westward were not brought East. They were employed in escort work in troop convoys in the general SOENDA ST. Area, until they joined up again for the final effort to stem the Japanese tide at the so-called battle of the JAVA SEA. In general the striking force was composed of two Dutch six-inch cruisers, two or three Dutch destroyers including a destroyer leader and six U.S. destroyers. The MARBLEHEAD was out of action due to enemy bombing and was enroute the U.S.A. The HOUSTON was employed on escort duty with troop convoys from AUSTRALIA to the Eastern Barrier Islands. In the same bombing attack when the MARBLEHEAD was damaged the HOUSTON was also hit, putting out of action her after turret with numerous casualties. This attack was made when both these cruisers were attached to the striking force under Doorman while previously operating to the Eastward of JAVA, that is, before he was sent West to BANKA to oppose the PALEMBANG attack.

The enemy was definitely reported on the 17th and 18th heading for BALI which had previously been softened by heavy bombing. The enemy objective was definitely known. He was observed landing in

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force on S.E. BALI and an attack was planned in detail by the high command for the night of the 19th-20th February and Doorman given orders, hardly a directive accordingly. The attack was ordered in three waves as follows:

Four U.S. destroyers, namely the STEWART, PARROTT, J. D. EDWARDS and PILLSBURY of division 58 were to proceed under command of TROMP (Dutch destroyer leader) from SURABAYA, through MADOERA and BALI Straits and attack while heading Northeasterly into BADOENG ST. The attack was to be ready to start at 1:00 a.m. the 20th from a point three miles south of the southern point of the Island, but was to follow by two or three hours the initial attack made by the forces from TIJLATJAP. These latter were the Dutch cruisers DE REUTER and JAVA the destroyer PIETHEIN with two U.S. destroyers, FORD and POPE which were to come in from the south coast of JAVA. All had refuelled at TIJLATJAP. This was the force which was to attack first.

Both of the above groups were to strike at the enemy as in a raid. A "battle" was not contemplated. The work was to be done while simply passing the enemy. All forces were then to continue on - passing North - about BALI to SURABAYA.

Torpedo motor boats were ordered out from SURABAYA to attack after the two foregoing groups had attacked. Arrangements were made for their refuelling at PANGPANG BAY.

The enemy was disposed in two groups. All attacks were made by passing between these two groups and resulted in the extraordinary situation of each enemy group attacking the other as each wave of our attack group cleared the waters between them.

The DE REUTER (Flag) JAVA, PIET HEIN, POPE, FORD group attacked on schedule. The DE REUTER for reason not explained did not get into action. She did not fire a shot. The JAVA which followed immediately astern of DE REUTER was considerably damaged. The PIET HEIN was sunk, apparently torpedoed. The FORD and POPE made an especially determined attack on both groups of the enemy. They lost touch with the Dutch cruisers which they were following, reversed course to the S.W. in order to again pass the enemy. Two or three enemy ships were observed to blow up or were in flames as result of the group torpedo and gun fire. A possible torpedo hit was reported made on an enemy cruiser of the KATORI Class. The two U.S. destroyers having made a second "pass" at the enemy on southerly course, retired clear of the motor torpedo boats along the south coast of JAVA to TLJLATJAP, contrary to plan. The rest of the group retired to SURABAYA.

The second group followed the above attack according to plan. Only enemy destroyers and cruisers were observed - no transports. Two of the enemy were reported torpedoed and on fire. The TROMP, in the lead, evidently took the brunt of the fighting and was badly damaged. The STEWART, which had lost contact with TROMP and now led the attack, was the only U.S. destroyer hit, putting out of commission her steering gear and killing one man. This was an 8-inch shell that went clear through her without exploding. The entire group, including TROMP found its way into SURABAYA the following morning. The STEWART was docked immediately on arrival in the large 15,000 ton lift - floating dock at the private ship yard. She was not in proper position

on the keel blocks - evidently she was pointed a few degrees on one side or the other of the direction of the keel blocks. No blocks were placed along her bilge. The shores from her sides to the dock walls were very long and insecure. The result was that when the dock began to lift the STEWART, she rolled over on her port side, seriously damaging not only herself but the dock as well. Every effort was made to save her. She was subsequently directly hit by a bomb during an air raid on SURABAYA, but our efforts to save her continued until the enemy had landed on the Island and was about to occupy the city. She was blown up together with the dock a complete wreck by a special demolition party ordered to stand by her for this purpose. It is believed the enemy will never be able to make use of her except for scrap.

The result of the third attack on that night by the motor torpedo boats based at PANGPANG is not known. They were observed attacking by the POPE and FORD as these retired to the southward well clear toward the BESAR shore. Details of this raid may be had by consulting the official reports of the Commanders concerned. These are available.

The composition of the enemy that night is not definitely known. That eight-inch cruisers were present is definitely established. How many of cruisers, destroyers and transports is not at this time ascertainable. The shooting of the enemy cruisers was reported as excellent so far as pattern is concerned - but the control was not correspondingly good. Our destroyers had little trouble in dodging splashes, although at times they were literally smothered in them. Individual enemy salvos did not straddle as frequently as could be expected. Our ships

were continuously straddled, however, but by separate salvos.

In the meantime the HOUSTON had been sailed to DARWIN, AUSTRALIA to act as ocean escort to a fast troop convoy from that place to reinforce the garrison at KOEPANG, on the Island of TIMOR. The convoy sailed from DARWIN on 15 February. Two Australian sloops and the U.S. destroyer PEARY were in company as A.S. escort. The following day, the 16th, the convoy was severely bombed - wave after wave, by carrier based enemy aircraft. Though all were severely shaken, no ship suffered a direct or badly damaging near-miss. That this is true is due largely to the splendid work of the HOUSTON which ship, recently provided with efficient A.A. ammunition, managed to save the situation. It was realized that the convoy was in position of real peril, and becoming increasingly precarious as it penetrated North into waters occupied by an enemy carrier. The supreme command ordered the convoy to return to DARWIN which place was reached without further incident the morning of the 18th.

It was desired at this time because of the implications of the threat to BALI, to reinforce the striking force under Doorman with the HOUSTON and PEARY. These vessels were ordered to fuel at DARWIN and to depart as soon as possible to the Westward. They left AUSTRALIA in company the evening of the 19th. The PEARY was detained in the vicinity of the coast by a protracted attack she made on an enemy submarine. She was directed to return to DARWIN, fuel and proceed again Westward while the HOUSTON pushed on for JAVA. It was while the PEARY was in the Port of DARWIN on the 19th that the port was

subjected to a bombing attack in great force by carrier based aircraft. The entire convoy was destroyed as was the PEARY. The PRESTON, a destroyer type aircraft tender, suffered severe damage but managed to escape and proceed for safety to BROOME. She was later repaired at SYDNEY. It was the PEARY's great misfortune to be caught in port, but the nature of her previous operations required that she be there. The PRESTON suffered a like misfortune, but DARWIN was the base from which she operated our reconnaissance group of PBV's from AUSTRALIA and enemy aircraft bombings were nothing new to her. She had managed to escape thus far.

The HOUSTON was too late to join with the striking group at the BALI raid. She arrived at TIJLATJAP the morning of the 22nd, fueled and sailed for SURABAYA in company with the PAUL JONES and ALDEN, the same day West-about via SOENDA to join Doorman. It should be mentioned here that the HOUSTON had only her two forward turrets in commission. Her after turret had been knocked out some time before as previously mentioned by enemy air bombing. So desperate was considered the plight of JAVA that the services even of this crippled ship were considered necessary for the defense of the Island. The ship acquitted herself nobly in action with the enemy later as will be seen.

The S.S. COLLINGSWORTH was sailed from SURABAYA safely to COLOMBO on the 19th. She was dispatched to JAVA at my request especially to pick up a cargo of tin destined the U.S.A. She was the last privately operated American merchant ship in Indies waters.

10. The Departure of General Wavell.

On Friday, 20 February, I happened to be in LEMBANG, having gone by motor from BANDOENG for the especial purpose of consulting with Lieutenant General Brett, U.S.A., (Deputy Chief of Staff to General Wavell), in regard to coordinated air support for our naval operations. I was informed most confidentially by his Chief of Staff that General Wavell that day had recommended to LONDON that the defense of the Island of JAVA cease as of a certain day in the immediate future. This "certain day" had been determined as the day there would no longer exist in JAVA any fighter aircraft - calculated on basis of current losses in that type.

Unfortunately I cannot relate here the positive sequence of events as of my own knowledge. I can only state what was common knowledge, except that Lieutenant General Ter Poorten, Commander in Chief of the N.E.I. Army consulted with me on the 21st at BANDOENG on the subject of General Wavell's views as to the futility of defending JAVA. I replied that I knew nothing of my own knowledge as to General Wavell's views on this vital subject. I was asked for my own view by the General and also asked quite bluntly what I would do in case the British retired. My reply was that my orders from my Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, were quite clear, - in substance to assist the Dutch in the defense of the N.E.I., and that these instructions most assuredly would be complied with. He remarked that he was profoundly shocked by the Wavell recommendation but he would defend JAVA to the last. His inference was obvious.

As to what was common knowledge, the accuracy of which I cannot confirm, - the Dutch largely through the instrumentality of Dr. Van Mook, the Lieutenant Governor, demanded the virtual dismissal of General Wavell as the supreme commander in the defense of the Dutch East Indies. Naturally the supreme commander's headquarters was in hardly-repressed turmoil and quandary certainly, as to what would be the outcome. I was consulted by the U.S. Army Air Corps as to what facilities the U.S. Navy could provide in event of evacuation, for which preparations went forward. It became evident that the U.S. Army Air Corps would depart JAVA should General Wavell do so and that furthermore their destinations would be identical. It was generally assumed that the General would proceed to INDIA, which assumption proved to be correct. General Brereton, in command of U.S. Army air did in fact leave BANDOENG Sunday the 22nd by air. His destination was not disclosed.

On Monday, the 23rd, General Wavell summoned me from BANDOENG for conference with him at LEMBANG. At 1:00 p.m. he received me privately at his quarters. He showed me two telegrams, one from LONDON and his reply. The first telegram in substance directed him to leave the Island of JAVA "forthwith" and to set up his headquarters elsewhere, "within or without," the ABDA area at his discretion. The telegram went on to say that there could be no question of "surrender" or "capitulation" in JAVA, that there could not be entertained under any circumstances a proposal for the cessation of defense of the Island or its abandonment. The direction of defense of JAVA thence-

forth was to rest exclusively in the hands of the Dutch. His reply was a lengthy dispatch containing recommendations to LONDON as to preserving secret for the time being his prospective departure, for the purpose especially of the morale of the people and the fighting forces in JAVA. He told me that it was his opinion the Dutch would resist to the last. He offered to me no opinion as to what the result would be. He did not have to, his views were well known. He remarked that it appeared General Ter Poorten and Vice Admiral Helfrich had no other alternative than to continue resistance for their last "homeland." He informed me that he would depart JAVA soon in the H.M.S. (Sloop) KEDAH, from TIJLATJAP and asked that the ship be escorted by a U.S. destroyer clear of submarine waters. The General left with his immediate staff on Wednesday, the 25th. The KEDAH was escorted by the U.S.S. PILLSBURY to a point 200 miles Southwest of TIJLATJAP. About 3 to 5 thousand British Empire troops remained on the Island.

The ABDA supreme command had ceased to exist. The direction of defense of JAVA was taken over directly by Dutch officers as follows, - Navy, Vice Admiral Helfrich; Army, Lieutenant General Ter Poorten; Air, Major General Van Oyen. The coordinating command reverted nominally to the Governor-General. LEMBANG was abandoned; headquarters of all branches were established at BANDOENG. I received orders from the Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet substantially to report for duty to Vice Admiral Helfrich. I reported accordingly in person immediately.

The Admiral expressed himself as profoundly grateful for our "ever loyal" assistance. He set himself up in a small room adjacent to the one I occupied at Naval Headquarters, a temporary shack near the combined Navy-Army bomb-proof. We spent most of our time during daylight thereafter in the bomb-proof Operating Room not only as a convenience, as our joint communication center and combat intelligence room was within it, but by reason of the incessant enemy air bombing. The headquarters area was completely covered over by an ingenious overhead camouflage, supported like a huge green net tent by bamboo poles.

Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N., chief of staff to Vice Admiral Helfrich, on the 23rd told his chief in my presence that he intended to leave JAVA in company with General Wavell. He gave no reason for this intention. It was naturally assumed the General desired the Admiral with him. It occurred to me at once that it would be to our decided advantage in future naval operations of the desperate character visualized at the time, to have an additional U.S. Naval Officer at headquarters in the capacity of Chief of Staff. In the course of the discussion that followed opportunity was sought and obtained to offer to the Vice Admiral the services of my own Chief of Staff - Rear Admiral Purnell, U.S.N. The Vice Admiral accepted after further discussion and I immediately sent for Admiral Purnell who at the time was at TIJLATJAP in charge of the Force Administrative Office, asking him to come to BANDOENG, "prepared to remain indefinitely." He arrived the following morning the 24th, and was in AUSTRALIA two days later,

the 26th, an indication of how fast events were moving.

What happened was that Admiral Palliser on the 24th received positive instructions from LONDON which were communicated to me to, (a) remain in JAVA, (b) assume direction of H.M. Naval forces in the ABDA area as the senior British officer present, (c) withdraw the British Naval forces from JAVA when further resistance in his judgment served no useful purpose, and (d) make every effort to persuade the Dutch to preserve their naval forces for further active service against the common enemy by a timely and corresponding withdrawal.

Obviously Vice Admiral Helfrich had no other alternative than to retain Rear Admiral Palliser as his Chief of Staff. This state of affairs was communicated to me by the Vice Admiral the night of the 24th. Rear Admiral Purnell was released and I directed him, under the circumstances of increased enemy pressure on JAVA to remove the Force Administrative Office from JAVA at TIJLATJAP to AUSTRALIA setting up this office initially in the tenders at EXMOUTH GULF. Admiral Purnell flew to BROOME, AUSTRALIA the following night, the 25th, and on the morning of the 26th contacted the U.S.S. CHILDS, now based at BROOME after the bombing of convoy at DARWIN, and in her proceeded to EXMOUTH GULF. The remainder of the Administrative Staff at TIJLATJAP found their way to AUSTRALIA in U.S. submarines destined for overhaul and in Dutch and U.S. aircraft ferries. The U.S. Naval Port office at TIJLATJAP was reestablished under Captain Hudson, who subsequently did fine work in evacuating our wounded and our numerous civilian refugees, the latter not only from JAVA but from SINGAPORE via JAVA, in any craft that could be secured to accommodate them out of TIJLATJAP.

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The U.S. Naval Port Offices at TIJLATJAP, BATAVIA and SURABAYA were abandoned February 28th - March 1st during the occupation by the enemy of the Island. The Port Officers, respectively Captain L. J. Hudson, Commander P. S. Slawson and Commander J. A. Murphy were ordered to Australia. All got away safely except Commander Murphy who secured passage in a Dutch KNILM Civil ferry plane which it is believed was shot down.

11. The Destruction of LANGLEY and PECOS.

The LANGLEY and SEAWITCH were sailed the 21st of February in convoy (MS-5) from FREEMANTLE under escort of the U.S.S. PHOENIX. The LANGLEY contained 37 U.S. Army fighters (P-40's), the SEAWITCH, 27, together with pilots, ground crews and ammunition. Their destination on departure was CEYLON.

Immediately upon dissolution of the Wavell supreme command in JAVA, orders were given directly by the naval high command Vice Admiral Helfrich, to divert both the LANGLEY and SEAWITCH to JAVA in order that the fighters they carried might be used for the defense of the Island. Vice Admiral Helfrich later expressed regret to me that orders had been sent by him direct to the PHOENIX to detach the LANGLEY and SEAWITCH. He explained that time was the most important factor and that he had taken this liberty to save time feeling that I could have no objection under these emergency circumstances.

There was much discussion as to the port of entry of these two plane carrying ships. TIJLATJAP was eventually decided upon and preparations at that port were made most hurriedly accordingly.

There was no flying field at or near TIJLATJAP. The planes were to be unloaded on the dock or pier, towed along the streets to a comparatively open field and from there flown to various flying fields for operation against the enemy. The plan was a makeshift one rendered necessary by the hazard of using either BATAVIA or SURABAYA, both of which were being subjected to continuous air bombing during daylight. Much had to be accomplished at TIJLATJAP for the reception of the planes. Streets had to be cleared, walls and shacks knocked down. It was necessary to clear and rearrange material and gear on the pier in order that the planes might be landed and towed away safely. Up to this time TIJLATJAP had suffered no serious bombing. Hopes ran high. The labor situation was serious as the great majority of native laborers had taken to the hills at the first indication of bombing. The same critical labor situation obtained at PRIOK but especially at SURABAYA. At the latter place the Naval Dock Yard was operating at 5% efficiency at the time we left the place, on the 18th, due to shortage of native labor now high in the jungles.

However, by extraordinary efforts all was made ready to receive the LANGLEY and SEAWITCH. Both ships were to fuel from the tanker PETRONELA, take on as many refugees as possible, for which a list had been prepared, and depart forthwith.

It developed now that the LANGLEY which had been detached first was due TIJLATJAP at 5:00 p.m. the 27th; the SEAWITCH the following morning. In the meantime as will be seen later it became evident that the enemy intended a landing in great force on the North Coast

of JAVA. The vital and pressing necessity for the use of the fighting aircraft due in these two ships to resist this invasion was all too apparent. At this time throughout all of JAVA there were not more than 15 fighters.

Nevertheless, the situation of the LANGLEY was brought to the attention of Vice Admiral Helfrich. The time of her predicted arrival at TIJLATJAP was discussed in detail. He concluded that time was the all important factor. He wished that she should not be delayed until the following morning to enter with the SEAWITCH, thus permitting both ships to approach the coast under cover of darkness. He said to me repeatedly that the responsibility was his alone; that he must get those planes in and at the enemy; that every minute counted. There had been no bombing off the South coast of JAVA and 5:00 p.m. was too late for enemy bombing of TIJLATJAP itself. He even asked me to inform the Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, that he took full responsibility and intimated that this request that I so inform the Commander in Chief, was tantamount to an order. I could not permit him to take this stand alone as I did in fact share completely his views as to the necessity for taking the risk and subscribed fully to his decision.

The LANGLEY was in fact discovered by enemy air reconnaissance during the early forenoon of the 27th, approximately 130 miles south of TIJLATJAP. She was heavily bombed thereafter by shore based aircraft, severely damaged and abandoned as a sinking hulk. Her survivors were rescued by the two escorting destroyers, the WHIPPLE and EDSALL. All but sixteen of her personnel were picked up, an extraordinary feat.

The survivors were ordered transferred to the PECOS which ship was directed to proceed south with all dispatch to gain distance from shore bases of enemy aircraft and to proceed vicinity CHRISTMAS Island if necessary to provide a lee for the transfer, and then proceed AUSTRALIA instead of CEYLON for cargo fuel. Both destroyers were urgently required - one for escort of troop convoy and to bring U.S. army plane crew survivors to JAVA to man the planes from the SEAWITCH - the other to escort the tanker BELITA due COCOS Island from CEYLON. Numerous survivors of the LANGLEY urgently required medical attention. Weather conditions did not permit the transfer until the following day in vicinity CHRISTMAS Island. Within four hours after this transfer the PECOS was attacked by carrier-based aircraft and destroyed. The WHIPPLE picked up approximately 270 survivors. Further details of this incident may be had from reports of the Commanding Officers concerned.

The SEAWITCH arrived TIJLATJAP without incident about 10:00 a.m. the 28th. Her planes were crated, not assembled as were those in the LANGLEY. It should be remarked here that the LANGLEY planes could not be flown off that ship. Half of the flight deck had been removed previously. She was in fact only a tender.

A major action was fought in the JAVA SEA beginning the afternoon of the day the SEAWITCH arrived at TIJLATJAP. This action which will be covered in a succeeding paragraph, was fought to prevent a landing in force by the enemy on the North Coast of JAVA. The battle succeeded in preventing a landing that night, but delayed the enemy only one day.

They landed the following night, March 1st. The SEAWITCH planes were sadly needed.

The SEAWITCH was unloaded under my personal observation by midnight March 1st and was sent to sea at once under escort of ISABEL, destination by my direction, EXMOUTH GULF. Her planes were never placed in service by the Dutch. It was reported to me they were destroyed still in their crates incident to demolition at TIJLATJAP prior to evacuation.

It has been generally assumed that the enemy was informed of the LANGLEY, and her mission. Her loading of assembled planes at FREEMANTLE it appeared could hardly be disguised. On my arrival later at FREEMANTLE I was made aware by the Lieutenant Governor and other military and naval officials of other leaks of information to the enemy. It is quite possible the enemy was fully informed. That the LANGLEY alone was attacked, and the SEAWITCH unmolested may be of significance with respect to a leak. It is to be noted also that the LANGLEY was attacked by shore based aircraft; the PECOS by carrier-based craft.

11. Operations from 20 February - 1 March - Battle in JAVA SEA.

For purpose of continuity a recapitulation of the damage reported to the enemy incident to the BALI raid 19-20 February is given here.

Damage by and to U.S. Army Air (B-17s) - 3 hits on one cruiser; one hit on another cruiser; 3 hits, 8 near-misses on one cruiser. Four of our P-40's were lost. One B-17 was reported missing.

Damage by and to surface ships.

(a) By the Cruiser group (DE REUTER, JAVA, PIET HEIN, FORD POPE) 2 or 3 ships blown up and on fire. Possible torpedo hit on cruiser of KATORI Class. The PIET HEIN was lost.

(b) By the Destroyer Group (TROMP, STEWART, PILLSBURY, EDSALL, PARROTT) 2 sure torpedo hits on ships of unknown class.

(c) By the M.T.B's. 2 hits by torpedoes on unknown ships.

The POPE and FORD, on the 21st, were withdrawn from the striking force under Doorman. The ALDEN and PAUL JONES were substituted. The two former destroyers, upon arrival TIJLATJAP after the BALI raid, were dispatched to sea after fueling to contact the BLACK HAWK to take aboard the 17 torpedoes remaining in that tender. These were the last of our reserve torpedoes. It was the intention to direct the FORD and POPE to again rejoin Doorman. This intention was carried out, - these destroyers rejoining in time to take part in the JAVA SEA action.

On the 22nd the PILLSBURY and PARROTT likewise were detached from the striking force. They had practically no torpedoes and were sadly in need of overhaul. This left only the J. D. EDWARDS (Comdesdiv 58 - Commander T. H. Binford, U.S.N.) with Doorman in SURABAYA. The PAUL JONES, ALDEN, FORD and POPE were due to join at earliest possible moment. It is to be remembered the STEWART was out of action, cap-sized in drydock at SURABAYA. Thus only five U.S. destroyers are from now on with the striking force.

The HOUSTON had arrived TIJLATJAP from DARWIN the 21st. She

fueled and sailed via SOENDA with the PAUL JONES and ALDEN in company on the 22nd to join Doorman. He based SURABAYA only during the night to evade the daylight bombing of that place. On the same day the FORD and POPE obtained their new torpedoes from BLACK HAWK and proceeded at once by same strait into the JAVA SEA to join the Dutch Rear Admiral. All of the five above ships, replacements and reinforcements, arrived SURABAYA the 24th.

Enemy activity in MAKASSAR STRAIT and the MOLUKA SEA all this time seemed to point unmistakably to a landing in force either on the south coast of BORNEO (BANJERMASIN) or the north coast of JAVA. Gradually the enemy intention was disclosed as a landing in great force some 50 miles west of SURABAYA. Simultaneously enemy activity of lesser intensity indicated a second force to the west, concentrating in the vicinity of BANKA evidently for the purpose of a landing on the western part of the north coast of JAVA in the general vicinity of PRIOK.

It was at this critical and crucial moment that General Wavell relinquished the supreme command. The raid at BALI had been fought. The enemy at BALI had been reinforced. A huge concentration of transports heavily screened and covered was reported about to descend on JAVA. Events moved rapidly.

Vice Admiral Helfrich now in supreme naval command and bearing the weight of the remnants of the empire on his shoulders practically alone, communicated to the Allied Naval Forces that he had "assumed command of the Allied Naval Forces engaged in the defense of the N.E.I., under title CZM." He expressed himself as confident that

"all commanders of Forces and those under their command will give fullest support at this critical time." All hands knew what there was yet to do and what to expect.

The Vice Admiral took the following steps at once. He ordered a concentration of submarines in the JAVA SEA. The Dutch O-19, K-8, K-10, the U.S. S-37 and S-38 and the British TRUANT reached the immediate theater of action at once. He decided that all available British Cruisers and fleet destroyers basing PRIOK move to the East immediately at high speed to join Doorman. The EXETER, PERTH, ENCOUNTER, JUPITER and ELECTRA responded. He ordered the eastern section of the north coast of JAVA mined with center at REMBANG. Only a very limited number of mines were available for this. It is probable that the DE REUTER and JAVA were subsequently destroyed in this hastily laid field. He ordered the Commander of the Eastern Striking Force to base SURABAYA but to keep the seas which of course was especially necessary in daylight to avoid the daily bombing of that base, and especially essential at night inasmuch as a night attack on a landing was contemplated. He subsequently directed any remaining British Forces still to the westward to concentrate and move against the enemy threat developing at BANKA. The HOBART, DRAGON, TENEDOS, SCOUT and DANAE were withdrawn from convoy escort duty to make this move. This force proceeded into SOENDA STRAIT, and to the north accordingly; and, failing to contact the enemy, was directed on the 27th to proceed to CEYLON. Thus these valuable ships were permitted to leave the fighting area prematurely under

British pressure and "against the Vice Admiral's better judgment", as he stated to me later.

Doorman's force now was composed of two heavy cruisers, HOUSTON (only two turrets in commission) EXETER, three light cruisers (DE REUTER (flag), JAVA, PERTH), ten destroyers (KORTENAR, EVERTSEN, ENCOUNTER, JUPITER, ELECTRA, J. D. EDWARDS, POPE, FORD, ALDEN, PAUL JONES).

Practically all of the remaining U.S. torpedoes on station were distributed among the five American destroyers of the striking force.

A recapitulation of status of U.S. destroyers at this time of final battle is pertinent. All destroyers were in great need of overhaul. They had been operating almost continuously since the 8th of December. Their condensers especially were giving trouble. The then five most able and seaworthy were attached to the striking force as set forth above. The STEWART was a wreck in a SURABAYA drydock due to no fault of her own. The PEARY was lost at DARWIN: the BARKER and BULMER were lame ducks enroute to AUSTRALIA with tender for overhaul. The WHIPPLE was only recently out of dock at TIJLATJAP with a soft bow and stem as result of collision with the DE REUTER. She was to be employed thenceforth on light duty only. The PILLSBURY and PARROTT had been withdrawn from the striking force to TIJLATJAP after BALI as unfit for such active operations, in need of extensive overhaul. The EDSALL had been damaged by one of her own depth charges, dropped at slow speed. She was leaking badly

and could not be relied upon for duty with the striking force. This accounts for the original 13 of the squadron.

The situation of the above striking force based at SURABAYA was indeed precarious. It had orders to keep the seas and could only refuel and provision safely at night. Navigation through the mine fields during dark was dangerous. At times, of course, ships would be caught in port during the daylight bombings - but fortunately no damage to our ships resulted except to the STEWART already capsized in drydock, and to the Dutch Hospital ship standing by in the outer Roads. She was severely strafed. The HOUSTON arrived SURABAYA with 67% capacity fuel on board and could not refuel, nor could other large ships, the oil fuel lines to the docks they could go alongside, having been ruptured by the air bombing. The enemy bombed the port with impunity. There was scant air protection and no adequate fighter protection at any time. In fact on NO OCCASION during the entire campaign in defense of the N.E.I. did any naval operation or movement in which U.S. ships participated, have the support of any fighting aircraft. //

Enemy combat information was derived mostly from our own observers in the PBV planes of our Patrol Wing - 10, under command of Captain Frank D. Wagner, U.S.N. Our air communication set-up was excellent and the information from our planes invariably timely and correct. Great credit is due Captain Wagner and his command for the splendid performance of the Wing throughout. Much information was had of course from submarines and the Army bombing planes - but none

was as valuable, complete and reliable as from the PBYS. At the end they became practically the exclusive source of systematic combat information. Planes flew at night (in moonlight) after the daylight phase of the final battle in the JAVA SEA, for the purpose of shadowing the enemy, especially the true objective - the transports, in order that Doorman's force might attack. No praise could be too high for the work of Patwing 10.

This narrative does not pretend to cover the action in the JAVA SEA in detail. These are not yet known. The action as a whole cannot be reconstructed accurately until all sources of information in due course of time are probed.

Information of the enemy which reached allied naval headquarters at BANDOENG was ample in all respects. The composition, disposition, location of enemy forces was known with reasonable accuracy at all times. This information was, to my knowledge, communicated at once when received to the Commander of the striking force, Rear Admiral Doorman.

On the 26th, Rear Admiral Doorman was informed that at 11:55 a.m. local time that day an enemy force of 30 transports escorted by two cruisers and four destroyers was in position Lat. $04^{\circ} - 50'$ South, Long. $114, 20$ E. course 240° true speed 10 knots. He was directed to proceed to sea, attack after dark then retire toward PRIOK.

The above instructions were modified in a subsequent dispatch as follows:

"You must continue attacks until the enemy is destroyed."

Previously many reports had been received from our PEY's, our submarines and our U.S. Army bombers of scattered enemy units in the JAVA SEA and of a "large convoy near the Coast of BORNEO," pointing to a major move by the enemy in the JAVA SEA.

Admiral Doorman did not contact the enemy the 26th. He reported that his information of the enemy was insufficient.

On the 27th Admiral Doorman reported that he had been attacked at 9:00 a.m. local time by enemy bombers in vicinity of SURABAYA. He requested fighter protection. He was instructed by the high naval command to "proceed, search for and attack the enemy convoy notwithstanding the air attack."

By 5:00 p.m., local time the 27th, the enemy forces had been developed with reasonable accuracy. It was known that a convoy of 39 to 45 transports, escorted by 2 or 3 cruisers, and 8 to 12 destroyers, was in position approximately 20 miles West of BANEAN Island, 60 miles North of the West Entrance to SURABAYA. It was established furthermore that a strong covering force was then 35 to 40 miles Southwest of BANEAN. This force was partially developed by the British EXETER, JUPITER and ELECTRA now joining Doorman from the West JAVA Sea.

The EXETER reported 1 enemy cruiser and 4 destroyers in this locality, and later 3 cruisers and 4 destroyers. The ELECTRA reported 2 battleships (really heavy cruisers), 1 cruiser and 6 destroyers; and later 1 cruiser and large number of individual ships. The

JUPITER made one report of scattered forces consisting of 4 cruisers and 14 destroyers.

Thus the two groups of the enemy, namely the convoy plus escort and the covering force to the southward of the convoy, were fairly well known and developed by early evening the 27th.

Doorman permitted himself to engage the enemy covering force in the vicinity of SURABAYA during daylight. This covering force evidently fulfilled its mission in keeping the allied striking force away from the convoy. Some of the details of the action that ensued may be had from the report of our commanding officers concerned - but even from these, it is impracticable with information now disposable to reconstruct what actually happened. Unfortunately the HOUSTON was subsequently lost. No report was had from her. The POPE, which ship was delayed in departing SURABAYA with the striking force, probably did not get into action at all, as she fired no torpedoes. She too was subsequently lost, with no report received of her participation in the events of the night of the 27th.

The striking force was assembled hurriedly - the British units especially were engaged before proper indoctrination could possibly have been effected. It is doubtful then that Doorman had opportunity to promulgate a well considered plan of action.

In spite of disparity of forces, the allied striking force was evidently doing very well, inflicting more damage than it received until unfortunately the EXETER was badly hit, slowed and sheered out to clear the battle line. The other cruisers, including

Doorman's which led, followed her movement, thus virtually breaking off the engagement.

The action may be partially reconstructed by reference to the accompanying Figures 1 to 6, drawn in accordance with my own individual appreciation of what probably happened, derived from reports, discussion and individual contacts. As previously mentioned it is impossible at this time, with the information and data at disposal, to state with complete accuracy what in fact did happen.

Figure 1 shows the composition and disposition of the opposing forces at the beginning of the action about 4:30 p.m., February 27th. Note that the U.S. destroyers trail the cruisers. Two large British destroyers lead the cruiser column. Three destroyers, one British, two Dutch appear on the unengaged flank. The Dutch flagship, the light cruiser DE REUTER leads the cruisers. The two heavy cruisers follow and they in turn are followed by two light cruisers. Formerly it had been practice when the striking force was commanded by a U.S. flag officer, to dispose the force in cruiser groups by types, each to seek suitable ranges in accordance with a plan, while supporting each other. The destroyers normally were disposed as one group or squadron by divisions. Cruising and battle PLANS were promulgated in which TASK GROUPS were indicated and procedure set forth under the various conditions that could be visualized. Furthermore special cruiser and destroyer DOCTRINES were promulgated. The enemy 6-inch cruisers shown in this figure as in the battle line were probably acting as an independent group as at TSUSHIMA in 1904. They appeared, however, to trail the 8-inch cruisers as shown.

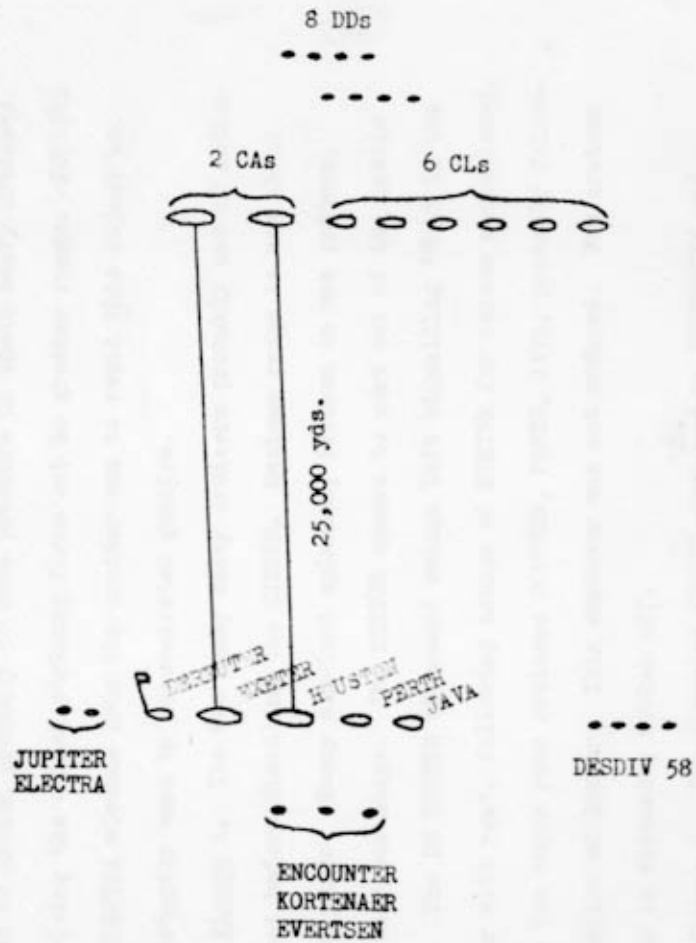


FIG. 1. 4:30 p.m. February 27th
Opening of the Action.

Figure 2 indicates closing the range by the Dutch Admiral. Evidently the heavy cruisers alone could range at the beginning of the action. Doorman who in his leading flagship was probably a target, concluded to get within range of his own 6-inch guns and in doing so he led our 8-inch cruisers into his own shorter range. Fire distribution problematical. Doubtful if any prescribed.

Figure 3 indicates the two enemy heavy cruisers taking punishment. Both are reported now in flames. The enemy destroyers advanced to attack probably to ease pressure on their heavy cruisers by driving the allied striking force out to greater range. JUPITER and ELECTRA advance from the cruiser van to repel this attack and are promptly sunk by concentrated gunfire.

Figure 4. The two enemy heavy cruisers probably out of action but not before disabling the EXETER. Maximum range is now about 15,000 yards. Enemy six-inch splashes, fifteen in one pattern, come near our ships. The EXETER sheers to port out of the battle line. The DE REUTER (Doorman) swings left signalling "What is the matter with you", following motion of EXETER for reason undisclosed, as do the three rear cruisers HOUSTON, PERTH, JAVA, probably following motion of leader. This maneuver was not ordered. The cruiser action is virtually broken off.

Figure 5. The disabled EXETER screened by ENCOUNTER and KORTENAER. The latter is sunk by enemy destroyer gunfire. Enemy torpedoes seen in the water. The HOUSTON and PERTH join and are screened by EVERTSEN. The DE REUTER and JAVA form another group without destroyer screen. Desdiv 58 attacks by order of Doorman by telephone to cover his retirement. One enemy light cruiser out of

action.

Figure 6. Dispersal of the striking force in groups which have lost touch with each other. Doorman in DE REUTER with JAVA heads N.E., probably to seek the convoy; is headed off by the enemy light cruisers. Doorman later headed south then west (not shown) and probably ran into the Dutch mine field off North Coast of JAVA. Both DE REUTER and JAVA were observed to blow up about 10:30 p.m. The EXETER with ENCOUNTER retire at slow speed toward SURABAYA. The HOUSTON, PERTH and EVERTSEN eventually retire toward PRIOK. Desdiv 58 attacks and eventually retires toward SURABAYA. PRIOK had been designated as the rendezvous after action. The POPE evidently did not join in the battle but returned to SURABAYA.

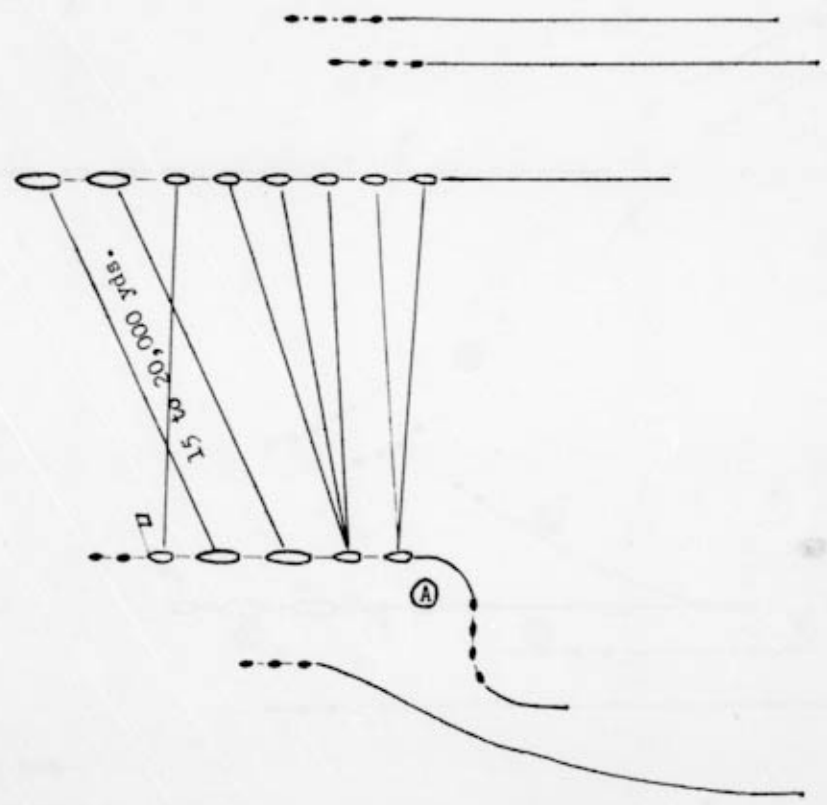


FIG. 2 - 4:45 p.m.

Ⓐ Doorman closes the range

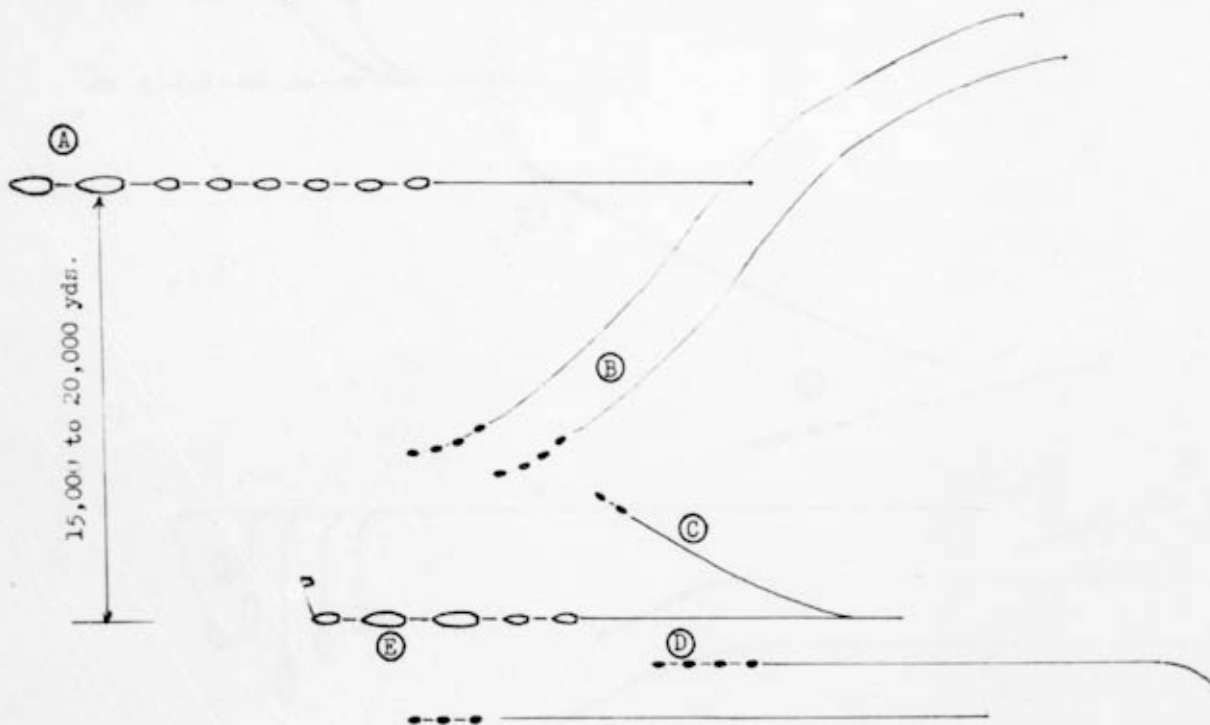
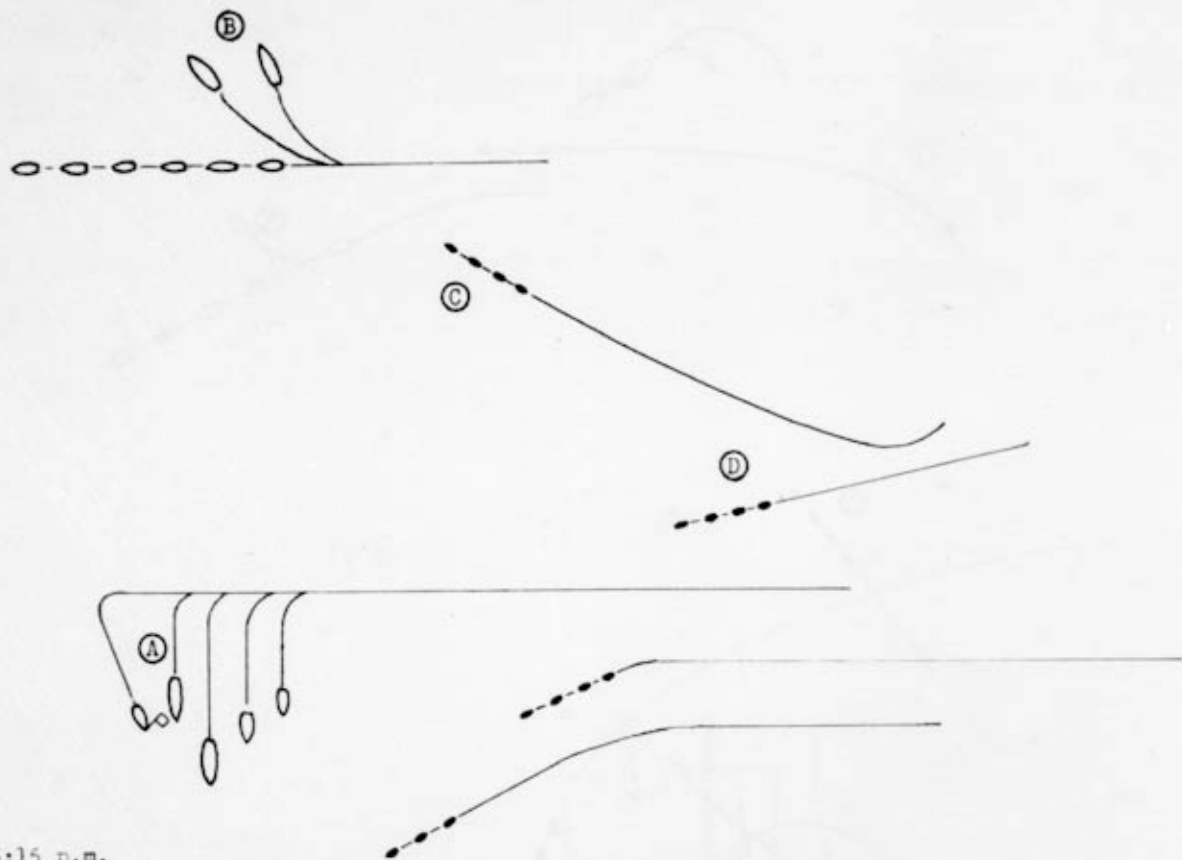


FIG. 3 - 5:00 p.m.

- (A) Enemy CAs badly hit and on fire.
- (B) Enemy destroyer attack.
- (C) JUPITER, ELECTRA oppose enemy destroyer attack. Probably sunk at this time.
- (D) Desdiv 58 seeks the unengaged flank.
- (E) EXETER hit in engine room.



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FIG. 4 - 5:15 p.m.

- (A) EXETER badly hit slows, turns away. All cruisers turn away.
- (B) Enemy CAS out of action.
- (C) One enemy destroyer division covers disabled cruisers.
- (D) One enemy destroyer division continues the advance.

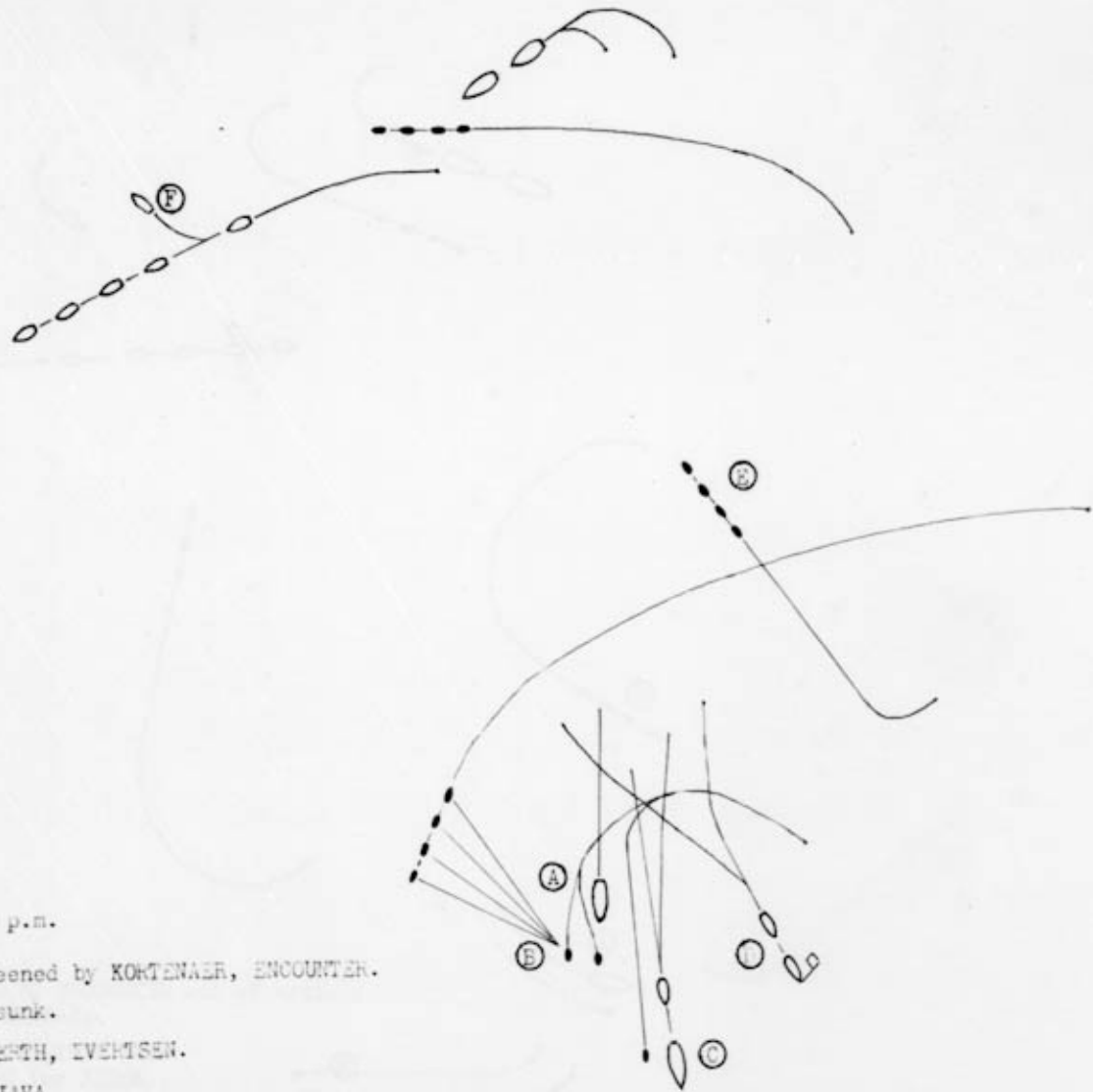


FIG. 5 - 5:30 p.m.

- (A) EXETER screened by KORTENAER, ENCOUNTER.
- (B) KORTENAER sunk.
- (C) HOUSTON, PERTH, IVERSEN.
- (D) DERGUTER, JAVA.
- (E) Desdiv 58 attacks
- (F) Enemy CI out of action.

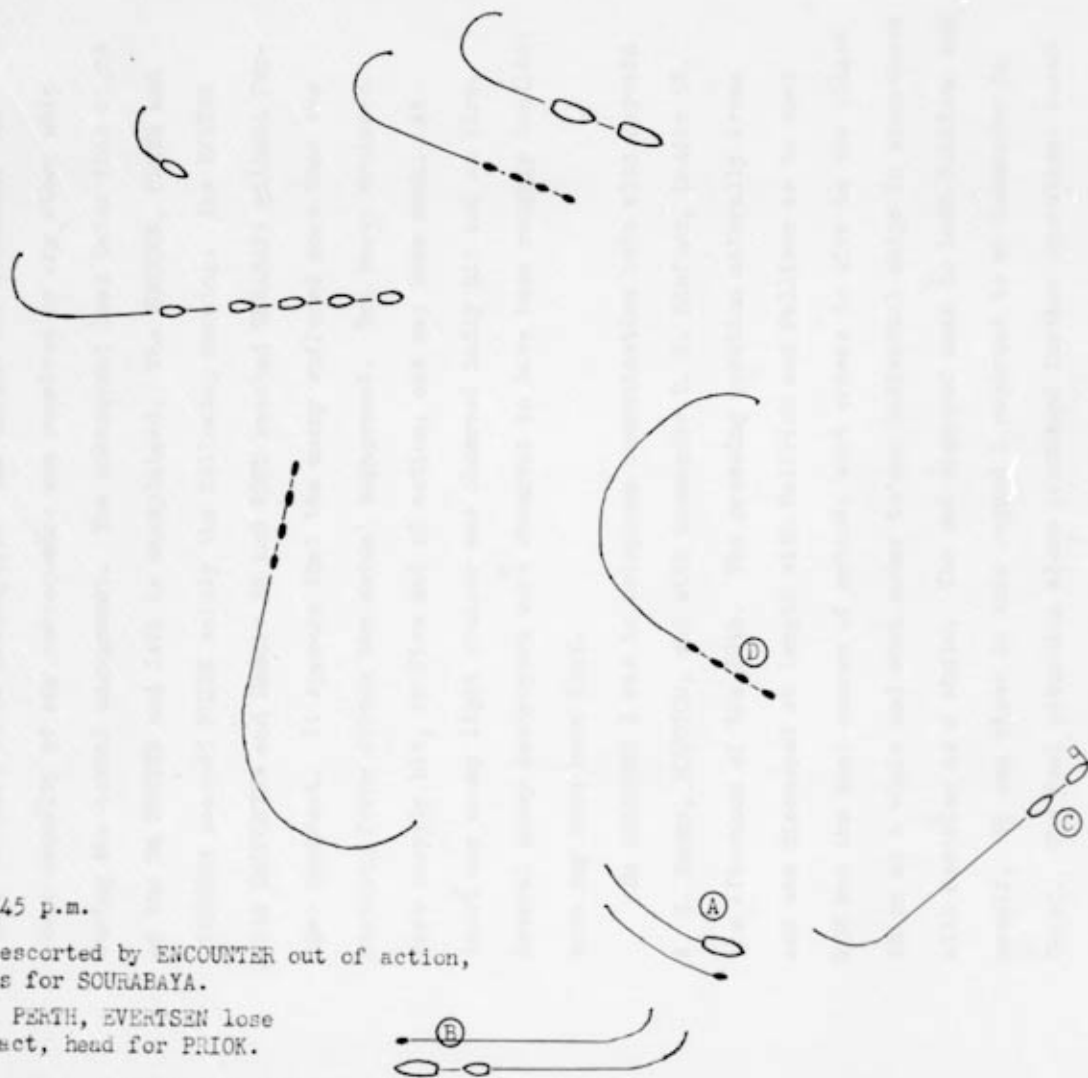


FIG. 6 - 5:45 p.m.

- (A) EXETER, escorted by ENCOUNTER out of action, heads for SOURABAYA.
- (B) HOUSTON, PERTH, EVERISEN lose contact, head for PRIOK.
- (C) DEREUETER, JAVA head to N.E. and lose touch.
- (D) Desdiv 58, retires after attack to SOURABAYA, having lost touch.

Such was in all probability the general procedure during the action in the JAVA SEA on the moonlight night of February 27, 1942. We lost three destroyers. The EXETER was disabled. No other casualty of any consequence was received by any other ship during the actual engagement. The subsequent loss later that night of the DE REUTER and JAVA is unexplained. The HOUSTON, PERTH and EVERTSEN reached PRIOK safely the following morning. The EXETER with ENCOUNTER and Desdiv 58 and POPE reached SURABAYA without further incident. It appears that the enemy suffered more than the striking force during the actual engagement. Two heavy cruisers were heavily hit, on fire out of action, one may have sunk. At least one enemy light cruiser was observed badly hit and on fire. Several enemy destroyers were observed to have been roughly handled; some may have been lost.

In BANDOENG I was in telephone communication both with Captain A. H. Rooks, HOUSTON, and with Commander T. H. Binford, Desdiv 58, the afternoon of the 28th. The pressing question naturally arose and was discussed at length with Helfrich and Palliser as to what NOW was the best course of action; what orders to give to the allied ships as a whole and what order to our individual ships in accordance with decision as a whole. The end appeared near to both Palliser and myself. My own views in this regard I reported to my Commander in Chief. The fuel situation alone precluded further operations based on JAVA. I was directed by my Commander in Chief to retire on AUSTRALIA when necessary to leave JAVA as a base. If the end appeared

to Helfrich, it was not made known to us. He determined to continue resistance with anything he could collect into a fighting force. A small Dutch cruiser, the HEEMSKERCH (similar to TROMP), was soon due from CEYLON. This ship he proposed to incorporate into the new striking force he visualized. The HOUSTON, EXETER, PERTH, together with seven allied destroyers were in a precarious situation on the North Coast of JAVA with both flanks seriously threatened. There was practically no fuel remaining PRIOK; fueling at SURABAYA was an exceedingly dangerous and difficult undertaking. The ships MUST get away from the North Coast - out of the JAVA SEA, into the INDIAN OCEAN. This was all too evident. The question simply was - where in the INDIAN OCEAN to send them.

Helfrich decided on TIJLATJAP. There he would take inventory of what was left to him in fighting condition and reorganize a striking force accordingly. By secret telephone then on the afternoon of the 28th I directed Captain Rooks of the HOUSTON at PRIOK to proceed with PERTH and EVERTSEN when ready to TIJLATJAP via SOENDA at night, and told him these instructions would be confirmed to all ships by dispatch. It was the last conversation I had with him. He remarked that TIJLATJAP did not appear to him a very desirable destination. He said that he had enough fuel with the 300 tons taken on at PRIOK to reach AUSTRALIA. He remarked that his ship's company was in fine spirits after their success in action and especially so, being lucky enough to be hit twice by eight-inch shells without casualty or damage. He remarked that he thought he had seen quite a few submarines while engaged and thought perhaps they had taken an active part in the

battle. He further remarked that many torpedo wakes were observed from his ship. He said that the PERTH was undamaged and had fired all her torpedoes, also that the EVERTSEN had arrived PRIOK. Both the latter ships were taking on most of what little fuel remained in that Port after fueling the HOUSTON - 300 tons between them at most. The PRIOK force less EVERTSEN got away at dusk that night. The Captain of the PERTH, the senior officer, reported that he "could not persuade the commanding officer EVERTSEN to accompany him." The reason for failure of the Dutch destroyer to escort the cruisers has never been explained. This destroyer did, however, put to sea under separate orders about 10:00 p.m. (local time). About midnight she reported a "sea battle in progress off ST. NICOLAS POINT." The following dispatch was then sent by CZM to the HOUSTON, PERTH and EVERTSEN:

"If any of addressees are engaged with enemy, others render assistance as possible."

It has been determined since that the EVERTSEN was "beached while sinking in STRAITS of SOENDA." Nothing has ever been heard of the reported battle off ST. NICOLAS. It is possible that the HOUSTON and PERTH, from whom nothing has been heard since departure PRIOK were involved.

In two telephonic conversations with Commander Binford, Comdesdiv 58 at SURABAYA on the afternoon of the 28th, he was first directed to remain SURABAYA until definite instructions later were given him as to procedure but he was to fuel and make all preparations for departure that evening. Later he was directed to instruct

the POPE with all her torpedoes on board to report to EXETER. He was to proceed at his discretion with Desdiv 58 (four ships) via MADOERA and BALI to EXMOUTH GULF to pick up the torpedoes remaining in ships under overhaul or not attached to the striking force. These instructions were confirmed by dispatch. It was at this time that Commander Binford told me that he had retired on SURABAYA rather than PRIOK the prescribed rendezvous, as he judged it impracticable to reach the latter place through waters he considered occupied in force by the enemy. He reported that there were no casualties to any of his ships and that practically all torpedoes had been expended except by POPE. He informed me he thought the DE REUTER and JAVA had been blown up, probably by enemy torpedo fire. Vice Admiral Helfrich authorized Desdiv 58 to proceed to AUSTRALIA for rearming as they were of no use to him at this stage without torpedoes.

Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N., as Chief of Staff gave the EXETER her sailing orders for TIJLATJAP in accordance with Admiral Helfrich's directions that all ships should assemble there. The EXETER was to be escorted by ENCOUNTER and POPE. Her maximum speed was 16 knots. Some minor repairs had been accomplished in her while enroute to and at SURABAYA fueling. She would be ready to sail that night. The question arose as to her routing - West - about through SOENDA or to the East through the Barrier via the Strait that appeared the safest. Palliser judged it best to send her West, skirting the South Coast of Borneo, then through SOENDA. I judged it best and so recommended to him at his request that he send her East through LOMBOK. She was sent West. So far as I know she has not since been heard of. Nothing has been heard from the POPE.

Desdiv 58 got away from SURABAYA that same night (28th) via the Eastern entrance, then via BALI STRAIT where an enemy destroyer division was encountered. The division did not attack being short of fuel, ammunition, and with no torpedoes but pushed on at high speed for destination, brushing the enemy destroyers aside. A few shots were harmlessly exchanged. The Division reached FREEMANTLE without further incident.

The U.S.S. S-38 the night of the 28th reported having picked up 58 survivors from H.M.S. ELECTRA in the battle area, five of whom were seriously injured - one dying. She was directed to proceed to the vicinity of the light vessel at the West entrance SURABAYA and there transfer the survivors to the Dutch hospital ship, then return to station.

The U.S.S. S-37 also the night of the 28th reported 60 survivors of the DE REUTER in a crowded open boat near and enroute SURABAYA. She took on board two U.S. bluejackets from among these survivors. These men had been attached as signalmen in the U.S. liaison group in DE REUTER. The S-37 could not accommodate the other survivors. She gave them five days rations.

The S-39 was dispatched the 28th to CHEBIA ISLAND of the TOEDJOE Group, vicinity BANKA where a party of forty British were reported from SINGAPORE, including Rear Admiral Spooner, R.N., and an Air Vice Marshal whose name was not disclosed. The S-39 landed a party on the Island the night of the 28th. No one was found. The place evidently had been recently heavily shelled.

12. Dissolution of the Allied Naval Command.

Rear Admiral Palliser and I spent most of the night of February 28th - March 1st discussing the precarious situation of JAVA as a whole and of our surface ships in particular which continued to base on JAVA ports. About midnight a report reached us that a U.S. Army bomber, JAVA to AUSTRALIA, had contacted that evening a strong enemy force in two groups about 150 miles south and east of TIJLATJAP heading northwest. The two groups were reported within a few miles of each other. One group reportedly was composed of at least two transports escorted by light forces; the other group apparently was a covering force composed of two battleships or battle cruisers according to the report, with cruisers and destroyers in company.

It was expected, incident to the bombing of the LANGLEY and PECOS, that TIJLATJAP would get her first taste of real bombing the following morning - March 1st. The port had already been ordered cleared by Admiral Helfrich of a mass of shipping in view of this expectation. It was known that enemy submarines were active off the port. Our available destroyers, gunboats and minesweepers did all they could not only assisting the Dutch port authorities in effecting an orderly withdrawal of ships, but in protecting them once clear of the entrance. The S.S. CITY OF MANCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk soon after leaving. The U.S.S. WHIPPORWILL rescued her survivors and returned them to port with remarkably small loss.

Enemy land based planes from BALI were most active in Eastern JAVA. From PALEMBANG undoubtedly, they had been equally active

against BATAVIA, PRIOK and BANDOENG. Furthermore an enemy carrier was known to be operating south of JAVA. The attack on the PECOS had developed this fact, and now as mentioned above an unusually strong enemy force was reported south of JAVA and heading for the coast. TIJLATJAP appeared to us to be so seriously threatened that it no longer could be regarded as a suitable base for our surface forces. To us it was definitely the end of JAVA as a base for operation against the strength the enemy brought to bear.

Admiral Palliser and myself decided to bring our views on this subject to attention of Admiral Helfrich who, it will be recalled had directed all surface ships, including his own, to TIJLATJAP, with our recommendation to him that no port in JAVA thenceforth be used as a base for surface forces.

Thus, on the morning of March 1st, 1942, at 9:00 o'clock, Admiral Palliser as Chief of Staff for reasons set forth above, advised Vice Admiral Helfrich in my presence to cancel his order directing surface ships to concentrate TIJLATJAP and to order them either to INDIA or AUSTRALIA. The conversation that ensued was substantially as follows:

HELFRICH: I must decline to accept your recommendation. I must continue resistance as long as I have ships that can fight. I have already ordered a greater concentration of submarines against the enemy in the JAVA SEA. The enemy will make another attempt to land tonight near REMBANG. He may succeed tonight but I shall attack the next wave of transports.

PALLISER: Then I must say to you as the senior British Naval Officer in this area, that my instructions from the Admiralty are to withdraw H.M. ships from JAVA when resistance will serve no further useful purpose. That time, in my judgment, has come. Therefore, I feel it my duty to order H.M. ships to INDIA at once and this I propose to do.

HELFRICH: You realize that you are under my orders?

PALLISER: I do of course. But in this vital matter I cannot do other than my duty as I see it.

HELFRICH: You know that I lent to the British when MALAYA was threatened, all of my fighting fleet - my cruisers, my destroyers, my submarines, my air - all of it was placed at your disposal for operation as you saw fit. In doing so we suffered grave losses. Furthermore, you did not hold MALAYA. SINGAPORE now is in the hands of the enemy. You failed. I think the wisest course now is to let me continue to handle this situation and save JAVA.

PALLISER: I cannot alter my decision.

HELFRICH: Will you delay one hour until I see the Governor General and inform him what you intend to do?

PALLISER: I cannot delay longer. Every minute counts now.

HELFRICH: And you, Admiral Glassford, what do you intend to do?

GLASSFORD: My instructions are to report to you for duty. Any order you give me will be obeyed at once. I wish to say to you, however, that I concur without reservation in the advice given you by your Chief of Staff. I am to retire on AUSTRALIA by order of my Commander in Chief if necessary to abandon JAVA, but that is for you to decide.

HELFRICH: Very well then, Admiral Palliser, you may give any orders you wish to H.M. ships. Admiral Glassford, you will order your ships to AUSTRALIA.

About an hour later after Admiral Helfrich had consulted with the Governor General, the former advised us that the Allied Naval command in the N.E.I. was dissolved by his own order thus conveyed to us verbally. In the meantime I had taken steps ordering all U.S. surface ships of my command then in JAVA waters or vicinity, to proceed to EXMOUTH GULF, AUSTRALIA. The craft concerned were specifically:

HOUSTON	- enroute	PRIOK - TIJLATJAP
POPE	- "	SURABAYA - TIJLATJAP
EDSALL	- based	TIJLATJAP
PILLSBURY	- "	"
WHIPPLE	- "	"
PARROTT	- "	"
ASHEVILLE	- "	"
TULSA	- "	"
WHIPPORWILL	- "	"
LARK	- "	"
L/NAKAI	- "	"
ISABEL	- "	"
PHOENIX	- enroute	JAVA to join striking force after being relieved for this purpose by H.M.S. ENTERPRISE as escort for convoy M-5, (FREEMANTLE - BOMBAY)
OTUS	- enroute	JAVA from CEYLON to which place she had accompanied the MARBLEHEAD.

All vessels were to proceed by prescribed routing clear of enemy forces through a common rendezvous in Lat. 15° S., Long. 113 E.

Identical orders were given to H.M. and Australian ships by Rear Admiral Palliser to proceed to EXMOUTH GULF (not to INDIA) through the above common rendezvous. Vessels were not to remain at the above rendezvous. They were to pass through the rendezvous that there they might pick up vessels with which to proceed in company for mutual protection or escort.

It has been mentioned previously that nothing has been heard from the HOUSTON and POPE. Of the vessels dispatched from TIJLATJAP included in above list, the EDSALL, PILLSBURY and ASHEVILLE are also unheard from and it is feared they too are lost.

Of the British ships in JAVA waters ordered by Palliser to AUSTRALIA, the EXETER, PERTH, ENCOUNTER and a few Corvettes from TIJLATJAP (number and names unknown to me) are also to be counted as lost.

About 10:30 a.m., 1 March, Admiral Helfrich sent for me and privately expressed to me the gratitude felt by the Governor General and himself for the loyal support of the U.S. Navy under my command in the defense of JAVA. He said to me that I was at liberty to leave JAVA and intimated that if I did leave the Island I had better do so at once if I wished to get away ahead of him.

I directed Rear Admiral Purnell now in HOLLAND to take charge of operations - the last dispatch sent from BANDOENG. Now by 11:00 a.m. I was enroute with my staff and hastily assembled material, to TIJLATJAP by automobile. We arrived without further incident in the late evening.

Air reconnaissance based at SURABAYA had ceased. The two available PBY's there were ordered to TIJLATJAP. Available planes from BROOME based on CHILDS were likewise directed to assemble TIJLATJAP. A total of four planes (PEY type) arrived during the afternoon of March 1st. Three of these were used to ferry our remaining personnel to AUSTRALIA. One had to be abandoned by reason of engine failure. One large submarine was also ordered to enter TIJLATJAP to assist in removing our people.

On my arrival TIJLATJAP, Rear Admiral Palliser who had arrived before me got in touch with me at once and together we made arrangements for all remaining U.S. and British ships, merchant and naval, to depart. Among these were several Dutch ships under British charter or control with U.S. citizens including consular staffs on board. Destinations were prescribed and routings arranged. Escort as practicable was provided by U.S. gunboats and British Corvettes still in port. Our remaining naval personnel were assigned by list to the submarine and to the waiting planes.

I left TIJLATJAP, taking Admiral Palliser with me in one of the PBY's about midnight and arrived EXMOUTH GULF, AUSTRALIA early the following morning, the 2nd. Admiral Purnell had already departed from EXMOUTH GULF in the HOLLAND for FREEMANTLE. The BLACK HAWK was preparing to leave also by his direction as the place was found to be altogether unsuitable as an advanced base for the overhaul of submarines and destroyers on account of high winds and heavy seas at that season of the year. The tender CHILDS received us in the uncharted lower bay where some lee was obtained for the landing

of the PBV's. I made a hurried survey of the lower gulf in CHILDS and reached the conclusion also that we could not remain there effectively. Accordingly the orders to BLACK HAWK were confirmed to proceed FREEMANTLE and we subsequently departed by air for the same place arriving the morning of 3rd March.

The tanker GEO. G. HENRY which had previously been ordered from FREEMANTLE to EXMOUTH GULF, and on which reliance had been placed to fuel the many ships ordered there, failed to make her appearance. It was ascertained later she had not departed FREEMANTLE as her orders via the Australians did not get through to her in time. Accordingly, all allied ships concerned were now warned by me that no ship should count on fueling at EXMOUTH GULF. Knowing that many vessels were short of fuel, the situation was not too pleasant. However, all ships except those lost by enemy action eventually made FREEMANTLE.

13. WEST AUSTRALIA

On arrival FREEMANTLE the morning of 3 March I got in touch with the local authorities and soon found the defenses of the port entirely inadequate for my forces as a base. It was thought possible, but hardly probable that the enemy would continue driving his wedge southward generally along the coast of WEST AUSTRALIA to render separation complete as between our allies in INDIA and ourselves in AUSTRALIA. Should the enemy learn of the concentration of allied naval forces in Southwest AUSTRALIA he might conceivably direct an air raid as profitable against such a concentration. The strategic importance of holding the FREEMANTLE - ALBANY area was

obvious. It appeared that whoever held Southwest AUSTRALIA controlled the line of communication AUSTRALIA - INDIA.

Our requirements as they appeared to me were made known at once by secret telephone to the "Australian Commonwealth Naval Board" and to General Brett of the U.S. Army Air Force at Melbourne. The result was that in a very few days we were provided A.A. protection by the 197th Regiment U.S. Coast Artillery and air protection by a U.S. squadron of P-40 fighters and a U.S. squadron of B-17 bombers. In the meantime, however, for purposes of greater security, ships as they arrived were dispersed in the FREEMANTLE - ALBANY coastal area.

I established my own force headquarters in PERTH, seven miles from FREEMANTLE on the SWAN RIVER and at the same time set up our own Naval Port Office at FREEMANTLE at the mouth of the River. This Port Office was soon absorbed by the Commander of the Force Base Force, Captain Grosskopf, U.S.N., who found himself confronted by the difficult problem of accommodating an ever increasing volume of supplies, provisions and material for the fleet from the U.S.A., as well as great numbers of casual fleet personnel arriving from the N.E.I. area.

A vast amount of shipping now began to use FREEMANTLE as a port of call, for fuel, for orders and for disembarking troops, refugees and survivors not only from JAVA and SINGAPORE, but also from AFRICA and the Middle East. These were strenuous times and our ships were busily employed on escort duty with incoming convoys and convoys we made up at FREEMANTLE. Thousands of people had to be accommodated, including our own survivors and wounded. All this

time enemy submarines were active off the coast.

My especial self-imposed task in WEST AUSTRALIA now was that of effecting real collaboration between the commanders concerned in the defense of the coastal frontier centered at FREEMANTLE. These commanders included -

1. A Major General in command of the Australian Army forces, which included the U.S. 197th A.A. regiment upon arrival, the latter for the defense of the new "Naval Base FREEMANTLE". This general had three thousand effective troops at his disposal scattered between GERALDTON and ALHANY in small garrisons. Headquarters PERTH.

2. An Air Commodore in command of the very limited independent Australian air force units in the area. The U.S. P-40's and B-17's when they arrived were placed under his command. Headquarters PERTH.

3. An Australian Naval Commodore recently arrived from JAVA in command of British and Australian Naval forces. These consisted of several Corvettes, minesweeps, guard ships, etc. Headquarters FREEMANTLE.

4. A U.S. Naval Flag Officer (myself) in command of U.S. Naval Forces, S.W. Pacific. Headquarters PERTH.

The necessity for the utmost close cooperation and collaboration between us was vigorously stressed. The gratifying result was that all concerned moved their headquarters from FREEMANTLE or from

their own establishments in PERTH to the same building which we had occupied. There we set up a common combat Intelligence Center and Common Operating Room for the land, air and sea forces. Our respective offices were practically adjoining. Consultation and conferences were rendered convenient. Duty officers and personnel from all services were constantly on watch. The communication set-up and arrangements in general were ideal. Especially by necessity, was the fighter air command established on an efficient basis. Information of approach of planes, enemy or friendly, was received very rapidly from the Radar or other scattered observers. Orders to the fighters could be issued instantly. The reconnaissance and bomber air command was served equally well by our communication set-up. Inshore and offshore (600 miles) air reconnaissance was continuous in daylight.

All we lacked was a unified command - some one commander authorized to decide in event of differences between the individuals of this group of commanders each acting entirely independently in defense of a vital coastal frontier.

Later, early in April when I visited supreme headquarters MELBOURNE, I was given to understand that when conditions permitted and required a supreme commander for the West Australia coastal frontier would be appointed. I was advised furthermore that at the time the supreme commander in Australia was not yet clothed with the necessary authority. A short time before, however, due to enemy action it had been found necessary by the Australian Government to

coordinate all defense activities in North AUSTRALIA by designating an AUSTRALIAN supreme commander of that frontier with headquarters DARWIN. The U.S. Forces in that area were directed to report for duty to the newly appointed Frontier Commander.

14. Submarines.

The submarines of the Force all through this campaign for the defense of the N.E.I. were administered and operated most ably by the Squadron Commander, Captain John Wilkes, U.S.N. Our submarines, in accordance with directives from the High Command, were employed primarily in the narrow and at times shallow waters of the N.E.I. area against the advance of an invading force. The vital sea lanes of enemy communication were covered as a secondary consideration in the employment of this type. Our submarines inflicted great loss and damage to enemy shipping both transport and combatant under conditions of exceedingly arduous and practically continuous operation. Great credit is due Captain Wilkes and to his command for the splendid results accomplished against the enemy, details of which may be found in separate report.

15. In conclusion I wish to express to the Commander in Chief my gratification over the manner in which it was found possible during these last trying and critical days of the campaign for Dutch, the British and ourselves to collaborate in the operation of our disposable forces. The desperate nature of our situation lent in my experience to an unprecedented spirit of cooperation and single-mindedness of purpose in resisting the advance of the enemy. Under these

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conditions the fighting spirit and morale of the personnel of my force continued to be of the highest order. Our deficiencies in material strength as compared to the force brought to bear by the enemy, were offset in a larger measure than is perhaps realized by the steadfast spirit and morale of our officers and men who in general maintained to the last the highest traditions of the U. S. Navy.

WILLIAM GLASSFORD

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*Naval Guide to
Pres*

Copy No 1 of 4

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F-1 1652

REPORT ON MALAYA, JAVA AND AUSTRALIA - MARCH 2, 1941 to MARCH 10, 1942

A-3 5503

FROM: Lieutenant Commander J. S. Mosher, U.S.N.R.

I. SOURCES

The writer served as Assistant Naval Observer at Singapore from March 2, 1941 to January 14, 1942; on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet (simultaneously Naval Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Command), in Java from January 14 to February 17; and on the staff of the Commander, Southwest Pacific, in Java and Australia from February 17 to March 6, 1942. The information for this report was gathered from many sources in connection with the performance of these duties, but chiefly from conversation and daily association with the following persons:

- United States Naval and Military Observers at Singapore,
- United States Consular Officers,
- United States Government Agents and Officers passing through,
- Local Naval, Military and Civil Authorities,
- Professional Writers and Correspondents,
- Civilians of all sorts, Asiatic, European and American.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
FILM OFFICE

II. SCOPE OF REPORT

This report is a digest of experiences under the assignments mentioned and the impressions drawn therefrom. Any opinions expressed are the writer's personal evaluations of information thus gained. The many subjects discussed preclude treatment by categories; the material is accordingly dealt with in a chronological order, covering in succession Malaya, Java and Australia as the writer saw them.

III. MALAYA, PREWAR

Preparedness.

In general, Malaya was not ready to resist invasion when it came. The British policy had been to prevent a Far Eastern war by any means, important among which was publicity. In order to discourage potential attackers, therefore, it was consistently given out that Malaya, and in particular Singapore, was very strongly fortified and defended, and any news stories to the contrary were strictly suppressed. As it turned out, this course was unfortunate: it did not deceive the Japanese, who were clearly well-informed as to Malaya's actual strengths and weaknesses; but it did deceive the publics of friendly powers, who took few steps before war broke to add to the defenses, on the natural supposition that they were more urgently needed elsewhere.

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Preparedness (Contd.)

While military effectives in Malaya were estimated by American observers at a top of fifty to seventy thousand, making allowances for auxiliary elements and casualties, modern weapons to arm them for the type of warfare to be expected were insufficient. This was especially true of long-range anti-aircraft guns to protect the airfields, fighter planes to escort or drive off bombing raids, and submarines and bombers to break up attempted landings. Until the initial attack such supplies were still being largely absorbed by Europe; when they were finally diverted to the Far East, it was too late. At least one convoy, for example, reached Singapore only just in time to be captured with the city.

Other preparations for war were hampered by a number of factors. The joint military and civil administration of governmental functions was complex and cumbersome, with duplication of effort and division of authority between multiple organs. This often resulted in frictions and impasses that impeded progress, but simplification was obstructed by jealousies and the weight of British custom. It was frequently more difficult to discover what agencies had jurisdiction in a matter than to obtain results from them when they were found. For instance, no less than a dozen separate passes were requisite to carry out the routine duties of Naval Observer; but in one case five civil and military offices claimed the right to issue one urgently needed pass, which was received promptly after a six-week dispute had settled the question.

While punctilities of this sort were observed with great strictness, there was a noticeable laxity in more important matters up to the time of the war. The social life and famous British week-end acted powerfully against the drive and efficiency which might have been expected. Military offices such as the channel of communications were all but suspended from Saturday noon to Monday morning because of the absence of officers, so that American messages had usually to be sent by commercial means during those days. In one case a priority message to the Naval Observer from Cavite was thirty hours in transit from the Naval Base to his office in town. Messages received in the evening could not be delivered before mid-morning or later the next day for lack of dispatch riders, and outgoing traffic had to be in the hands of the communications officers before five or six p.m. to get attention that day. Restaurants, theaters and dance floors were crowded with uniforms clothing newly arrived officers who did not yet know their jobs. At the airdromes the work-day ran from 0730 to 1230, with a "mid-morning break" for coffee lasting from 0930 to 1015 or later. The climate was considered too enervating at airdromes for work after lunch, though found bracing enough in town by Observers, even after dinner.

Of course, these conditions were not universal; there were many over-worked officers carrying the load for the rest; but they

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Preparedness (Contd.)

were not healthy in a country quite unprepared for what everyone was sure was to come. They are an evidence, perhaps, of the terrific losses Britain suffered during the last war in its best and most energetic manpower, or of a hopelessness while the United States was not by her side in this one. In any event, this state of affairs totally disappeared once Singapore and Pearl Harbor had been assaulted, and the twenty-four-hour day seven days a week took its place.

The population of Malaya was not well-prepared psychologically for a war, either. There was considerable friction between the military and the colonials, who resented any usurpation of what they considered their rights or functions, and little was done to counteract it. Censorship was so strict that local newspapers gave no real news; the short-wave radio, or American papers a month or two old, both unavailable to most of the natives, were the only satisfactory sources of outside information. In consequence the Asiatic population can have had only a sketchy idea of the objectives of Britain's war with Germany, or of the value of belonging to the British Empire rather than to Japan. Rubber interests strenuously, even successfully, opposed prewar practice maneuvers by the army on their plantations; after the fighting began they opposed destruction of this source of supply to the enemy. There was a general preoccupation with the post-war trade of the British Empire that took, to an American, an astonishing precedence over first winning the war; it became irritating as well when various American necessities were successively barred from entry because competitive. In December, 1940 even the American community's Christmas presents from home were impounded en masse by the Exchange Control, nor were they later released except where enough influence could be brought to bear. By Christmas of 1941 gifts were being received only from Japan.

The Government's relations with the native rulers were not perfect, if the Sultan of Johore may serve as an example. His Highness made no secret of his dislike for the British. An able, extremely energetic man of sixty-seven, he resented their guiding hand and would say so frankly to persons who, like the writer, were scarcely more than alien acquaintances. At large parties, of which he gave a number, the writer more than once saw him greet his guests with a "Heil" and a Nazi salute, though always in a joking manner. Although one of his previous wives was a Scotswoman he had a formula of asking for rye whiskey, saying, with a wink, "I've had all the Scotch I'm going to have." The British authorities, particularly the military, disapproved of the Sultan; but as native princes go, he had a reputation as a good ruler to his own people. The Government once put a midnight curfew on his staying in Singapore because it was felt that his fondness for parties was undignified; he countered, so it is said, by having the people of Johore spend the rest of the night planting the Britishers' favorite golf-course there full of trees. A month or two before the war he also vetoed an army project of filling the Johore jungles with Dyaks from Borneo who, it was hoped, would add any Japanese heads that might appear there to their collections. The grounds for the

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veto were that it was by no means certain that Dyaks would bother to draw fine national distinctions, which seems a reasonable belief. The plan's author, a Major of Punjabis, told the writer that it had got as far as Air Marshal Brooke-Popham before receiving this setback.

Relations with the Australians, whose troops were present in force, were no better. The Malayan Colonials joined with the English military in circulating everywhere derogatory and not always credible stories about the social and disciplinary shortcomings of the Australians, while the latter emphasized the inability of their detractors to defend themselves alone from any enemy. The reaction of an impartial listener was compounded of embarrassment at the ingratitude and surprise at the bad judgment of these needless attacks on the Australians at such a time, coupled with a slowly rising belief that the latter must be right. Some results of such frictions will be discussed farther on.

The general readiness for and security against hostile acts was indubitably comprised by these and similar factors, despite the fact that security measures in other directions were elaborate and painstakingly pursued. No matter how well they knew the face, sentries at restricted areas invariably required an Occidental, in or out of uniform, to produce the correct pass for the activity within. This was a highly proper precaution in a country so full of potential fifth columnists; but it was observed more than once that groups of native laborers could pass an Asiatic sentry to their daily work in these places without this ceremony. When the Japanese bombers came, guiding flares and lights appeared in many restricted areas, notably in the Naval Base; the culprits, when caught, were usually found to be laborer types of Siamese or Indian extraction. An interesting example of leakage in spite of censorship: while any reference to regiments by name was strictly deleted from all other newspaper pages, the United States Military Observer compiled a nearly complete list of British regiments in Malaya from the accounts of inter-regimental games in the sports columns. It is not believed that sporting news was held more important than security, but that an oversight was to blame.

If the foregoing sketch of prewar conditions in Malaya seems hypercritical, it is because the writer does not feel that the loss of that colony can be explained by presenting favorable sides of the picture, of which there were many.

IV. MALAYA AT WAR

Warning of Attack.

First warning of an impending Japanese attack on Malaya came through the R.A.F. three and a half days beforehand. On the

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Warning of Attack (Contd.)

afternoon of December 4 (December 3 in Hawaii) a patrol plane reported a very large Japanese convoy off Cape Kamao, the southernmost point of Indo-China. A fighter plane rose from the convoy and drove the patrol plane away, but not before it had seen that three merchant ships in the lead had just swung into a northwesterly course while the rest, including several men-of-war, were still headed due west into the Gulf of Siam. This caused speculation as to whether the convoy was bound for Malaya or Thailand, and the patrols were ordered to learn its subsequent course. Continued bad visibility prevented the convoy's being sighted again, however, although it is practically certain that it was the one carrying the first landing force to Khota Bahru.

The United States Naval Observer in Singapore relayed this report to the Navy Department and the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet by dispatch. The British authorities in Malaya immediately ordered full mobilization, cancelling all leaves and calling all reserves and civilian defense forces to their posts. Air raid precautions, except for blackout, were put into effect.

The Attack.

At 0415 Singapore Daylight Saving Time December 8 (about 2230 Honolulu Standard Time on December 7) a flight of Japanese bombers attacked Singapore town, killing some sixty Chinese in crowded rooming-houses on Chulia Street with one or two direct hits, destroying a business building on Battery Road nearby, partially wrecking the Bank of Taiwan (a Japanese concern) on Raffles Square, and breaking many windows in surrounding shops. The bombs were probably 500-pound demolitions. It is believed that the attack, which centered one block from the business district waterfront, was really aimed at the close-packed shipping in that part of the harbor. Several bombs struck the water, but without damaging any craft. Next day these ships were ordered to scatter to more widely separated berths.

The writer witnessed the raid, which lasted forty-five minutes, from the Observer's Mess two miles away. The enemy was assisted by a bright moon in a high mackerel sky, and through an oversight of the Air Raid Wardens (not later repeated) the street lights burned steadily until dawn. Anti-aircraft guns and searchlights in the area were in operation as long as the raiders could be heard, but the writer saw no planes. The all-clear sounded at 0500. Later it was learned that the attack had coincided with a landing attempt at Khota Bahru which so far had been driven off.

Naval Observer's Measures.

The United States Naval Observer moved at once out to the Naval Base, 14 miles from his regular office, to maintain constant contact with the British naval authorities. Communication between him and the town office was carried on by seeraphone, which proved

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Naval Observer's Measures (Contd.)

indispensable in this situation. The town office was put on a 24-hour basis. The subordinate staff of one officer, two enlisted men and two clerks had been augmented only a few days before by two Lieutenants, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., until then Singapore businessmen, an aviator Ensign, U.S.N., previously attached to the R.A.F., and an Ensign, (C.E.C.), U.S.N.R., who had been caught in Singapore by the war while on special mission from Cavite. Without these reinforcements it might have been impracticable to meet all the exigencies that arose, such as the great increase in coded traffic, the intensified ship-control problems, the round-the-clock watches and the countless errands.

The advantage of establishing an office as nearly as possible on a complete war footing before war conditions occur was soon apparent. Many of the chief problems had been foreseen and solved; but others that now arose had to be met with time and energy at a premium. A brief review of a few of these may be useful. Multiplied transportation needs forced the hire of an extra car and chauffeur, purchase of two bicycles, and impressment of the private cars of the two I-V(S) officers. The risk of current failures and certainty of blackouts suggested the purchase of candles, half a dozen flashlights with blue bulbs, and all the batteries to be found. (Batteries disappeared early from the shops.) A short-wave radio was installed in the office to pick up news of the outside world, now very slim. Large containers were purchased and filled with drinking water; thermos flasks and jugs were prepared for eating emergencies. It had been foreseen that full cooperation in war with the British would mean moving the main office to the Naval Base, but this would not have been desirable earlier. By the end of the week, however, all personnel but one officer and the Storekeeper and a clerk had been permanently established there, and the coding equipment moved and set up with much labor. Devices to adjust local voltage to American machines had to be procured from the Royal Naval establishment; fortunately they were available, for those previously used in town would not serve. Tin hats, gas masks and sidearms were obtained from the British for those not already supplied. Although no one was now living at the Observers' Mess, it was retained with full servant staff for possible need. The office force in town took charge of Ship-control, contact with the Consulate General, purchases and other errands, and Accounts. Two sets of strip ciphers were left them for use in Ship-control or emergency. At British request the Base office took on the heavy RDF traffic between Cavite and Kranji. This would not have been possible without an ECM which was delivered by USS EDSALL several days after the commencement of hostilities, by order of Admiral Hart.

The War.

After the first few days there were no raids on Singapore for nearly two weeks. This may have been attributable to the enemy's

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The War (Contd.)

preoccupation with the landing effort at Khota Bahru, now making progress. From then on, however, raids on the island averaged two nightly: usually a businesslike one at about 2300 followed by a nuisance raid at 0400. A few times it was learned from RDF bearings that the attackers came from a carrier stationed near Khota Bahru. Its custom was to steam southeasterly the day before until within a safe range of Singapore, starting back an hour or two after the raid was over. These attacks seemed in general to be more effective than those of the army, which came from Khota Bahru, now in Japanese hands, or from the Kra Peninsula, full military use of which had been allowed Japan by Thailand after its three-hour "resistance". Warning of attacks approaching over land was about 25 minutes in the early stages, of those from the sea necessarily very much shorter. As the enemy advanced down the Peninsula the advance notice correspondingly lessened. On January 12 it was about 10 minutes. Until that date, when the writer sailed for Java, little military damage was done by bombings. They were mostly conducted in formation, at 10,000 feet or higher, and the alarms rarely lasted over an hour. One Japanese plane did fly very low over the enlisted men's barracks with its running lights on, machine-gunning the buildings while within range, but this was an individual's stunt. Airfields and oil tanks seemed to be the chief targets, though not many effective hits were registered.

Fifth Column During Raids.

Colored flares guiding the enemy to bombing objectives were frequently observed during raids, even within the Naval Base enclosure. This was not surprising in view of the swarms of Asiatic workmen daily admitted to construction projects in such areas. To force the hands of the perpetrators a few false raids were staged, with some success. In one case the culprit, surrounded in a wood close to oil tanks and the writer's quarters, escaped while a circle of Indian troops and Royal Marines, bent unknown to each other on the same mission, endangered each others' lives with rifle fire. In another, two Thais were caught red-handed firing flares from the roof of the highest building in town, where they had been located during previous alarms by adjacent spotters. It was suspected that enemy agents were operating more than one short-wave radio near Allied airfields where returning planes were often caught as they landed, but the writer never heard that any of these was captured. This trick may explain many timely Japanese attacks on the field at Malang, in Java, later on, while American bombers en route to the war zone were fueling there.

Land War for the Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the Japanese were advancing steadily in northern Malaya by a series of rapid flanking operations covered by superior air power. The writer's duties prevented his following these land developments in detail, but it is possible to give a précis of their strategy and tactics as he understood them.

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Strategy and Tactics.

The defender's failure there may perhaps best be summarized in the word "outflanked". The chief fault of their dispositions seemed to be inadequate provision against this maneuver, which the enemy pressed overhead as well as laterally, and against the Peninsula as a whole quite as much as against local positions. The defense was based on strong points and flexibility rather than static lines, but relied far too much on difficult country and frontal defense. Many valuable positions were lost and bodies of men cut off without real fighting because supposedly impenetrable jungle had been substituted for strength on the wings, or because airfields or supply lines in the rear had been seized via air or water. In the large view, the Japanese tended to ignore the central mountainous regions until general retreat had been forced by landings well down the coast; but, locally speaking, low-lying jungles and swamps proved feeble obstacles to their advance. The seizure of Penang on the west so soon after that of Kota Bahru on the east coast is a sample of their larger plans: from then on, their water-borne landings down both coasts forced a continual general retreat. Messages from local commands to the Naval Base War-room would report Japanese troopships offshore; a few hours later it would be wired that the defenders were falling back ten or fifteen miles because the enemy had landed below their positions, threatening to cut them off. What had been done to prevent any landing was often exasperatingly omitted from these dispatches; presumably the enemy's trip southward had been quicker by water than the defenders' by land, or the paucity of mobile fire-power had left too much beach uncovered. In any case, the Japanese system worked, and defending forces did a disproportionate amount of their fighting faced toward Singapore. Since contact with other hostile forces in front was often entirely lost during these rapid withdrawals they did so with inadequate knowledge of the foe's subsequent movements, and between two fires,

Training.

The Japanese have long specialized in night fighting, and turned the fact to their advantage and the confusion and exhaustion of the defense. They now also showed themselves well prepared for jungle fighting, whether by day or night. Their dress and equipment was light and suitable for the terrain, their rations durable and portable, their heavier weapons mobile and numerous. Where they found unguarded vehicles and paths they used them; they saved their rations by living where practicable off the country; they were provided with medicines against incapacitating tropical ailments. The men moved through difficult territory as individuals, but did not lose cohesion; they had been trained to operate separately and with initiative as cogs in the general machine. They made use of what they found to hand, but did not let it distract them from the objective. Those too far in advance, for instance, frequently escaped observation or capture by climbing trees while awaiting their main body, to which they doubtless passed on what they had learned from these vantage points. In short, their methods were up-to-date, adapted to their needs and thoroughly ingrained; and the defenders seemed unable to frustrate them.

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General Bennett.

The writer had the interesting experience later on of flying from Java to Australia with General Gordon Bennett, Commander-in-Chief of Australians in Malaya, shortly after his escape by sailboat from Singapore. What the general told him during the 24 hours they were together may shed additional light on this Allied failure. It should be remembered in evaluating his remarks, however, that the general was then on his way to report on that failure to his government, and that in this informal conversation he did not in the least try to hide great bitterness against "the British", as he called them. The gist of his statements is presented for what it may be worth.

General Bennett stated categorically that the Australians had been let down throughout the campaign by their colleagues. As a commander, he had been inflicted by the English with a succession of staff and liaison officers who neither knew their business nor put it first; as an Australian he had experienced disastrous want of cooperation from the British general staff and its forces on his flanks. He complained of scant consideration to his problems or proposals at staff meetings, even when his was the chief or most difficult sector. He cited instances where English staff officers had selected unsuitable headquarters for their residential comforts despite their military inconveniences, pausing only after they had established themselves to consider how communication with the fighting units was to be set up and maintained. Their incompetence was shown in many ways; but when he insisted on the removal of those under him, for cause, they were transferred grudgingly and sometimes, especially when well-connected, promoted on transfer. Meanwhile, the English and Indian troops on his flanks repeatedly fell back, without notice to him, from secure positions as yet unreached by the enemy, leaving the Australian battalions to reach new lines in the rear how they might.

On the subject of regaining the Malayan Peninsula, General Bennett was equally bitter. He remarked that no profit of any sort had ever accrued to Australians from its wealth, and that at least 8,000 Australians had just been killed in the attempt to preserve it for English capitalists. He conceded that its possession by friendly powers was an important factor of military safety to Australia, but added that if they were to defend it for the Empire they should have some interest in its other values. From now on, he contended, the Pacific Problem must unavoidably become the direct responsibility of Australia and the United States together; it was absurd to suppose that they would pay to keep the peace there for the privilege of collecting dividends for London shareholders.

Australia had neither the wealth nor population to defend or develop herself unaided. It was perfectly clear that the Empire could never again pretend to do so; she must turn to powerful allies whose interests coincided in general with hers. An understanding of some sort with the United States would be inevitable after the war.

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It was interesting to read, some weeks after these talks, Churchill's announcement that General Bennett's report was not yet ready for publication. The general showed it in draft form to the writer during this trip, remarking that it was nearly ready for the typist and would be submitted to the Australian cabinet as soon as possible. He left for Melbourne by special plane the day after our arrival in Broome, and the fact that he had submitted his report to the cabinet was duly reported in the Australian press about a week later. The Government subsequently promoted him to Lieutenant General, with a command in the Australian Defense Forces.

Comment.

The available "British" rebuttal to General Bennett's criticisms should in fairness be recorded. The United States Military Observer formerly at Singapore recently informed the writer that he had heard equal counter-claims from reliable British officers, among them that the Australians were habitually unruly and undisciplined, even to the point of looting places they were supposed to defend; that they often ran without fighting at all, jettisoning their equipment and leaving their colleagues to redeem the situation; and so on. In support of this, the Observer stated he knew without question that certain regiments from Britain on whom this duty was said to have fallen had been practically wiped out. Although he did not himself see direct evidence of such Australian behavior he was inclined to believe it highly possible.

Nevertheless, the Observer added that on his last night in the Burma front lines, where there are few if any Australians, contact with the enemy had been lost for three days and he personally was unable to find any Japanese by driving ten miles south of the British lines. This indicates to the writer that, while General Bennett's statements may be discounted insofar as they insist on the faultlessness of Australians, there is basis for them. In any case, whatever the accuracy of all these contentions they support the belief that there was much friction and non-cooperation in the Malayan campaign, and too much of the sort of bad staff work which fosters these undesirable conditions.

The Sea Defense.

Adequate strength at sea, including sea air-power, might have saved Malaya by preventing any direct Japanese landings in that country. But even what strength there was had been seriously weakened at the outset by the loss of the PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE, and the preoccupations of the Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines while the United States and Royal Navies were unable to reinforce the Far East. The heavy task of preventing the landings therefore devolved largely on the R.A.F. and local submarine forces which, although they did yeoman work, were inadequate to stop the Japanese advances. The Dutch submarines in particular gave a fine account of themselves, especially in the shallow Gulf of Siam; but losses and necessary lay-ups gradually reduced the effect of their efforts. The overworked R.A.F. planes meanwhile were needed more and more for operations over land, so

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The Sea Defense (Contd.)

that even the few planes fitted for sea operations had to be used to neutralize the mounting Japanese air attack. A friend of the writer won the D.F.C. by bombing an enemy-held airdrome in northern Malaya from 400 feet in an unescorted PBY, for example.

PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE.

There may never be a complete explanation of Admiral Sir Tom Phillips' sacrifice of the PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE a week after they arrived in Far Eastern waters. A Royal Navy Commander who survived the former told the writer he believed Phillips had put to sea to dispel his reputation as an "arm-chair admiral" by a smashing setback to the invasion convoy at Khota Bahru. The writer is practically convinced, from the unanimity of various sources questioned, that the Admiral declined a definite offer of air escort from the R.A.F. The Naval Observer at Singapore reported the sinkings in detail by dispatch at the time; they need not therefore be gone into here. But the loss of these two fine ships imposed a caution on the Allied naval forces and gave the local Japanese commands a freedom of action which was unfortunate for the defense of Malaya.

Scorched Earth.

As completely as they could the defenders denied to the enemy any supplies or installations left behind. The writer lived for the first five weeks of the war with Captain (E) O.W. Phillips, R.N., Fleet Engineer Officer of the Far Eastern Fleet, who was responsible for much of this work. A highly efficient officer, he was hampered by considerable lack of cooperation from the civil Public Works Department officials supposed to carry out his orders up country. Those at one airfield had been supplied the needful quantity of gelignite to blow up a number of special retaining dams, thus inundating the field after destruction of the runways. They fled while the enemy was still some days away, dumping the gelignite into a stream, which rendered it useless. A Naval Reserve officer under Captain Phillips' orders was obliged then to drive over 200 miles with a fresh supply. He succeeded in breaking the dams before the enemy arrived. Captain Phillips' estimate of the reasons for the first party's failure cannot be quoted.

As stated before, owners' opposition to destruction of their plantations and similar property developed early and was, at least in some cases, successful in the end. It was undoubtedly supported by the official British determination to preserve the Empire's trade beyond the war; of course it would take many years to restore the prewar production of a wrecked rubber plantation. The tin mines of Malaya are not tunneled, but worked by the strip-bank method of digging away whole hillsides. These large areas naturally cannot be put out of reach of invaders, but the machinery and equipment can and it is believed that in most cases it was. Oil companies, on the other hand, cooperated very well; their wells and installations

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Scorched Earth (Contd.)

have been thoroughly demolished, so far as the writer knows. In this the Dutch were notably efficient, requiring all white employees to belong to the Army Reserve and devoting each Saturday morning for about 18 months prior to the war to demolition drill. The results were exceedingly thorough, and it is estimated that all their oil fields were put out of commission for the maximum possible time.

Plans for destroying the Singapore Naval Base were thorough-going and presumably effected at the proper time, although no direct information on the subject has come to the writer. They included complete wrecking of all machinery, cranes, graving dock caissons, pumping apparatus, etc. The two large floating docks were definitely sunk, and it is said they could never be used again even if raised. About a week before the fall of Singapore the writer saw a cabled order from the Admiralty, dated a day or two before, instructing the Rear Admiral, Malaya, to make plans to tow the smaller of these docks to Java. These orders could not be carried out through waters infested by hostile craft and planes, and it is not known why the Admiralty expected that they could be.

V. JAVA

Early in January, 1942, Admiral Layton, R.N., Sir Tom Phillips' successor as Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet, informed the United States Naval Observer that he was about to move with all his staff to Colombo. The Observer radioed this information to Admiral Hart, then in Soerabaja, inquiring whether he should follow Admiral Layton or remain in Singapore with the Rear Admiral, Malaya, who is the equivalent of the Commandant of an American Naval District. Admiral ordered the Observer to proceed as soon as practicable to Java, bringing his staff and equipment. With the exception of one officer and the clerk, who were left in charge of Ship-control for as long as that might prove necessary, the entire office sailed for Batavia aboard HMS ANKING on January 12. On the morning of departure 70 Japanese planes, about 40 of them bombers, flew over the Naval Base, headed south. The R.A.F. attacked them for about an hour and a half, breaking up their formations, but they dropped no bombs within hearing distance of the Base. It was learned later that they were looking for the convoy of which USS MOUNT VERNON was a part, then approaching Singapore through Banka Strait. Because of continued rain and low clouds they never found it.

Admiral Hart had meanwhile established his office in Batavia, near the Department of Marine, pending preparations to quarter the Supreme Allied Command and its staffs in Lembang. The Naval Observer, Captain J. M. Creighton, became the Admiral's Chief of Staff, and went to Lembang at once; the other officers from Singapore were assigned to the Admiral's coding board in Batavia, then much understaffed, remaining there a week before going on to Lembang.

Supreme Allied Headquarters.

Lembang is 5,000 feet high in the mountains, about four hours' drive from Batavia and 13 kilometers above Bandoeng. The

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Supreme Allied Headquarters. (Contd.)

Headquarters there was situated in the Grand Hotel, which was overtaxed to feed, house and afford office-space to the combined staffs, guards and enlisted men. It had more the appearance of a refugee camp than a headquarters, the British having brought with them forty or fifty women from Singapore whom they assigned to cooking and secretarial duties. There was even one child, son of the hotel manager. The hotel grounds were enclosed in a barbed-wire fence, the single opening in which was patrolled by uncompromising Javanese sentries carrying both cocked rifles and bared sabers at the ready. The only language they understood was that of a pass in good order, and until these arrived considerable personal danger and difficulty were incurred by officers having to go in and out on duty. For protection from parachutists and air attacks the thorough Dutch formed an open glacis around the enclosure by cutting down the woods, and camouflaged the buildings and empty swimming pool with paint and matting. Shelter trenches were dug and machine-guns and splinter-proof sentry boxes set up. A British Camp Commandant was appointed to oversee subsistence and quarters.

Supreme Command.

The combined command, under General Sir Archibald Wavell of the British Army, consisted of a Naval Staff, known as "Abdafloat", the Military Staff, called "Abdacom", and the Air Staff, or "Abdair". The letters "a-b-d-a" in these designations stood for "American, British, Dutch, Australian", as being descriptive of the governments of the territories directly concerned in the Japanese war. Personnel for these staffs was selected as equitably as possible from the various powers.

Nature of Operations.

The key to the future situation in the southwest Pacific at this stage of the war was naval. The isolation of Malaya, Borneo and the Celebes was proceeding rapidly, and now New Guinea, Timor and Bali were menaced. The successful defense of Java would require, in the last analysis, resounding naval setbacks to the numerous powerful Japanese convoys heading south through every strait. Unfortunately, these setbacks had to be administered by an Allied navy little larger than a task force, burdened with many extraneous duties like that of convoy, hampered by complex allegiance, already overwhelmed in the air, and obliged to be everywhere at once. The requisite shuttling and whittling it accomplished with honor, but only relatively with effect. For instance the admirable action of January 24 in Macassar Strait, when four overaged American destroyers decimated a convoy many times their strength in warships alone, was rewarded only by the survivors' going on to occupy Balikpapan. Meanwhile, as they captured island after island the Japanese were progressively enabled to destroy by land-based attacks the material reinforcements arriving in the area from home. The crucial need was for fighter planes, which had to be imported from Australia by ship because of the distances over water and without which the

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Nature of Operations (Contd.)

bombers and bases could not be protected. The continued loss of these supplies before they were received by the land defense gave a foregone conclusion to operations once the enemy was ashore.

Communications.

Control of the farflung marine activities from Java was naturally complicated. Communication had to be maintained with ships of three nationalities and two languages from Australia to India, and with shore authorities from Australia to Washington and London. It was not uncommon to send a dispatch to ten or twenty different addressees, each differently concerned with its text. To handle the flood of messages in Lembang the Dutch furnished the regular Java telephone lines, plus direct scrambler-phone and teletype systems to Bandoeng and Batavia, the latter manned at the Lembang end by the British Army Signal Corps. There were also dispatch rider services to the two towns mentioned. These channels proving insufficiently flexible or secure for its needs, the United States Navy set up its own radio sending and receiving stations at the Grand Hotel, using them to intercept Baker and Fox schedules and communicate direct with its ships and with Corregidor.

Coderooms.

To deal with the coding for Abdafloat the United States Navy had a board of seven officers assisted clerically and otherwise by four or five enlisted men. The United States Army had at first no provision at all for its own communications; they were undertaken by the Navy until the gap could be filled. Abdacom's traffic was to be handled by sixteen Britishers, mostly women, who were later increased to thirty. Dutch messages were encoded at their naval headquarters in Bandoeng, where the mixed Reconnaissance Group under Abdair was situated, and in Batavia. Enemy contact reports between Regroup and the High Command were also relayed by the Navy.

Speed and Security.

The multiple addressees of dispatches necessitated the use of codes common to all. For this purpose British numerical codes were distributed. They were cumbersome, compared to our ciphers, and susceptible to difficult garbles which not infrequently caused serious delays or repeated transmissions. Moreover, their distribution had been imperfect, so that all too often dispatches had to be repeated in other systems or relayed by circuitous means. Add to this that messages were sometimes received in Dutch when they should have been in English, or vice versa, and it will be seen that there were obstacles to the free flow of orders and information.

Navy ideas of security were ignored in a number of ways, sometimes of necessity and sometimes not. Contact reports and others of great

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Speed and Security (Contd.)

urgency had often to be passed on by ordinary telephone because of delays via other channels. As many as seven copies of dispatches were demanded by the headquarters war room and other sections. Some of these were reported lost; rather than waste time searching for them the losers requested replacements. For a while the United States Army expected verbatim transmission of its dispatches in new Navy systems. This could not be accorded, but there was little time to make satisfactorily secure paraphrases. Hand messages were received through dispatch-riders among whom one officer recognized a Russian girl formerly employed in a Tsingtao nightclub. Both Dutch and British sent many important communications in the clear, via teletype operated in some cases by halfcaste girls. They also persisted, against American protests, in giving wide distribution to serial bulletins in doubtfully secure codes announcing the whereabouts and current destinations of all ships, including submarines. The Navy managed to solve many of these security problems, but not without misgivings.

Air Raids on Java.

Shortly after Admiral Hart arrived in Lembang the radio in Japan broadcast his address with a promise to bomb it next day. No raids were made on Lembang while he was there, however, although a few alarms were sounded. When the Admiral left for the United States, about the middle of the month, his coding board was ordered by Vice Admiral Glassford to move to Bandoeng. The coderoom was thereupon established in the air-conditioned Dutch Naval Communications Office underground, and remained there until ordered at the end of the month to move to Australia. During that fortnight enemy raiders came over Bandoeng almost daily in the morning or afternoon, flying noticeably closer to the ground than they had in Singapore. Chiefly directed at nearby airfields, the raids did no appreciable damage to the town at this period nor, it was said, to the airfields. They were whittling down the Dutch supply of fighter planes, however; on three successive days the writer saw four, two, and then no fighters go up to meet the attacks. On the fourth day there were two again, presumably brought in from elsewhere. This attrition was increasingly felt until, on February 26, the writer's last day in Java, he was told there were only 18 fighters left in the whole island. There was no way to check this statement at the time, but it may have been true. As in Malaya, the lack of enough fighters led to lack of bombers, replacements of which were repeatedly shot on the ground by the enemy at inadequately protected fuelling-stops, such as the airfield at Malang in eastern Java, before they ever got into action. The narrowness of the island, like that of the Malayan Peninsula, contributed to surprise attacks from the sea, it being impossible to give the crews warning enough to get their planes back into the air. Fifth column radio activity may have been responsible for the extreme timeliness of some of these raids. New fighters could not be imported under their own power because of the distances over water, but had to be brought in ships across seas

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Air Raids on Java (Contd.)

already thickly patrolled by enemy air and surface forces.

LANGLEY and PECOS

This last fact resulted in the sinking of USS LANGLEY about March 2, and of USS PECOS on the day following. In a final effort to get the vital fighter-planes to Java the LANGLEY was ordered to carry a cargo of P-40s to Tjilatjap, despite the risks. She was caught about a hundred miles south of her destination by planes from a Japanese carrier supported by destroyers and, if the writer's information is correct, cruisers, and sunk by bombs. The PECOS, en route to Colombo, was deflected from her course to rescue survivors, but, after she had them aboard, the same force sank her too in a five-hour bombing. American destroyers picked up the survivors again that night; but several hundred officers and men and all the LANGLEY's planes were lost in the double sinking.

Situation on February 26

At midnight of February 26 the writer, under orders to start for Australia via Tjilatjap the next day, paid a brief last visit to Lembang to collect some papers and baggage that had been left there. Captain Creighton was on duty in the war room and showed him the latest dispositions on the operations maps. Yellow markers for Japanese forces filled all straits north of Java and to its east and west, and appeared as far south as Christmas Island. Bali and large areas of Sumatra were already overrun. It was obvious that Java was now almost completely cut off from outside aid and that the island's resistance must depend on the forces already there.

Tjilatjap

Tjilatjap, on the south coast about eight hours by train from Bandoeng, had become the chief embarkation port for personnel leaving Java. A United States Navy headquarters under Admiral Purnell had been set up there as a Base Force and radio station and now added embarkation to its functions. It had offices and quarters in one wing of the only livable hotel and in some nearby buildings. Tjilatjap, by no means a popular resort even in peacetime, was not equipped to deal with the flood of transients that descended on it now. At the time the writer arrived two or three hundred persons of all sorts and persuasions seemed to be quartered in the hotel, sleeping on veranda floors, in the lounge chairs, or even in parked cars. Meals became strictly cafeteria affairs, in that impatient diners helped themselves in crowds from the kitchen range while the Javanese waiters ran confusedly about with empty beer bottles or dirty plates. Dinner was mostly fought for and eaten in the pitch black of raid alarms. The water supply in the taps failed about twenty-three hours a day, and so did the proprietor, who took to

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Tjilatjap

his bed to avoid complaints and demands he could not satisfy. Meanwhile the Dutch Club down the street was crammed with civilian refugees, and passenger ships waiting in the river for orders served as floating hotels for the overflow. 3,000 R.A.F. personnel from Singapore, wounded officers and men from U.S.S. MARDLEHEAD, Allied women and children, Standard Oil men and correspondents all sat around waiting for transportation to Ceylon or Australia.

American naval personnel was being evacuated by all means available, including submarines, surface ships and seaplanes. The submarines entered the river mouth at night, received their passengers and sailed for Fremantle. Plane passengers boarded British Overseas Airways Corporation seaplanes in the evening and took off for Australia at first light. Ships sailed at hours calculated to get them well away from land before dawn, their decks blanketed with passengers trying to sleep. Two evenings in succession the writer made ready to board a submarine, but was told just before sailing-time that wounded or other more pressing cases had taken up all space. An offer of a ride to Colombo in U.S.S. PECOS was declined because Perth was his objective - luckily for him, as it turned out. At the last minute on the second evening he was sent aboard a B.O.A.C. plane with three American naval aviators who had appeared in Tjilatjap that afternoon. It was on this plane that he met General Gordon Bennett, referred to elsewhere.

VI. AUSTRALIA

Broome

An hour or two after the plane took off the next morning it flew, at 6000 feet directly over a Japanese naval flying-boat. Apparently the enemy did not notice, for nothing resulted from the incident. At about 1430 the bare red coast of Australia was sighted, and a short time later the plane was set down about two miles from shore. The beach at Broome is extremely shoal for a great way from land. There is a 24-foot tidal rise and fall, according to a native. Fortunately the water was high at the time or it would have been necessary to walk with the luggage across a mile or more of wet sand and clay. As it was, a combination of dinghy and pearling schooner was used to bring the passengers to the seaward end of a long, high pier. A sort of Toonerville train carried the passengers ashore along the top of this structure and up to the village, a total distance, perhaps, of two miles. Except for cart tracks across the desert and a partly completed airfield this appeared to be the only way to enter Broome from the outside world.

The train dropped passengers at the Hotel Governor Broome and Grand Hotel Continental, finally stopping at the court house. A B.O.A.C. agent billeted the writer in the home of a pearl fisher overnight. Food was to be had at the Hotel Continental down the road.

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Next morning, after an extremely hot night featuring very able mosquitoes (which presumably gave the writer his subsequent attack of dengue), he and the three aviators walked to the airfield on the edge of town to see about transportation to Perth. This field consisted of a single straight runway, hardened but covered with red dust that rose in clouds from the slip-stream of every plane, laid out on a large area cleared of sagebrush and partly grassed. The field itself was too soft for large planes, two of which were having their wheels dug out when the party arrived. They had sunk in up to the hubcaps on leaving the runway, and thereafter all planes were lined up on the edge of the hardened surface. The landscape surrounding the field was level as far as the eye could see and set no noticeable limit to enlargement of the airport, if needed. The only building was a corrugated iron shed at one end of the runway. Too small to shelter large planes and devoid of machinery or tools, it was being used as a general waiting-room and stowage space. A quantity of full gasoline drums was spread over a large area at the side of this building. They had been painted a brilliant scarlet at their place of origin, for some unhandy reason; there was no paint in Broome with which to render them less attractive. Together with the row of large planes, which could not leave the runway, they presented as appealing a target to hostile airmen as might be devised. Airfield Defense was the responsibility of Lieutenant Colonel Vance, U. S. Army Air Corps, whose sole weapons for this purpose were eight .50-cal. machine-guns without mounts of any kind which had been delivered the day before. It was three days later that Broome was bombed and machine-gunned, for the first time, with casualties of about 400 persons and nine B-24s or Flying Fortresses.

The United States Army was also in charge of transit here. Considering the facilities they handled it well, for about 150 military and civilian transients were moved by plane to distant points in the thirty-six hours the writer was in Broome.

At this time it was learned that one of two B.O.A.C. planes which had followed the writer's from Tjilatjap had failed to arrive. It is believed now that Commander Murphy, former U. S. Naval Observer at Sandakan, was aboard. He is the only Far Eastern Naval Observer who was lost in all these movements.

After waiting till late in the afternoon for a plane bound in the direction of Perth the writer and his companions were told that none would leave before the next day. They accordingly went back to town to get something to eat and wash off the red mud compounded of perspiration and dust. Broome has no rain nine months in the year; the hotel could therefore offer only a shower of very stagnant water from a sun-heated cistern. Since it was not yet dinner-time the meal consisted of sardine sandwiches, caramels, cheese and fresh lemonade, found in a drygoods store with a soda-fountain.

Perth

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Perth (Contd.)

and a number of Army wounded to Perth in about five hours. R.A.A.F. officers at Ramsay (?) Airdrome, twenty miles from town, welcomed them cordially with cold beer, a car driven by a W.A.A.F. young lady, and other useful assistance. The aviators took quarters at a hotel, while the writer reported to Captain Felix Stump, U.S.N., who had arrived a short while before from Java. Admiral Glassford and the rest of the staff were expected by plane and submarine in a few days.

The immediate problem was to arrange a headquarters for Admiral Glassford's Southwest Pacific Command, which Captain Stump proceeded to do by renting a floor and a half of the largest office building in town and ordering furniture, telephones and a private line to Melbourne installed. The Australians involved in these transactions rendered every possible courtesy and assistance. Dispossessed tenants not only moved out promptly and with good grace, but helped their dispossessors in any way they could to move in; while department stores rushed orders out of hours and telephone officials broke rules. It was made very clear that the United States Navy was welcome in Perth.

Uniforms

Owing to sinkings and sudden departures hardly an American officer or man now had proper clothing. American ships in the area had long been out of stock, and the variety of dress the personnel ashore were obliged to appear in was remarkable to behold besides being unsuited to the cool climate of southern Australia. An important discovery in Perth, therefore, was that of a uniform factory able and willing to copy American uniforms and even to make gold and silver thread emblems and devices from samples. Although much rushed by their own government contracts, this firm most obligingly set about this work, even finding a metal concern to make dies for American buttons. Nevertheless, it is certain that a cargo of uniform equipment of all kinds would be thankfully received by our forces in the Far East and would add to their comfort, appearance and self-respect.

Orders Home

The concentration in Perth and Fremantle of officers previously scattered through many Far Eastern ports produced a plethora for the staff jobs now available. On March 6, after a week in Perth, the writer was ordered to return to the United States for reassignment. He caught the transcontinental train that afternoon with Commander Slawson, formerly Naval Observer in Batavia, and Lieutenant Belleman from Singapore, both of whom had been ordered to report to Melbourne.

Track Gauges

The only interesting feature of the train journey east, which lay across an endless expanse of bare, dry plain or desert, was the discovery that no less than four changes of track-gauge occur at state lines between Perth and Melbourne. This seriously complicates

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Track Gauges (Contd.)

movements of war materials across Australia, since they must be loaded and unloaded at each shift in gauge.

U.S.S. MOUNT VERNON

It was learned that U.S.S. MOUNT VERNON, prior to returning to the United States, was disembarking 5000 Australian troops from the Near East in Adelaide. The writer joined her there, accordingly, on March 10, and after an uneventful voyage via New Zealand reached San Francisco on March 31. About 170 officers were brought home on this trip, the majority aviators or survivors from sunk ships. The erstwhile commanding officers of U.S.S. PECOS and LANGLEY were aboard, as well as Mrs. Sayre, wife of the High Commissioner to the Philippines, with a party of civilians from Corregidor.

VII. SUMMARY

A brief statement of the general impression brought away from these crowded events seems the best way to summarize such variety. The impression is that the United States must rely on itself alone to win the Pacific War and, after it, the Peace. Its efforts will be abetted no doubt, by the British, Dutch, Chinese, and, possibly, the Russians; but only so far as the primary interests of these powers dictate.

The writer believes that the British, Colonials and Military alike, are more concerned to prevent post-war dislocation of their commerce than to help win current battles; and that they will extricate themselves by political maneuvers applied to their friends as much as by military ones against their foes. This is demonstrated by their refusal at first to admit useful numbers of Chinese troops into Burma, which British officers explained to the writer was caused by fear that the Chinese might be hard to dislodge commercially after the war. Yet simultaneously they were allowing the Burmese Government to collect duty on lend-lease goods for China from the United States. There is no mention among the British of their debts to the United States, but they take it for granted that all their possessions and prerequisites will be returned intact when the war is over. In short, they will accept military aid in their politico-economic warfare, but only at their own price. It would be naive of the United States to overlook the post-war implications of this attitude.

The Dutch will also expect return of their colonies, but they will fight whole-heartedly for them. To the Java Dutch, the Netherlands East Indies are home rather than a commercial venture, and they are alive to the necessity of using force to expel the Japanese. They have fought hard and efficiently so far; whether they will continue to do so once they have the islands back will doubtless depend on their confidence in the determination of the United States to settle the Japanese menace for good.

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To the Australians a solid understanding with the United States on the future of the whole Pacific area is the issue. Their relationship henceforward with the British Empire seems to concern them far less than the possibility of such an understanding, and encouragement in that direction from this country should do much to enlist their thoroughgoing support.

/s/ J. S. MOSHER,
Lieutenant Commander, U.S.N.R.

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A163/A9
(SW Pacific)

REPORT OF THE NAVAL OPERATIONS OF THE MEN-OF-WAR BELONGING
TO THE STRIKING FORCES IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC DURING
THE LAST WEEK OF FEBRUARY AND THE FIRST DAYS OF MARCH
1942 COMPILED FROM THE DATA RECEIVED UNTIL MARCH 3,
1942

1. The strong concentration of Japanese men-of-war and transports since the middle of February in the Macassar-Kendari area raised the surmise that from this area, an attack on East Java could be expected. (Afterwards it appeared that its destination was Timor and Bali.) After the occupation of Palembang, reconnaissance in the South China Sea showed that a strong cruiser squadron was concentrating in the Anambas Islands. We estimated that this unit would form the covering force for a landing fleet coming from Indo China and bound for West Java.

2. Gradually, there has been formed a Western Striking Force (W.S.F.) based on Tandjong Priok, and an Eastern Striking Force (E.S.F.) based on Sourabaya. The W.S.F. was expected to consist of the British cruisers Hobart, Exeter, Perth, of some cruisers of the D Class and of the British destroyers Electra, Jupiter, Encounter, Scout and Tenedos.

The E.S.F. should be formed out of American and Netherland units, viz: deRuyter, Java, Tromp, Houston and Phenix, besides 5 American destroyers and Netherland destroyers Witte de With (WdW), Kartenaer (Ktr), Piel Hein (Phn), and Banckert (Bkt.)

Houston joined the E.S.F. on February 25, (doing convoy duties before in the Koepang-Darwin area), while Phenix never reached the Java Sea).

3. On February 19th, the enemy landed at the east coast of Bali; during the night of February 19th and 20th, the E.S.F. (without Houston) attacked the Japanese Forces in Straat

Lombok. During the following night's action, Tromp was badly damaged and Piet Hein was sunk. One enemy cruiser blew up, after being hit by torpedoes, while another Japanese cruiser and a destroyer were severely hit by torpedo and gun fire.

4. On the following day, Manokert got a direct hit during an air attack and was badly damaged so that she could take no further part in the operations.

5. On February 25th, the ESF. was composed of the cruisers Ktr., Jva, Houston, 5 U.S.A. destroyers and 2 Netherlands destroyers (WAW, Ktr). This day, General MacArthur reported, that on February 20th a strong Japanese concentration of about 100 ships was seen near Yolo (Sulu Islands). From this intelligence, we concluded that the main Japanese attack could be expected through Strait Macassar. Scouting planes in the South China Sea did not report any enemy action.

Air reconnaissance in Strait Macassar on February 25th reported a strong transport fleet of about 80 ships going South. The exact number was not revealed, since the reporting plane was attacked and lost.

6. In consequence of this report, the Exeter, Perth, Electra, Jupiter and Encounter were ordered to join the ESF. They arrived at Sourabaya February 26th.

7. Hobart and 2 cruisers of the D Class stayed in Western Java Sea because of a possible surprise attack from Strait Banka; a transport fleet being assembled in the area Palembang-Muntok.

8. Air reconnaissance in the Java Sea reported, February 26th, an enemy transport fleet of about 30 ships near Arends Islands, course 240, speed 10 knots. The Commanding Officer, ESF., was ordered to attack during night 26-27 of February. ESF. left Sourabaya February 26th at 1800, made a sweep along the North coast of Madura as far as Strait Sapoedi and returned on February 27th with Western course up to Mandalika, without seeing the enemy. It is not known why the C.O. made this sweep instead of heading straight for the enemy.

Presumably, he expected the landing during the night of February 26-27 on the North coast of Madura and near Rembang, and feared to miss the enemy fleet by pushing to the Northeast.

9. On February 26th, RAF planes reported a transport fleet of about 20 ships covered by cruisers and destroyers near the Southeast coast of Sumatra about 100 miles north of Batavia, course 345, low speed. During the night 26-27 February, the remaining part of the WSF. made a sweep from Batavia to Strait Banka without seeing the enemy. It put into Tandjong Priok during forenoon of the 27th of February. Since air reconnaissance that day did not report any enemy ships, Hobart, Danae, Dragon and destroyers Scout and Tenedos, after refueling were sent to Tjilatjap. Daily air raids on Tandjong Priok and dwindling fuelstock compelled this decision.

10. On February 27th, a strong air reconnaissance reported three divisions of transports accompanied by covering forces on their way to East Java from the area Bawean-Arends Islands.

(a) A group of about 20 transports covered by destroyers

- (b) A group about 25 transports covered by 5 cruisers and destroyers
- (c) A group about 35 ships of different types to the West of group B
- (d) One cruiser and two destroyers at about 10 miles distance from group A course 225

The columns (a) (b) (c) were heading South.

11. For a just understanding of the general situation, it is necessary to state that intelligence reports on the 26th of February showed 14 Japanese cruisers, among ^{them} several heavy cruisers, in the area Eastern Java Sea, Kangean, Bali; afterwards, it appeared that at least four more Japanese cruisers were en route to West Java.

12. The ESF., after its sweep along the Java coast, being on the point to enter Sourabaya, was informed of the enemy position and received the order to attack. The column, in line ahead, was formed by deRuyter (Flag) Exeter, Houston, Perth and Java. C. O. ESF. (Rear Admiral Doorman) ordered the British and Netherland destroyers to form a screen in front of the cruisers. Since the Dutch destroyers, at the moment they received this order, were already between the mine fields, these vessels did not succeed reaching their posts in the screen. The U.S.A. destroyer division in line ahead, formed the rear. The course was 310°, speed 24 knots, which was gradually increased. The enemy was sighted at 16.10 (Java time) bearing Northwest on West course. Our ships shifted on a parallel course and opened fire at 16.15. The reports with regard to the strength of the enemy are uncertain. Perth reported two cruisers of the Sendai Class followed by two Machi cruisers and 13 destroyers. Jupiter mentioned two battleships, four or seven cruisers and several destroyers.

A Boeing flying fortress reported the enemy force at 5 cruisers and 12 destroyers. Most likely the ESP. was fighting a Japanese force of two heavy cruisers, three light cruisers and 13 destroyers, in two groups of 5 and 8 vessels.

Fire was opened at a distance of 30,000 yards, the range decreasing after some time to 25,000 yards. All the ships fired vividly. Houston is specially mentioned for her rapid fire at the rate of 5 and 6 salvos a minute; deRuyter was also reported to have been firing rapidly.

16. The Allied destroyers could not observe with certainty the effect of our gunfire because the Japanese shortly after the beginning of the battle laid a heavy smoke screen.

Several very high smoke columns were seen, the bearing of which did not alter, and which differed very much from any smoke screen. Probably these high columns were from Japanese ships hit by gun fire and ablaze. One of our planes reported to have seen several fiercely burning enemy ships.

17. The enemy in the beginning concentrated on de Ruyter. Soon they straddled this cruiser and Exeter, without hitting their target. Ruyter observed several salvos of 15 shells. According to Perth, the Japs used R.D.F. for controlling their gun fire at extreme range. Witte de With reported spotter planes, on which she opened fire unsuccessfully.

18. Almost immediately after the opening of the battle, the Japs launched a destroyer attack which was beaten off by the cruisers and the British and Dutch destroyers. Perth damaged a destroyer; Kortenaer got 3 hits on another destroyer. Eye-witnesses of Dutch destroyers suppose to have seen Jap submarine

attacks. Various explosions have been observed, as from torpedoes exploding at the end of their range.

19. At about 17.00, Ruyter turned sharply to starboard in order to decrease the range. At this moment, the second Jap destroyer flotilla launched an attack. While the Allied cruisers manoeuvred to avoid the torpedoes, Exeter was hit in a boilerroom by a 8" shell. She, being second ship in the line, turned to port followed by Houston, Perth and Java. Since Ruyter continued the initial course, the formation became temporarily confused.

20. The Dutch destroyers Witte de With and Kortenaer originally continued their course. As they almost reached a position between Java and the enemy, they also turned to port. During this turn, Kortenaer was hit by a torpedo on the S.B. beam. Whether this torpedo was fired by a submarine or by the attacking destroyers remains uncertain. The destroyer sunk in a few minutes; only that part of the crew on deck being able to reach drifting rafts.

21. The American destroyers then laid a smoke screen while the British destroyers were ordered to launch a counter attack. After this attack, they turned away from the enemy, also raising a smoke screen.

Little is known about this engagement. Jupiter signalled that she saw only two Jap ships, on which she opened fire. Electra sank in this action. The U.S.A. destroyers most probably joined in the operation, since they appeared to have fired all their torpedoes.

22. During this interval in the battle, Exeter, whose speed was reduced to 16 knots, left the battle line and proceeded

to Surabaya, accompanied by Witte de With. At this moment, she discovered a Jap destroyer breaking through the smokescreen and trying to attack the damaged Exeter. WdW immediately engaged the enemy ship, hitting it at least twice with her 5 inch guns; whereupon the Jap turned away. WdeW received no hits, but was damaged by the explosion of a depth charge, which was swept overboard.

23. As soon as the four Allied cruisers had reformed the line of battle and had come clear of the smoke screens, they opened fire at a range of 21,000 yards. Half an hour later about 18.10, the enemy turned to the Northeast covered by smoke. It was observed that a heavy Jap cruiser was hit near the stern burning fiercely. A U.S.A. army plane reported that this cruiser succeeded in extinguishing the fire and rejoining the Jap column. The same plane scouted three Jap destroyers lying ablaze and motionless.

24. The retreat of the Japs was reported by Rear-Admiral Doorman; in the same communique, he asked for the dislocation of the transport fleet. He was informed that according to latest intelligence, the transports in various groups were between Bawean and Arends Islands. At 18.12 in the twilight, the ESF. shifted to a N.E. course, endeavoring to intercept the transport fleet. On this course at 19.27, ESF. sighted in bearing N.W. 4 Japanese warships proceeding at high speed. Fire was opened at a range of 9000 yards. Results of this short engagement are unknown. The Allied vessels were not hit. In order to shake off the enemy, the ESF. turned South heading to the Tandjong Awar Awar on the North coast of Java, one of the probable landing points. Near to the 10 fathom line, it shifted to the West. A half hour after this turn, at about 21.30.

Jupiter was damaged by a heavy explosion; it looks as if she had run into one of our own protecting minefields. Jupiter was beached in sinking condition. Since the U.S.A. destroyers had been sent away to Sourabaya for refueling, the Encounter was the only destroyer accompanying the cruiser force.

25. After the loss of Jupiter, EST. turned North once more trying to push at the enemy transport fleet. During this night operation, the squadron was shadowed by Japanese planes regularly dropping parachute flares. On this Northern course, at 23.00, the ships passed very near to the survivors of the lost Kortenaer. One of the ships launched a large illuminated rescue raft. The men were picked up by Encounter and landed at the Naval Base.

26. Since the position of Kortenaer at the moment she was torpedoed can be plotted with certainty, and so consequently the approximate position of the rafts, it is clear that the last part of the struggle took place at least 30 miles from the Java coast in an area where no mines had been laid.

27. At 23.30 approximately, on 6° S 112 E, EST. sighted on the starboard beam at about 5000 yards two Japanese cruisers. Fire was opened at once, to which the Japs replied. deRuyter was hit by a shell and turned 8 points to starboard, probably to evade torpedo tracks. Directly afterwards, heavy explosions took place on deRuyter and Java; both ships went down. Most probably, the EST. ran into a barrier of submarines.

According to unconfirmed rumors, 60 - 80 survivors, amongst whom Rear Admiral Doorman, would have reached Surabaya. The hospital ship "Opten Koort" immediately sailed from Sourabaya, but was seized by the Japs.

28. The fate of Rtr and Jva became known in Headquarters, February 28th at 0050, reported by Perth and Houston, which ships, after the loss of both Netherland cruisers, proceeded at high speed to Tandjong Priok. They arrived in the forenoon for refuelling.

29. The position of the ESF at noon of February 28th was: (a) At Sourabaya - Exeter, Witte de With, with a damaged propellor shaft (explosion depth charges) and 5 USA destroyers four of which had taken part in the battle of the previous day. (b) At Tandjong Priok - Houston, Perth, and the Netherland destroyer Evertsen, just put into port after convoy duties.

30. The WBF cruisers, Hobart, Dragon, Danae - destroyers Scout and Tenedos, left Tandjong Priok in the morning February 28. This squadron, originally bound for Tjilatjap, was ordered to proceed to Colombo.

31. Dwindling oil stocks at Tjilatjap combined with strong Japanese forces South of this harbor (two battle cruisers, two light cruisers and tankers) made it inexpedient further to operate from this base.

The separated parts of the ESF at Priok and Sourabaya were difficult to concentrate under existing circumstances.

32. In a conference with Vice Admiral Glassford, U.S.N. and Vice Admiral Palisser, R.N. and in concert with the Governor General, it was concluded to disband the Allied Command, whereafter these flag officers got the full control over their ships.

33. Since the enemy commanded the Java Sea and had an overwhelming superiority in the air, the various Allied commanding officers had to make serious decisions, whether to break through the enemy forces to the Indian Ocean, or to

Australian waters. The clear, full-moon nights made these decisions even more difficult.

34. Houston and Perth left Tandjong Priok after dark, making an effort to reach the ocean through Soendastraat. Destroyer Evertsen was ordered to go with Houston. By unknown reasons, Evn did not join this cruiser, but tried to reach the Indian Ocean on her own. During the night, she met with two Japanese cruisers. In the following engagement, Evn got several hits and was beached, sinking on the coast of the island Seboekoe in Soendastraat. Houston and Perth reported at 23.30 that they engaged strong enemy forces near the St. Nicolspoint. After this, no more was heard of these ships. According to Japanese reports, Houston and Perth sank at least one big transport and damaged another.

35. The above-mentioned Japanese naval forces belonged to the squadron covering the transport fleet, reported during the afternoon of February 28 proceeding to Soendastraat and to ~~Indra-~~^{Indra-}~~ma Joe.~~^{majo.} The Japs landed their troops during the night of Feb. 28th and Mar. 1st on both points on the North coast of Java.

Most probably, this fleet is the same as reported by the RAF on February 26th, on the S. E. coast of Sumatra (ad 9)

Reconnaissance planes haven't reported it on the 27th; it may have sheltered during this period amongst the Zutphen Islands (North of Soendastraat). Not sooner than in the afternoon, February 28th, scouter planes reported three Jap cruisers North of Indram and several cruisers and destroyers in Soendastraat.

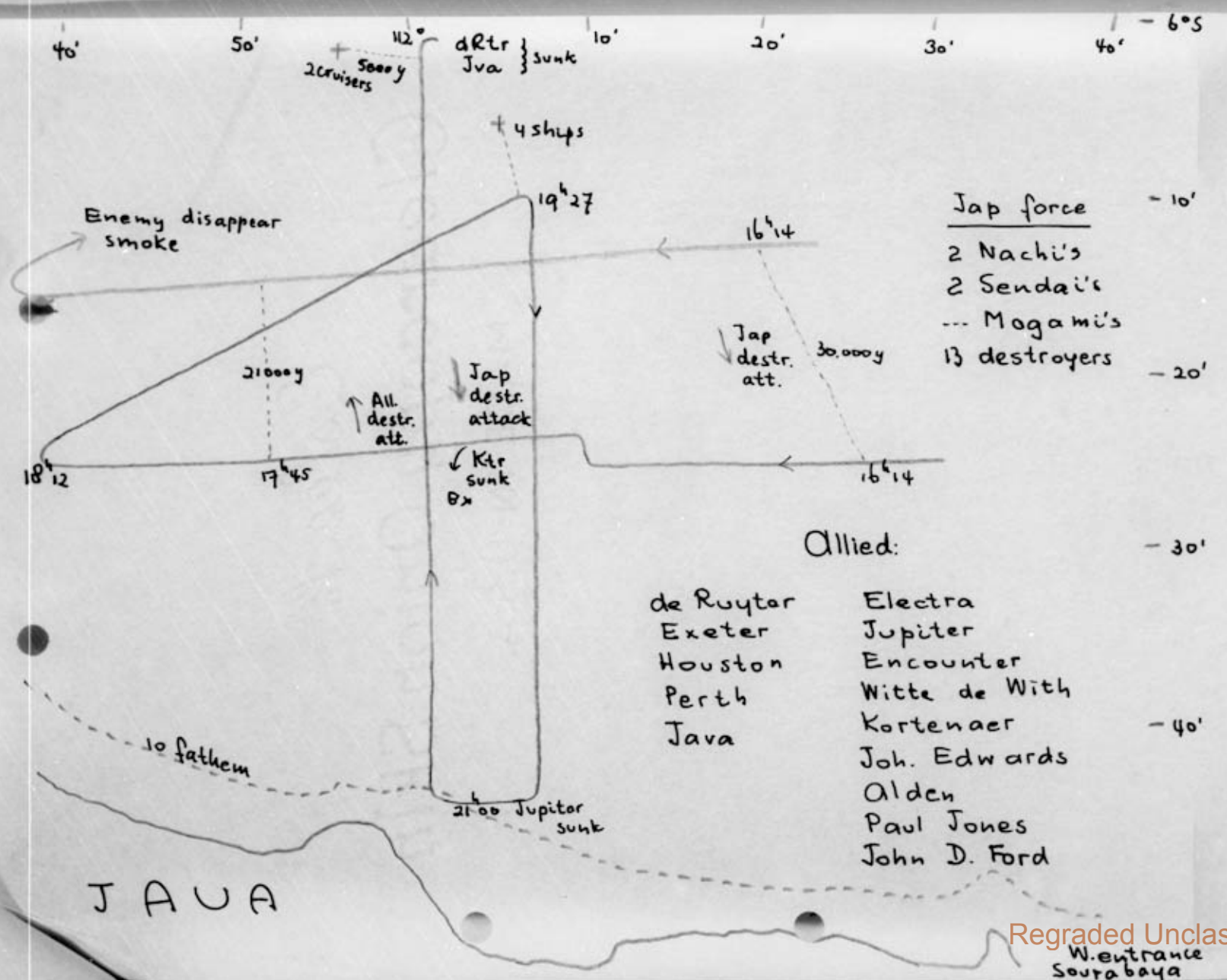
36. Exeter at Sourabaya was ordered to leave in the evening of February 28, with U. S. destroyer Pope and British Encounter, to proceed East of Bawean and along the South coast of Borneo on a Western course, trying to escape during night to the Indian Ocean.

On the forenoon of the first of March, these ships were attacked by 3 Japanese cruisers. As no more was heard about these ships, probably, they were sunk. Japanese broadcast claimed that several of the crew of Pope were made prisoners of war.

37. The remaining four American destroyers at Sourabaya tried and succeeded to reach the Indian Ocean through Bali Strait. In the narrows, they met a group of Japanese destroyers. After a short engagement, the Japs broke off the fight. The American destroyer division reached Australia without further casualties.

38. Witte de With was ordered to join the U.S.A. destroyers, but damage at the propeller shaft was not repaired betimes. The next day during an air raid, she was hit and destroyed in the drydock. Ranchert, severely damaged by air attacks on February 24th was scuttled by her own crew on March 1st, because it was impossible to bring her into a seaworthy condition.

Vice Admiral
C. B. L. Helfrich



DESPATCH
ON
OPERATIONS IN SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC
January 15th—February 25th, 1942
BY
**General Sir Archibald Wavell, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.C.,
A.=D.=C.**

Despatch on Operations in South-West Pacific, January 15th—February 25th, 1942.

1. After the dispersal of the South-West Pacific Command at the end of February 1942, I ordered a narrative of events to be prepared from the records available. The official account of Abdacom which accompanies this despatch was accordingly drawn up. Many papers had to be destroyed when the headquarters left Java, and practically the whole staff became dispersed. The account therefore is incomplete in some respects but gives a general story of the events of the six weeks during which Abdacom existed.

This despatch gives an estimate of the strategical background of the Command and of the aims which it tried to achieve.

2. My first intimation of the decision to establish a United command in the S. W. Pacific and of my selection to take charge of it was contained in a telegram which I received from the Prime Minister on the evening of December 30, 1941. I did not receive my official instructions, which are at Appendix "A" of the Official Account, till January 4th, 1942. I left Delhi by air at 7 A.M. on January 5th to proceed to my new command.

3. Meanwhile I had cabled on January 2nd to the Chiefs of Staff in London asking for a statement of the Allied resources which would be at my disposal. I said in this telegram that it seemed to me that attack on enemy shipping by air and submarine and on enemy air bases by air should be our primary objectives; and that to secure the line of naval and air bases Port Darwin-Timor-Java-Southern Sumatra-Singapore would probably represent the limit possible with the resources likely to be immediately available. I did not consider air bases in Northern Sumatra could be held with the enemy already established in Penang. The Chiefs of Staff replied that they themselves did not know what Allied-resources would be at my disposal and that they assumed that this information would be supplied by the Allied representatives attached to my staff. They agreed generally with my views on the objectives to be aimed at, except that they considered air bases in Northern Sumatra must be held.

4. Two matters regarding the extent of the proposed ABDA area seemed to me to require further consideration—whether or not Burma should be included and where the Eastern boundary should be. I recommended at once that Burma should continue to be under the Commander-in-Chief in India and should not be transferred to ABDA Command. For geographical reasons, the defence of Burma was a vital part of the defence of India, and as C-in-C. in India I had tried for some months before Japan came into war to have it placed in the Indian Command instead of in the Far East Command. Transfer of responsibility for Burma to C-in-C. India had not, however, been made till about one week after entry of Japan into the war. Its re-transfer back to a commander with his headquarters in the Netherland East Indies seemed to me a retrograde step, but I was informed that it was necessary for political reasons, in order to connect Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek with the S. W. Pacific Command.

It was not clear from the original directive whether Port Darwin was included in ABDA area or not. I enquired on January 10th what was intended, and eventually received a decision on January 24th that I should be responsible not only for the defence of Port Darwin but also for such portion of the North-West coast of Australia as was necessary to ensure the successful defence of Port Darwin.

5. I left Delhi by air on January 5th, 1942 and spent the night at Madras. Next day I flew to Colombo and left the same evening by flying-boat for Singapore where I arrived early on January 7th. I had realised from the first that a race against time was involved if the line I had indicated to the Chiefs of Staff (see paragraph 3 above) was to be held; and that much would depend on the capacity of the troops in Malaya to delay the Japanese north of Johore till sufficient reinforcements could arrive. I was anxious to discuss with the Commanders concerned the likelihood of holding the Japanese advance; to see for myself the state of the troops engaged; and to estimate the time factors involved.

At the moment when I landed in Singapore I had in my mind the following provisional time programme. If the Japanese could be delayed north of Johore State till the end of January, the 18th Division should arrive to reinforce the defence. This would, I hoped, enable the Australian Corps, which was to come from Middle East, to be landed at Singapore and to prepare a counter-offensive from Johore. The Indian troops in Malaya could then be withdrawn to reinforce the Dutch East Indies.

6. I visited the Malayan front on January 8, the forward troops being then some 35 miles north of Kuala Lumpur. The Japanese had broken through their position on the Slim river on the previous day, and the two forward brigades were reduced to a handful of very tired men. After seeing the troops and their Commanders down to Brigade Commanders, I came to the conclusion that the 3rd Indian Corps, which had now been fighting and retreating continuously for a month, was of little further fighting value without a rest; and

that it would soon disappear altogether if the present policy of gradual withdrawal was followed, especially since the country south of Kuala Lumpur was not suitable for delaying action. I at once issued orders to General Heath, commanding 3rd Indian Corps, to cover Kuala Lumpur for as long as possible without awaiting full-scale enemy attack, and to impose the maximum delay on the enemy by extensive demolitions. I informed him that I proposed to withdraw the Indian Corps to Johore to rest and re-fit. I then returned to Singapore to make further plans with the Commanders involved.

7. After discussion with Lieutenant-General Percival, G. O. C., Malaya, and with Major-General Gordon-Bennett, commanding 8th Australian Division in Johore, I laid down on January 9th the following general plan for the defence of Malaya:—

- (a) 3rd Indian Corps, after delaying the enemy north of Kuala Lumpur for as long as possible (I did not think this was likely to be longer than January 11th), to be withdrawn by rail and road into Johore, leaving sufficient mobile rearguards to cover the demolition scheme.
- (b) 8th Australian Division, less one brigade group in Mersing area on Eastern coast, to move forthwith to North Western frontier of Johore and to prepare to fight a decisive battle on the general line Segamat-Mount Ophir-mouth of Muar river. The brigade group in Mersing area to join the remainder of 8th Australian Division as soon as it could be relieved by troops from Singapore Island.
- (c) The 9th Indian Division, to be made up from the freshest troops of 3rd Indian Corps and 45th Indian Infantry Brigade (which had lately arrived in Malaya from India, and was now in Malacca), to be placed under General Gordon-Bennett for use in the southern portion of the position indicated in (b) above.
- (d) 8th Australian Division as soon as possible to send forward mobile detachments to relieve the rearguards of 3rd Indian Corps and to harass the enemy and delay him by demolitions.
- (e) 3rd Indian Corps on withdrawal to take over responsibility for east and west coasts of Johore south of the road Mersing-Kluang-Batu Pahat, leaving General Gordon-Bennett free to fight the battle in north-west Johore. 3rd Indian Corps was to rest and to re-fit 11th Indian Division and to organise a general reserve from reinforcements as they arrived.

8. This plan had the disadvantage of allowing the enemy practically unopposed passage from Kuala Lumpur to the northern boundary of Johore through the provinces of Negri Sembilan and Malacca; but in view of the state of the 3rd Indian Corps we were in no position to fight for these provinces, which were well roaded and not favourable for delaying action. The concentration of the 8th Australian Division in the north-west of Johore involved taking certain risks on the east coast by replacing the Australian brigade group which had organised the defences in that area by troops with less knowledge of the ground. General Percival was somewhat reluctant to do this, but I instructed him that he must do everything possible to strengthen the western side of Johore which was immediately threatened. I authorised him to withdraw troops from the southern defences of Singapore Island which I did not consider likely to be immediately threatened. The Segamat-Muar river line had certain natural advantages, since the approaches from the enemy's side were limited, and the right flank was protected by an almost impenetrable jungle and the left by the sea. But the troops available were few (8th Australian Division had two brigades only) and the Indian troops available were tired (9th Division) or partially trained (45 Indian Infantry Brigade). The position had been recognised as the best available for defence in the southern portion of the Malayan peninsula and had been reconnoitred, but no defences had been made. I knew that General Gordon-Bennett had studied the theatre and the tactics appropriate to it, and was confident that he would conduct an active defence. I hoped that he might be able to prevent the further advance of the enemy till the arrival of the 18th Division towards the end of January; and that with this reinforcement we might hold the enemy till the arrival of the Australian Corps in February enabled us to deliver a counterstroke.

I hoped that the R. A. F. with the increase in fighter strength which was expected would be able to give forward troops close support and to attack enemy columns; also that naval small craft would be able to prevent enemy landings on the Johore coast. Both these hopes were unfulfilled.

9. I was concerned to find that no defences had been made or even planned in detail on the north side of Singapore Island, although it was obvious by now that we might be driven back into the Island and have to defend it. I ordered these defences to be put in hand at once. I also received from the Cabinet representative in the Far East, the Right Hon'ble Mr. A. Duff-Cooper, who was returning to the United Kingdom, a gloomy account of the efficiency of the Civil Administration and of the lack of co-operation between the civil and military. I discussed this latter question with General Percival and with the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, who promised the fullest co-operation and fulfilment of all military requirements.

10. On January 10th I flew from Singapore to Batavia where I met the principal officers who were to be members of the ABDA staff; Lieutenant-General Brett of the U. S.

Air Force who had been appointed Deputy Commander; Admiral Hart of the U. S. Navy, who had been appointed Chief of the Naval Staff; the commanders of the sea, land and air forces of the N. E. I., Vice-Admiral Helfrich, Lieutenant-General Ter Poorten and Major-General Van Oyen; Admiral Palliser of the Royal Navy; and Major-General Brereton of the U. S. Air Force. Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, acting commander of the Eastern Fleet, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, Chief of Staff of the Australian Air Force, were also in Batavia and attended the conferences that were held. Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, who had been appointed my Chief of the Staff, and Major-General Playfair had accompanied me from Singapore.

I held a conference the same afternoon at which the general situation in the S. W. Pacific was outlined and the organisation, location and functioning of ABDA Headquarters was discussed. This general organisation, which was worked out in further detail at a conference on the next day, is given in paragraph 12 of the official account. It was decided to establish the headquarters in an hotel at Lembang, ten miles north of Bandoeng, the military headquarters in Java, as soon as the necessary signal communications could be established.

11. The first strategical discussions at these conferences revealed the paucity of Allied resources to meet the Japanese advance and the urgent need of reinforcements, also that the most pressing decision required was whether we could afford to reinforce forward air bases such as Amboina, Kendari in Celebes, Koepang in Timor, Samarinda in North Borneo, Sabang in North Sumatra, which were obviously of great importance and had only weak garrisons unable to resist a Japanese attack in force. Both American and Dutch representatives urged the vital necessity of holding these forward bases, but I was unable to see how with our very limited resources we could afford to reinforce them, and felt that we must concentrate our effort further back as indicated in my original telegram to the Chiefs of Staff.

12. My instructions were to report when I was in a position to assume command, which meant when the Lembang headquarters could be established. While waiting till the communications in the Lembang headquarters could function, the principal members of the ABDA Command held daily meetings at the Hotel des Indes, Batavia, where the majority were living. On January 14th I cabled to the Chiefs of Staff in Washington and London that although I was not yet in a position to exercise effective operational control, it was obvious that the sooner I was officially responsible for taking general decisions affecting the whole area the better. Both the American and Dutch representatives agreed. I therefore proposed to assume command from midday G. M. T. on January 15th. This is accordingly the official date for the opening of the ABDA command.

13. On assuming command I sent the following general appreciation of the situation in the S. W. Pacific Area:—

- (a) **Philippines.**—I could see no prospect with the resources available, of sending support to General MacArthur. The recent occupation by the enemy of Tarakan in north Borneo and of Menado in Celebes had increased the difficulty of reaching the Philippines with air forces from the N. E. I., even had sufficient aircraft been available. Admiral Hart had arranged for a submarine to go to Manila loaded to capacity with the types of ammunition of which General MacArthur was running short.
- (b) The position in **Burma** seemed satisfactory at the moment.
- (c) **Malaya.**—Provided convoys arrived safely and up to time and we could prevent fresh Japanese landings on the east coast, I hoped to hold Johore and Singapore and at a later date to stage a counter offensive.
- (d) There was no immediate threat to **Sumatra** and **Java** but reinforcements of troops and anti-aircraft material were urgently required.
- (e) Further Japanese advances in **Borneo** against Balikpapan, Samarinda and possibly Pontianak were probable, also in **Celebes**; the enemy's object being to establish air bases within range of Java.
- (f) Japanese were also likely to take measures to cut the supply route between Australia and N. E. I. by the occupation of **Amboina**, **Timor** and positions farther east to command Torres Straits.

I pointed out the smallness of our resources to meet these dangers, and that we must avoid undue dispersion. Our immediate objectives should be to secure Singapore and to check or hamper Japanese advance in Borneo and eastwards.

Nearly all British and Dutch naval forces were engaged in escorting convoys into Singapore; American surface craft formed a small striking force if suitable targets east of Borneo could be found. The submarines available were being used aggressively against enemy shipping routes. If more cruisers and destroyers could be provided for the striking force there would be a better prospect of dealing the enemy a blow and of preventing him establishing himself between Australia and N. E. I.

All land reinforcements arriving must at present be sent to Singapore, but air bases in south Sumatra and Java itself must be reinforced as soon as possible.

Main air objectives must be to establish an effective reconnaissance system to watch and report movements of enemy shipping; to attack enemy shipping when located; to attack enemy air bases; and in Malaya to co-operate with land forces and to attack enemy columns.

14. I had made another visit to Malaya on January 13, when I flew to Singapore and motored up to Segamat on the north-west frontier of Johore to meet General Heath, commanding 3rd Indian Corps, and Major-General Gordon-Bennett, commanding 8th Australian Division, to whom I had entrusted the defence of Johore.

I found that the plan I had laid down at my visit four days before (see paragraph 7) was being put into execution; but that the 9th and 11th Indian divisions had suffered further losses in fighting north of Kuala Lumpur, and that the enemy's advance had been more rapid than I had hoped. I felt confident that General Gordon-Bennett and his Australians would handle the enemy roughly, but I cabled to the Chiefs of Staff that the battle for Singapore would be "a close run thing".

15. ABDA headquarters was established at the Grand Hotel, Lembang, on January 18th. I consider that to have organised such a headquarters from representatives of four different nationalities, at a place to which many of them had to travel several thousand miles, and to have got it established on a working basis, within a fortnight of the instructions having been sent out from London and Washington, was a remarkable piece of staff work on the part of General Pownall and all concerned. It was only made possible by the wholehearted way in which the Dutch authorities in the N. E. I. placed all resources at our disposal and did all in their power to assist. I should like to place on record here that during its unfortunately too short existence on Dutch soil nothing was left undone by the civil and military authorities in Java that could contribute to the efficiency and good working of my headquarters and to the comfort of the personnel. I tender to them all my grateful thanks and wish them a happy issue from their present troubles.

I should like also to state at once my appreciation of the loyal co-operation of all my colleagues on this international headquarters. There was in all grades of the staff a spirit of friendliness and willingness without which this international body, hurriedly brought together, would never have worked. There was fortunately no language difficulty as all the Dutch spoke English fluently.

The methods by which ABDA staff worked are described in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the attached report. I think they were on the whole as good as could have been devised in the short time available; but improvements especially in the matter of rapid and efficient signal communications were being made all the time, and had by no means reached finality when the headquarters was dispersed. I should like to mention the services of Captain J. P. L. Reid, R. N., for his untiring work to improve the communications of the headquarters.

16. My efforts for the first four weeks of my command in the South West Pacific, i.e. up to about the middle of February, were all directed towards the objects I had laid down in my original telegram to the Chiefs of Staff in London when I first received the appointment, i.e. to maintain a line of bases by Port Darwin-Timor-Java-Southern Sumatra-Singapore, on which to build up, above all, an air force capable of securing local air superiority and thereby checking the Japanese advance southwards. I considered the naval and land efforts subordinate, for the time being, to the need for a really strong air force. A review I sent to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on January 24th, one week after Abdacom was established, is attached as Appendix "A". It proved unfortunately to be over-optimistic.

17. The air forces in sight constituted on paper a formidable force. The United States authorities had placed under orders for the ABDA command, according to information given me by General Brett, well over 1,000 aircraft to arrive within the next two or three months. The British contribution was on a more modest scale but was quite a considerable reinforcement. If all the aircraft promised to ABDA command had arrived safely and up to time; and had we succeeded in establishing sufficient well protected aerodromes to receive them and in providing the ground organization to service them, all would have been well. I have always maintained, and still do so, that the Japanese air force is comparatively weak and can be overcome whenever the Allies manage to concentrate a sufficient air force under favourable conditions.

In the ABDA command we had never time to assemble sufficient force or to create favourable conditions for them to operate. Only a small proportion of the aircraft promised ever set out for the N. E. I. and of those which set out a considerable proportion, possibly as high as 40 to 50 per cent, failed to arrive. The distances by sea from the sources of supply, Great Britain and U. S. A., were so great that few aeroplanes arrived by ship before the evacuation. The air routes, from Australia on the east or by Africa, India and Burma on the west, were so long and hazardous that wastage was extremely high. The Australian

Government too succeeded in getting a number of U. S. A. aircraft, intended for ABDA, diverted to the defence of Australia.

Even had all the aircraft arrived, we should have had considerable difficulty in finding sufficient aerodrome accommodation and ground organisation. The aerodromes in southern Sumatra and Java were limited and required considerable development; there was little or no material available for an adequate warning system; and there were very few anti-aircraft guns for aerodrome protection.

The R. A. F. had sufficient ground personnel available but they were in Singapore; and it took some time, when it became obvious that it would be necessary to remove the air force from Singapore, to reorganise in Sumatra and Java; in fact the Japanese attack on the aerodromes in southern Sumatra took place while reorganisation was incomplete. Also much vital equipment was lost at sea between Malaya and Sumatra.

The U. S. Air Force never had complete ground crews and their aircraft worked under a considerable handicap accordingly. The Dutch Air Force had been much reduced in numbers by the gallant efforts they had already made in the defence of Singapore and Malaya.

As a result of insufficient and incomplete aerodromes, inadequate protection against enemy attack, and lack of ground personnel and organisation, the wastage of aircraft after arrival in N. E. I. was unduly high.

The result of all the factors set out above was that the Allied air force, instead of increasing in strength and obtaining superiority over the Japanese, wasted with gradually increasing rapidity and was finally completely destroyed.

18. The land troops, on their way or under orders for ABDA Command, were the 44th Indian Infantry Brigade, the 18th British Division, the 7th Armoured Brigade (two regiments) and the Australian Corps of two divisions (6th and 7th), besides certain reinforcements for the troops already in Malaya. The 44th brigade and the 18th division were due in January, the 7th Armoured brigade in February, and the Australian Corps in February and March. I originally proposed to land all these troops in Singapore with the intention of staging a counter-offensive from Johore (see paragraph 5).

The 44th brigade and 18th division landed in Singapore just before the investment of the island and only about a fortnight before its capture by the enemy.

Towards the end of January, it became obvious that we were likely to be driven back into Singapore island and that troops arriving in February could hardly be landed in Singapore. I then proposed to use the first Australian division to arrive to secure the important group of aerodromes in Southern Sumatra, which were only weekly guarded, while the second division and 7th Armoured brigade reinforced the garrison of Java.

Early in February I decided to divert the 7th Armoured brigade to Burma, to reinforce the Burma Army which was being hard pressed; also Burma was a much more favourable theatre for the operation of armoured troops than Java.

Before more than the advance parties of the Australian Corps could arrive, south Sumatra had been captured by the enemy and Java was so closely threatened that it would have been impossible to land any large number of troops. The Australian Corps was diverted to Australia and Ceylon after the Australian Government had refused consent to its being used to reinforce Burma.

A certain number of anti-aircraft units arrived and were disposed of as stated in paragraph 19 (c) of official account.

An American artillery regiment was landed in Java and took part in the defence of the island [see paragraph 19 (d) of attached report].

To sum up, the land reinforcements arrived too late to save the situation either in Malaya or the N. E. I.

19. The difficulties of using the small naval force at my disposal were great. Java itself was 500 miles long and the whole area to be covered approximately 2,000; if the striking force was divided, its parts were too weak to deal with any Japanese force; if it was kept concentrated it was unlikely to be at the vital place at the right time.

Up to the end of January a considerable proportion of the available naval forces were employed in escorting convoys into Singapore and occasionally between Australia and Java. The striking force was therefore small and no air forces were ever available to cover it once it was even a short distance from Java; while to operate anywhere within range of a Japanese air base was to invite heavy and dangerous air attack. Since the enemy never moved his naval forces or convoys outside range of air support, our only hope of action was by a rapid dash in at night and out again; this manoeuvre led to a very successful destroyer attack near Balikpapan on January 23rd, but the enemy never gave us a chance to repeat it.

On February 14th Admiral Hart gave up his post as Chief of Naval Staff through ill-health and was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Helfrich, commander of the Royal N. E. I. Navy.

20. There were at this period five separate Japanese lines of attack with which we had to deal. They were directed against the following objectives so far as we could estimate:—

- Amboina, Timor and possibly Port Darwin.
- Celebes (Kendari and Macassar).
- Borneo (Balikpapan, Bandjermasin, Pontianak).
- Johore and Singapore.
- Burma (Moulmein and Rangoon).

The Japanese advances in the N. E. I. were methodical. They secured a line of air bases; then with aircraft established on these bases they attacked our air forces on the next bases to the south; when they judged that the air strength on these bases was sufficiently reduced, they sent a sea-borne expedition to seize them; and so on. On capturing an aerodrome, they were very quick in repairing any 'destruction' and in establishing air forces and developing an air warning system. So stereotyped were their methods that it became possible to predict with reasonable accuracy the date of the next advance and its objective.

By the time that ABDA headquarters was established the Japanese had already seized Menado in Celebes and Tarakan and Kuching in Borneo. They attacked Balikpapan on January 23rd, Kendari on January 24th, Amboina on January 30th, Macassar on February 9th, Bandjermasin on February 10th. All these were taken by sea-borne attack, except Bandjermasin which was occupied by columns sent overland from Balikpapan. We did our best to check or at least inflict heavy loss on the Japanese expeditions; but air resources were too small. The naval striking force was inferior to the Japanese escort for any of their convoys; and was, as explained, always exposed to enemy air attack without any cover from our own air force. The enemy convoys and landing forces were usually outside the reach of any except the American heavy bombers, which did most effective work but were too few in numbers. The best success was against the Japanese force which attacked Balikpapan, when American and Dutch bombers scored a number of hits on warships and transports; and a night attack by destroyers caused heavy damage to transports.

On January 27 when it was obvious that Timor was threatened, I decided to try and reinforce the garrison of Koepang at the south-west end of the island. The aerodrome here was essential, since short-range aircraft (fighters and light bombers) could not reach Java from Australia without refuelling on the way. The garrison protecting the aerodrome was a small mixed force of Australians and Dutch. I somewhat reluctantly departed from the principle I had laid down that we could not afford to reinforce these small garrisons (see paragraph 11), and asked the Australian Government for permission to move a battalion from Port Darwin to Koepang, while the Americans agreed to send an artillery regiment from Port Darwin. I sent a battery of light A. A. artillery from Java. After some hesitation, natural in view of the weakness of the garrison of Port Darwin, the Australian General Staff agreed, and the reinforcements sailed from Port Darwin on February 15. It soon, however, became obvious that the Japanese were aware of the move and that an attack on Timor was imminent: on February 16 I decided to cancel the reinforcement and issued orders for the return of the ships to Port Darwin. The convoy was heavily attacked from the air but fortunately escaped damage.

21. Meanwhile the situation in Malaya continued to deteriorate. I paid another visit to Singapore on January 20 and discussed the situation with General Percival, General Heath and General Simmons (Fortress commander). My hope of holding the enemy on the Segamat-River Muar line until the whole of the 18th Division could be landed to reinforce the forward troops and until the 11th Indian Division was rested and re-fitted, had been disappointed. The raw and partly trained 45th Indian Infantry Brigade had been unable to stop the enemy from crossing the Muar River and had been cut off east of the river together with two Australian battalions. The 53rd Brigade, the leading brigade of the 18th division had had to be committed to the battle without waiting for the arrival of the remainder of the division and was already heavily engaged. It was obvious that the force would have to fall back to the approximate line Mersing-Kluang-Batu Pahat and that there was every prospect of the force being driven from Johore into Singapore Island. I found that very little had been done in the preparation of defences in the northern part of Singapore Island; and I had already cabled to the Prime Minister on January 19 warning him that the defence of Singapore Island was very far from strong and might not hold out for long if Johore were lost. On January 21 after my visit I again sent a warning on the weakness of Singapore against attack from the north. I instructed General Percival to continue the fight in Johore and to endeavour to hold the enemy on the mainland until further reinforcements arrived; but to make every preparation for the defence of Singapore Island.

The fighting in Johore continued to go badly, and I realised that there was danger that the troops on the mainland would be destroyed before the reinforcements (44th Indian Infantry brigade and remainder of 18th division) could disembark at Singapore and reach

Johore. The Japanese had made a fresh landing on the east coast at Endau. I judged that it would be better to withdraw the force from the mainland into the island and continue the fight there rather than that it should be overwhelmed before the reinforcements landed. On January 27 I cabled to General Percival giving him discretion to withdraw into the island if he considered advisable (Appendix "B"). Next day he telegraphed that he had decided to withdraw on the night January 30/31. I cabled approval and told him he must fight for every foot of the island.

I again flew to Singapore on January 30 with Air Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, who had arrived from England to take over the appointment of Chief of Air Staff ABDA Command and Commander of the Allied Air Forces a few days previously. I visited Johore and saw General Heath and General Gordon-Bennett and discussed plans for the withdrawal. In Singapore I saw General Percival and the Governor, and also the senior naval officer, Rear-Admiral Spooner, the A. O. C., Air Vice Marshal Pulford, and the Garrison Commander, Major-General Simmons; and discussed the defence of Singapore Island.

The withdrawal of the troops from the mainland exposed three out of the four aerodromes on the island to artillery fire. The increased scale of air attack on aerodromes had already necessitated the removal of the bomber squadrons to more secure bases in Sumatra. To leave fighters on the exposed aerodromes in Singapore was to invite their destruction in a few days. We could not afford this; and I gave orders for the withdrawal of the majority of the fighters to Sumatra to protect the air bases there, which with the loss of Malaya became absolutely vital to the defence of the N. E. I. The equivalent of one fighter squadron was kept in Singapore, to be reinforced as occasion served by other fighters from Sumatra. This decision was open to criticism as depriving the land forces at a dangerous time of protection against air attack, but it was inevitable. Crests had shown, and events in Java and Burma were to show later, that it is impossible to maintain a weak air force within close range of a stronger enemy one, and that the sacrifice of aircraft entailed by the attempt brings no real relief to the land forces in the end.

22. Burma represented a most important but somewhat distracting commitment. Operations in Burma had no effect on the defence of Malaya and the N. E. I.—which was my most urgent task—except in so far as reinforcements of land and air troops had to be provided. In Java I was 2,000 miles away from Rangoon, and a visit was not an easy undertaking. Signal communications too were indifferent. I had, as already stated, recommended that Burma should remain under the control of India, and had been overruled. I should have protested more strongly against the decision to include it in the ABDA Command had I thought there was likely to be an immediate Japanese invasion in force. I had miscalculated the extent of Japanese preparations and believed that while engaged in active operations in the Philippines, Malaya and the N. E. I. they would not be able to undertake a serious campaign in Burma; and I hoped that we should have a breathing space to organise the neglected defence forces there before having to meet a heavy scale of attack.

At first the reports I received from Burma seemed to confirm my views, but in the fourth week of January I began to receive disquieting messages from the commanders in Burma. The Japanese had invaded Tenasserim in some force and had gained some easy successes. I flew to Rangoon on January 25 and found the situation improved. I still hoped that we could build up a sufficient force to hold any enemy advance at a distance from Rangoon. The air situation was satisfactory; two large-scale air raids on Rangoon late in December had caused the enemy heavy casualties and had not been repeated.

23. The general situation at the end of January was that while we had inflicted some damage on Japanese convoys and Japanese air forces, especially at Balikpapan, we had failed to stop the southward progress of Japanese expeditions. Amboina had been attacked and taken in the last days of the month; there was still a convoy at Balikpapan which might at any time move south on Macassar or Bandjermasin; a third force was reported in the South China Sea and might be directed on Singapore or Sumatra. Our forces in Malaya had been forced to retreat into Singapore Island. In Burma we had lost Moulmein, and Rangoon was threatened.

To meet the above dangers I had no naval striking force available for the moment, since all cruisers and destroyers not on escort duty were undergoing repair or refit. A convoy containing the 18th Division (less one brigade already arrived) had just reached Singapore. No more land forces were in sight for several weeks. Our air striking force comprised little more than an average of 6 to 8 American heavy bombers. The British light bombers available were fully engaged in the defence of Singapore.

A welcome consignment of 48 Hurricanes, flown off the aircraft carrier "Formidable", reached me at the end of January, but generally speaking air reinforcements arriving were only sufficient to replace wastage, and the Australian Government was exercising considerable pressure for diversion of air reinforcements for ABDA to the defence of Australia.

Altogether the outlook was not good, and I reported that I could do no more than try to defend Singapore Island, air bases in Southern and central Sumatra, the naval base at

Surabaya and the aerodrome at Koeping in Timor which was essential for air reinforcements from Australia (see W4 of January 29, Appendix "C"). I was still hopeful that we might succeed in these objects and that the arrival of the air reinforcements promised might yet turn the scale.

24. Much depended on the ability of the garrison of Singapore Island to make a prolonged resistance. General Percival had the 18th British division practically intact, the 8th Australian division of some four or five brigades of mixed British and Indian infantry, and the equivalent of some four or five brigades of mixed British and Indian infantry, besides local forces. In view of the size of the island (about the equivalent of the Isle of Wight) this force was obviously weak in numbers, but the enemy could not employ large forces, and I considered that an active defence should enable the island to be held for some time, for some months I hoped.

I had instructed General Percival to place the fresh 18th Division on the front most likely to be attacked and the 8th Australian division in the next most dangerous sector, keeping the Indian troops as far as possible in reserve for reinforcement and counter-attack. He estimated that the Japanese were most likely to attack in the north-east of the island and placed the 18th division there. He put the Australians in the north-west.

25. During the early part of February operations proceeded on similar lines. There was little I could do except to continue air attack on Japanese convoys as opportunity offered and the weather permitted—flying conditions at this period of the year are usually difficult—and to hold such naval force as I could collect available to strike at Japanese vessels if a chance occurred. On land no more reinforcements were available for some weeks, and I could do little more than encourage the forces in Singapore and Burma to resist to the utmost.

I visited Burma on February 5 and 6. As a result of this visit I decided to divert to Burma the 7th Armoured Brigade which was on its way from Mideast to the ABDA Command. It had originally been intended to use it in a counter-offensive in Malaya but the withdrawal into Singapore Island precluded this, and General Percival reported that it would be of little value in the defence of Malaya. I then intended to use it for the defence of Java, until we could initiate counter-offensive operations. Java was, however, unsuitable for armoured operations, and my visit to the Salween river front in Burma showed me that the possibilities for the use of armoured troops in that area were considerably greater. I was also impressed with the necessity to reinforce the defence of Lower Burma.

It was fortunate that I made this diversion. The brigade would have arrived in Java only just before the Japanese invasion and could have contributed little to the resistance on the island, whereas in Burma it played an invaluable role from the latter part of February up to the withdrawal into India three months later.

The air situation in Burma remained satisfactory and our air forces continued to inflict severe losses on the enemy. I took with me to Rangoon an American Air Staff officer to go into the question of operating part of the American heavy bomber force from Burma and China against Japanese bases in Thailand, Malaya and Indo-China. For various reasons this proposal was never put into operation.

26. We had a series of misfortunes in the first week of February. Our naval striking force was heavily attacked by enemy bombers and two American cruisers, Marblehead and Houston, were seriously damaged; we lost 16 badly-needed A. A. guns by the sinking of a ship in the Banka Strait, while a train accident in Java caused the death of some very valuable A. A. personnel; and we suffered heavy air losses by enemy attacks on Malang and Surabaya aerodromes and on Bali aerodrome when a flight of much needed American fighters from Australia were refuelling there.

The combination of the above losses had undoubtedly a serious effect on our ability to resist the various Japanese advances.

27. On February 10 I once more visited Singapore and saw all senior commanders on the island and the Governor. The Japanese had effected a landing during the night February 8/9, and were making rapid progress in the west of the island with their usual infiltration tactics. I ordered General Percival to stage a counter-attack with all troops possible, but I left Singapore on the morning of February 11 without much confidence in any prolonged resistance. My fears were justified and Singapore was surrendered to the enemy on February 15.

28. With the fall of Singapore, Southern Sumatra came into the front line as the last outpost of Java to the west. I had always recognised the importance of Southern Sumatra and the necessity to build up a strong defence in it, but the resources had not been available so long as we concentrated on trying to hold Singapore. Two days before the surrender of Singapore I telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff pointing out the danger in which Southern Sumatra stood and the seriousness of the situation (see CCOS 7 of 13th February 1942, Appendix "D").

I had done what little was possible to strengthen the garrison of Southern Sumatra. General Ter Poorten had at my request moved two battalions from Java into Sumatra at the beginning of February; and I had ordered 16 Heavy and 16 Light A. A. guns from Singapore to protect the aerodromes at Palembang. Unfortunately several of the ships with guns and ammunition were sunk or damaged by enemy action and very little A. A. equipment had reached Sumatra before the Japanese attack. The equivalent of 3 Light Bomber Squadrons and 3 Fighter Squadrons had been withdrawn to the two aerodromes in the neighbourhood of Palembang, from where they could give support to the defence of Singapore and also cover the approaches to West Java in the Karimata Strait.

An enemy convoy of transports and warships was sighted at the Anambas Islands, north-east of Singapore, early in February. At first this was thought to indicate a possible attack on Singapore from seaward, but we soon decided that its probable objective was Southern Sumatra and that it was only waiting till the landward attack on Singapore Island had made sufficient progress. I ordered the assembly at the western end of Java of such naval striking forces as were available, with the intention of attacking the convoy from the Anambas Islands as soon as it made a move. Owing to delays in refuelling and the distances involved our naval force was not ready for action till February 14.

At dawn on the 13th February the enemy convoy moved south from the Anambas; early on the 14th some 700 Japanese parachutists were dropped on and near Palembang aerodrome and the oil refineries. At the same time a heavy air attack by both Bombers and low-flying Fighters, took place on Palembang I aerodrome, and caused numerous casualties to the Fighter Squadrons located there for whom organized dispersal and camouflage arrangements were not available. Confused fighting followed and many parachutists were accounted for; but meanwhile the enemy seaborne expedition had reached Sumatra and on the morning of the 15th a force of about one division was advancing on Palembang by all possible river approaches.

Our naval force went through the Gaspar Strait between Banka and Billiton Islands on the night of the 14th/15th but was too late to intercept the convoy. During the whole of the 15th it was unable to accomplish anything and was subjected to heavy bombing attacks, fortunately without effect; but one Dutch destroyer was lost by striking a reef.

All available aircraft, British, Dutch and American, were directed against the Japanese convoy, which had established itself near the north end of Banka Strait, and against the landing craft and small vessels despatched up the rivers from the convoy. Very heavy casualties were undoubtedly inflicted on the enemy by these attacks, but our numbers were insufficient to stop the advance altogether. By February 15 it became obvious that there was little hope of holding Southern Sumatra.

29. I was on this date holding a conference at my headquarters with the Governor-General of the N. E. I., Admiral Helfrich and General Ter Poorten on the situation caused by the fall of Singapore and the enemy attack on Sumatra. It was decided to divert to Java two ships which had just arrived at Oosthaven in Southern Sumatra. They contained one squadron 3rd Hussars with light tanks, and the advance parties of the Australian Corps, including one Pioneer battalion (without its equipment) and one Machine Gun battalion (without machine guns). These could not be unloaded in time for any useful action in Sumatra but could assist in the defence of Java. I felt, however, bound to warn the Governor-General N. E. I. that in the circumstances the Australian Government might be reluctant to allow their troops to land in Java. I attach as Appendix "E" the telegram I sent after this conference.

Next day, February 16, after further consideration of the situation and discussion with General Brett and Air-Marshal Peirse, I sent to the Chiefs of Staff a full appreciation of the problem of the defence of Java. This telegram is given in Appendix "F". The conclusions I reached were that Japanese invasion of Java seemed likely to begin before the end of February. I could hold out little hope of preventing landings or of repulsing the invaders with the naval, land and air forces at my disposal or likely to be so in the immediate future. The question therefore arose of what further Allied resources should be put into the defence of Java, the urgent problem being the destination of the Australian Corps. I considered that the security of Burma and Australia were the most vital requirements in the war against Japan and that efforts should not be made to reinforce Java which might compromise the defence of Burma or Australia. I recommended therefore that the risk of attempting to land the Australian Corps in Java was unjustifiable, since the leading division could not be completely landed and operative before March 21 in most favourable circumstances and the whole Corps not before the middle of April; and that at least one division, and if possible the whole Corps, should be directed to Burma. I also recommended that immediate steps should be taken to build up a heavy bomber force in Burma.

30. On February 18th after further discussion with my commanders I again warned Chiefs of Staff that I regarded a successful defence of Java as extremely doubtful and I repeated my recommendations for the diversion of the Australian Corps to Burma and the establishment of a heavy bomber force in Burma (see Appendix "G").

On this same day I received a telegram proposing the re-transfer to control of India of the Burma Command. I replied that I had always been of the opinion that Burma should be part of the India Command. On February 21st Burma was accordingly again transferred to the control of Commander-in-Chief India and ceased—for a very short time as it turned out—to be my responsibility.

31. Meanwhile we had received information that seemed to indicate a Japanese attack on the island of Bali just east of Java. I again transferred our small naval striking force from west to east of Java in the hope of intercepting the enemy convoy and escort.

The landing at Bali took place during the night February 18th/19th at the southern end of the island, to seize the aerodrome. On the following night a cruiser and destroyer action took place in the Lombok Strait in which we lost two destroyers and had one Dutch cruiser damaged, but probably sunk at least one enemy destroyer and damaged several cruisers or destroyers. We also inflicted by air attack considerable losses both on enemy vessels and on enemy aircraft using Bali aerodrome.

With aerodromes in southern Sumatra on the west and Bali on the east in the hands of a greatly superior enemy air force, as well as his aerodromes in Borneo and Celebes, it was obvious that our air forces, which were now out of reinforcement by air, would soon be overwhelmed, and that once they had been the enemy could land almost anywhere on Java with little hindrance. On February 19th I warned the Chiefs of Staff that our fighter force would not remain effective for more than two weeks longer.

Two days later I had to reduce this estimate to one week, a forecast which proved correct.

32. On February 21st I received the decision of the Combined Chiefs of Staff that Java should be defended to the last by all combatant troops then in the island and giving me latitude to order forward any naval or air reinforcements already allotted to N. E. I.; but informing me that land reinforcements were being diverted elsewhere. I was instructed to withdraw ABDA headquarters from Java.

I replied that I considered ABDA headquarters should not be withdrawn elsewhere but should be dissolved; after discussion with the Governor-General of the N. E. I. I recommended that the command of the sea, land and air forces in the N. E. I. should be taken over at once by the Dutch commanders (see Appendix "H").

My views were accepted and my command of the South-West Pacific Area ended at noon February 25th just six weeks after I had assumed it.

33. My instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, that all troops in Java capable of taking part in its defence were to remain resulted in the following Allied troops being left to resist the Japanese invasion alongside the Dutch forces:—

- (a) About 5,500 British troops, mainly anti-aircraft and administrative units, but including one squadron 3rd Hussars.
- (b) About 6,000 R. A. F., mainly unarmed and without aircraft all of which had been expended by February 25th.
- (c) About 3,000 Australians (men of Machine Gun battalion and Pioneer battalion who had been landed to protect aerodromes) together with some administrative troops.

To assist the Dutch to continue resistance the most pressing need was fighter aircraft and I gave orders that the U. S. ship "Langley" should proceed as fast as possible to unload some P. 40 planes in Java. She was unfortunately sunk by air attack while approaching the island. This destroyed the last chance of prolonging fighter resistance to the Japanese air force.

SUMMARY.

34. The main reason of our failure in the South-West Pacific is obvious, our enemies moved too quickly on a simple effective plan and never gave us time to collect the forces necessary to remedy our initial weakness and to make headway against them. It was more than anything else an air battle and success depended almost entirely on local superiority in the air. Without this our naval forces even if they had been stronger could have accomplished little, as the danger of operating warships within range of shore based aircraft without fighter cover was shown on several occasions during the short campaign.

The effect of enemy air superiority on the land operations has been exaggerated, the material damage done and the casualties caused were comparatively small, but the moral effect was great.

The Japanese air operations were well planned to make the best use of their local superiority to cover the forward moves of their naval and land forces and to prevent our air forces establishing themselves and disputing the mastery of the air. Their air squadrons were effectively handled and their machines were of types which had obviously been carefully designed with a view to these operations. In particular the Japanese long-range fighter, with a radius of action up to 700 miles, gave them an outstanding advantage, since it enabled them to provide fighter escort for their bomber raids from distant air fields, and to attack our aircraft on the ground from ranges quite outside our power to retaliate.

Nevertheless, it is my firm conviction that the Japanese air arm is not a really formidable force, either in numbers or performance, once it can be met on anything like equal terms. Its methods are stereotyped and the air fighting over Rangoon and elsewhere showed that individually the pilots and machines (when not obsolete type) of the Allies are superior.

On paper, a sufficient Allied air force to have at least a favourable prospect of gaining air superiority was due to be assembled in the N. E. I. by February or March. In practice the reinforcements which arrived barely sufficed to meet wastage at any time and in the later stages when the Japanese had established air bases in close proximity to Java the Allied air force was quickly overwhelmed.

The reasons for the failure of air reinforcements to arrive have been indicated in paragraph 17. The idea that air forces can operate effectively without proper ground organisation, is a most dangerous one, and the mobility of air forces is in reality strictly limited and no greater than those of land forces unless large numbers of transport aircraft are available.

The Japanese plan for the occupation of Malaya and the N. E. I. was simple and methodical; it has been described in paragraph 20 of this Despatch. It was based on maintaining air superiority by attack on the aerodromes of the opposing force.

For some reason the enemy made few attacks on shipping—except warships—until near the end. Our convoys to Singapore though they had to pass through narrow waters within easy range escaped almost untouched; while Tanjong Priok the port of Batavia, which at one time in February contained about 120 ships, was not attacked.

The Japanese landings in Borneo, Celebes and other islands were always made in such strength and with such heavy naval and air support as to overwhelm the small garrisons which held them. In Malaya, where the numerical disparity was less, the Japanese troops undoubtedly out-manoeuvred ours by their superior mobility training and preparation. By the time Singapore Island was reached these qualities, together with air superiority, had established a moral ascendancy which made the resistance of the Singapore garrison half-hearted and disappointing.

35. We were hampered in the final stages, when the arrival of reinforcements was a matter of extreme urgency, by the fact that the ships bringing reinforcements were not loaded tactically; for instance, the personnel of a machine gun battalion arrived in Java and might have been invaluable but that their machine guns and equipment were in another ship due many days later. In fact it was usually necessary for several flights of ships to arrive, sometimes spread over two or three weeks, before one formation, such as a Brigade group, was complete. Such economy of shipping space may be essential but it is apt to prove a grave tactical handicap.

36. From the standpoint of higher strategy the situation bore a distinct resemblance to that when we went to the assistance of Greece a year earlier. It might then have been more prudent to let Greece go and concentrate on holding Crete and our gains in Libya. It might possibly have been more prudent here to let the N. E. I. go and to concentrate on making Burma and Australia secure. But undue prudence has never yet won battles or campaigns or wars, and from the political point of view it would have been as unthinkable to abandon our stout-hearted Dutch allies without the utmost effort to help them as it would have been a year earlier to leave the gallant Greeks unsupported. Our assistance to Greece cost us Crete and placed us in great difficulties in the Mediterranean; our attempt to hold the N. E. I. has cost us Burma and has placed India and Ceylon in danger; but that in both instances we took the right, the only, decision I have no doubt. Just as I still believe that our expedition to Greece was by no means the forlorn hope it may have appeared, so the Allied attempt to defend the N. E. I. might well have had a more fortunate issue. The principle of engaging the enemy as closely and as far forward as possible must be maintained at all costs and will in the end bring victory.

The efforts of the Allies in the S. W. Pacific, though unsuccessful, undoubtedly inflicted severe losses on the enemy, how severe we shall not know till the end of the war. The gallant attacks of the Dutch, British and American warships and aircraft against heavy odds and in most unfavourable conditions have certainly not been in vain.

37. I should like to bring especially to notice the work of the following staff officers and commanders:—

Vice-Admiral Helfrich, Commander of the Royal N. E. I. Navy and Chief of the Naval Staff in the latter part of the campaign, who directed the forces under his command with skill and resolution.

Rear-Admiral Palliser, R. N. who was deputy Chief of the Naval Staff throughout; his cool judgement and knowledge were invaluable.

Lieutenant-General Ter Poorten who commanded the Allied land forces in the N. E. I.; he handled the inadequate forces at his disposal with efficiency and showed calm determination in all circumstances.

Major-General Playfair as Deputy to General Ter Poorten did most valuable work.

Air Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, Chief of Air Staff, only arrived in Java at the end of January, his experience and personality enabled him at once to grasp a difficult situation and to get as much as possible out of an air force greatly overmatched in numbers.

Major-General Brereton, U. S. Army Air Corps, acted as Chief of Air Staff till the arrival of Air Marshal Peirse and then acted as his Deputy and as Commander of the U. S. Air Forces; his character and leadership made a great impression and set the very high standard of gallantry and efficiency which the U. S. Air Forces showed throughout the operations.

Major-General Van Oyen commanded the Dutch Air Forces throughout and took over command of the Allied air forces after the departure of ABDA headquarters. The very stouthearted performance of the Dutch air force owed much to his inspiration.

Lieutenant-General Brett of the United States Army Air Corps was Deputy to me throughout the existence of ABDA headquarters; I cannot speak too highly of the tireless wise assistance and loyal co-operation which he gave me.

Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall was my Chief of Staff; it was mainly due to his ability and tact that this allied headquarters was so quickly established and worked so smoothly; I owe very much to his judgement and advice.

Major-General Lloyd, A. I. F., did most of the Administrative work of the command and did it most efficiently, he is a staff officer of great quality.

Lieutenant-General Laverack, A. I. F., Commander of the Australian Corps, who arrived ahead of his Corps and was most helpful in preparing for its disposition, had it been decided to land it.

Finally I should like to pay tribute to the Dutch people of the N. E. I. for their courage in adversity, for the efficiency of their administration which was shown in the way in which our requirements were met, and for the kindness of their hospitality. They had in their Governor a worthy representative of these qualities. The energetic pugnacity of their Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Van Mook, is a guarantee of their determination to recover all that has been temporarily lost.

APPENDIX "A".

OUTWARD CIPHER CABLE No. 00309, DATED THE 26TH JANUARY 1942, FROM ARDACOM, TO BRITMAN WASHINGTON FOR COMBINED C. O. S. REPEATED TROOPERS FOR C. O. S.

W. 1.

1. Japanese obviously making intense efforts on whole front with object obtaining quick successes. We can only use our limited resources to check enemy as far forward as possible by hard fighting taking offensive action whenever possible. We shall incur heavy losses on sea, land and air during this period and further efforts will depend on their being made good rapidly.

2. Enemy attack on BURMA has developed suddenly in south with immediate objective MOULMEIN and eventual objective probably RANGOON. INDIA sending reinforcements and part of Indian and Burmese troops in north after being replaced by Chinese will move south. Am flying RANGOON today and will report further on Burmese situation on return.

3. Troops in JOHORE are being very hard pressed by fresh Japanese divisions and have had heavy losses but Japanese losses also undoubtedly very heavy. We shall hold line MERSING-KLUANG-AYER HITAM-BATU PAHAT as long as possible but may be forced back into SINGAPORE island itself. Enemy numerical superiority in air and our lack of suitable small craft make it difficult to stop enemy infiltration along coast. Reinforcements of Australian machine gun battalion and Indian brigade due in SINGAPORE today and tomorrow, two brigade groups 18th Division due three days later. If all these arrive safely situation should be much easier. Enemy's air offensive has been intense and air losses on both sides considerable, unconfirmed report that Hurricanes shot down twenty enemy bombers yesterday without loss.

4. Enemy has been reconnoitring and bombing aerodromes in SUMATRA to increasing extent. Anti-aircraft defences being sent as they become available.

5. Assume PHILIPPINES situation fully known to you. Am doing what we can to send ammunition and supplies by submarine blockade runner or air.

6. Enemy pushing air bases south on BORNEO and CELEBES presumably with view eventual attack JAVA. We are now engaging large enemy convoy in MACASSAR Strait and destroyers and air force have already sunk or damaged number of enemy ships. Enemy has landed BALIKPAPAN. JAVA is at present very inadequately defended especially vital naval base at SURABAYA, defence will be improved as resources become available.

7. East of CELEBES things comparatively quiet at present which is just as well as we have very little there.

8. Naval situation is known to you from my telegrams 00200 of 21/1 and 00235 of 22/1. Air situation improving as reinforcements arrive but our effort is necessarily reduced by lack of ground organisation spares, etc. Land defence of JAVA and southern SUMATRA should be comparatively secure after arrival Australian divisions.

9. Generally we will keep on holding and hitting enemy as hard as our resources allow till time comes to strike back. With adequate air we should be able to take considerable toll of his shipping. Enemy should not be able to replace his air losses as we can and we should be able to build up gradually air superiority and drive back his bases and re-establish those we have lost. Next few months will be anxious and difficult but have every hope of getting through them successfully.

APPENDIX "B".

OUTWARD CIPHER CABLE No. 00426, DATED THE 27TH JANUARY 1942, FROM ARDACOM, TO GENERAL, SINGAPORE

Personal for General PERCIVAL from General WAVELL.

Primary objects are to gain time and cause maximum loss to enemy. You must judge when withdrawal to island is necessary to avoid disorganisation and unnecessary losses of men and material which may prejudice defence of island, which you must be prepared to hold for many months. You can only judge time by keeping very close watch on battle. Good luck am sure can trust your judgment. Keep me frequently informed.

APPENDIX "C".

OUTWARD CIPHER CABLE No. 00488, DATED THE 29TH JANUARY 1942, FROM ARDACOM, TO TROOPERS FOR C. O. S., BRITMAN WASHINGTON FOR COMBINED C. O. S.

From General WAVELL. W. 4.

1. PERCIVAL telegraphed last night that after consulting Commanders in JOHORE he had decided to withdraw to SINGAPORE island by night January 30/January 31. I have approved decision. In view Japanese superiority on ground and in air and landing fresh troops ENDAU early withdrawal inevitable and desirable to do so with as little loss and disorganisation as possible.

2. PERCIVAL should after withdrawal have equivalent of approximately three divisions in island of which about half will be fresh troops. Do not know what losses of men and material troops on mainland have suffered in recent fighting or in what state they will reach island. Losses have been heavy but they have inflicted heavy loss on enemy.

3. For prolonged defence of island much will depend on our ability to operate fighters from SINGAPORE and to reduce scale of enemy air attack. Propose visiting SINGAPORE with PEIRSE tomorrow if possible.

4. Bomber aircraft have already been removed from island and all personnel and material not essential for defence being removed as far as possible.

5. We have rather anxious period ahead. Apart from north AUSTRALIA and BURMA we are faced with three main enemy advances. Considerable enemy naval force presumably escorting transports located at northern entrance MOLUCCA Straits may be directed on AMBON possibly even KOEPANG. Force at BALIKPAPAN still some twenty ships in spite of losses and also reported moving south probably on MACASSAR or BANDJERMASIN. Third advance directed on SINGAPORE and perhaps on SUMATRA before long.

6. To meet above we have for moment no naval striking force. Large proportion cruisers and destroyers undergoing repair or refit, remainder on escort duty to east or west. No further formations land forces in sight for several weeks. Air striking force comprises little more than average of 6 to 8 heavy U. S. A. bombers.

13. If Australian Corps is diverted I recommend that at least one division should go BURMA and both if they can be administratively received and maintained. Presence of this force in BURMA threatening invasion of THAILAND and INDO-CHINA must have very great effect on Japanese strategy and heartening effect on CHINA and INDIA. It is only theatre in which offensive land operations against JAPAN possible in near future. It should be possible for American troops to provide reinforcement of AUSTRALIA if required.

14. I also recommend that immediate steps be taken to build up heavy bomber force in BURMA for operations against Japanese L. of C. and eventually JAPAN itself. Bomber force should also be built up in north AUSTRALIA though this is less favourable as air base.

15. I think I have, as you know, always recommended fighting enemy with all available resources wherever met and I have only made above recommendation after much heart-searching. I have discussed question with BRETT and PEIRSE and above represents generally their views.

APPENDIX " G ".

OUTWARD CIPHER CABLE No. 01517, DATED THE 18TH FEBRUARY 1942, FROM ABDACOM, TO BRITMAN WASHINGTON FOR COMBINED C. O. S. TROOPERS FOR C. O. S.

From General WAVELL. AW. 10.

1. Please make my 01288 of 16/2 to C. I. G. S. and Field-Marshal DILL official telegram AW. 9 to C. O. S.
2. Since it was written have again within last 24 hours discussed problem of naval defence of JAVA with Admirals HELFRICH, GLASFURD and PALLISER, land defence with General TER POORTEN and air defence with General BRETT and Air Marshal PEIRSE. My general conclusion is that successful defence of JAVA with resources available and in sight extremely doubtful if Japanese act rapidly and in strength as there is every likelihood they will. Report this morning indicates that advance to BALI or LOMBOK is now taking place.
3. Effective Dutch fighting force only four mobile brigades of three battalions each with little artillery. 80 per cent are native troops. Remainder Dutch forces are static scattered over island.
One squadron 3 Hussars with light tanks and about 1,200 Australian troops are being landed for aerodrome defence, remainder of Australian troops in ORCADES are unarmed. General TER POORTEN agrees that troops now available can do little to stop invasion.
4. Since our successful destroyer attack at BALIKPAPAN I have been unskilful or unlucky in use of naval striking force. It was concentrated east of JAVA to attack convoy that went to MACASSAR and enemy bombing attack which damaged MARBLEHEAD and HOUSTON drove it back into harbour. It was then moved west to meet convoy from ANAMBAS islands which invaded South SUMATRA. It missed it by 24 hours and was again subjected to very heavy bombing attack though without loss. It is now being concentrated east to meet attack on BALI but may be late again.
5. Our air force undoubtedly did much execution on Japanese attacking PALEMBANG and if Dutch reinforcements and our anti-aircraft artillery which had only recently arrived had had more time to organise defence attack should have been defeated for time being at any rate.
6. In present circumstances my recommendations from military point of view are that :—
 - (a) Australian corps be diverted to BURMA. If BURMA is unable to receive whole at present, part should be landed at CALCUTTA as reserve for BURMA.
 - (b) Heavy bomber force should be built up in BURMA as soon as possible for operations against Japanese L. of C. and eventually JAPAN itself.
 - (c) Naval and air forces in JAVA area should continue to take all possible offensive action against enemy and that naval and air reinforcements earmarked for this area should continue to be sent unless otherwise ordered from here. Consider we can still hit enemy some very effective blows from JAVA.

APPENDIX " H ".

OUTWARD CIPHER CABLE No. 02076, DATED THE 22ND FEBRUARY 1942, FROM ABDACOM, TO BRITMAN WASHINGTON FOR COMBINED C. O. S. REPEATED TROOPERS LONDON FOR C. O. S.

C. C. O. S. 19. From General WAVELL.

1. BRETT and myself saw Governor-General this evening and discussed your DBA. 20 with him as regards command JAVA, time of withdrawal ABDA headquarters and effect on public morale. Also communicated to him your DBA. 22.
2. No difficulty future command JAVA. Organisation already in existence before ABDA headquarters arrived and commanders of naval, land and air forces in island are already Dutch.
3. Dutch not likely to wish any of their representatives on ABDA H. Q. withdrawn.
4. Recommend that ABDA headquarters should not be ordered to be withdrawn but should be dissolved. Reason given should be that return of BURMA to INDIA leaves ABDA area practically without command except local defence JAVA which can be better exercised under original Dutch organisation. PHILIPPINES should revert to American control, N. W. AUSTRALIA to Australian Command. Announcement in this form would be much less damaging to public morale in JAVA than withdrawal of headquarters elsewhere. DARWIN only possible alternative location and obvious that it would be quite ineffective there.
5. It should be made quite clear to Dutch that withdrawal of ABDA headquarters does NOT mean stoppage of warlike supplies to JAVA and public announcement to this effect should be made. N. E. I. Government request that they should be consulted as to form and time of any announcement of decision re. ABDA command and I consider it essential that they should be.
6. As regards time, Governor-General says and I agree that effect of withdrawal after invasion of island or heavy bombing attacks had begun would be deplorable and that it should take place as soon as possible.
7. I propose therefore to make preparations but to take no active steps for withdrawal and to keep intention strictly secret till I receive reply to this telegram. Withdrawal of majority of headquarters will be by ship to COLOMBO. Propose leave any liaison officers required by Dutch. Consider also that senior officer for British and Australian troops left in island should remain.
8. BRETT leaves by plane to AUSTRALIA early tomorrow to hasten despatch of air reinforcements from AUSTRALIA (see my CCOS. 17 and AW. 12).

Letter in file A16-3/A9 (S.W. Pacific)

DESPATCH

ON

OPERATIONS IN SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC

January 15th—February 25th, 1942

BY

**General Sir Archibald Wavell, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.C.,
A.=D.=C.**

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MERITS AND POSSIBILITIES
OF PLACING AN AMERICAN
AIR FORCE ON THE
CAUCASIAN FRONT

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STRATEGY SECTION

MERITS AND POSSIBILITIES
OF PLACING AN AMERICAN
AIR FORCE ON THE CAUCASIAN FRONT.

*See Memo from General Marshall
8/28/42 in file A16-3 (U.S.S.R.)*

August 24, 1942.

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MERITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF PLACING AN AMERICAN AIR FORCE ON THE CAUCASIAN FRONT

SECTION I - Introduction.

1. The question of placing an American air force on the Caucasian front to fight with the Russian armies should be weighed against the following:

- a. The capabilities of such an air force and the results that it is reasonable to expect from such an operation.
- b. The availability of a balanced air force for such assignment.
- c. The logistics of supply and replacement.
- d. The effects of such an operation on current and projected offensives in other theaters.

2. This study is an analysis of the merits and possibilities of the contemplated operation based on the considerations listed above.

SECTION II - Capabilities of an American Air Force on the Caucasian Front.

1. Air Operations.

a. Air Fields. (Tab A)

(1) Twenty five air fields suitable for heavy bombers are available in the TEHERAN-SULTANABAD HAMADAN-KAZVIN area. There are several advance airdromes in the vicinity of TAERIZ. South of the Caucasus Mountains there are 22 air fields from which fighters could operate for interception.

(2) An airplane assembly plant is in operation at BASRA. Limited repair facilities in the vicinity of TEHERAN can also be used.

b. Terrain. (Tab B). The Caucasus Mountain Range extending for 550 miles from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, rises to altitudes in excess of 10,000 feet. Passes across it are few and difficult. The coastal plain at the western end is extremely narrow. Between the Caspian Sea and the mountains lies a flat coastal plain 20-30 miles wide, which is the natural avenue of approach to the Baku oil fields.

South of the Caucasian Mountains lies the Trans-Caucasian valley. This valley is a natural highway connecting the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. It is traversed by a railway which connects Batum with Baku.

c. Weather. (Tab B). Military operations in the Caucasian Region will be limited by weather conditions in the Caucasus mountains. During the winter, land operations over or through the

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mountains will be restricted by snow-blocked passes, extremely low temperatures, high winds, and low visibilities due to clouds and fog. Air operations will be circumscribed by icing conditions at low levels and severe turbulence coupled with low ceilings and low visibilities. Except possibly in the "Caspian Gate", major operations in the Caucasus would probably be suspended from mid-October, certainly by the first of November, and could not be resumed prior to the spring of 1943.

2. Situation on the Caucasian Front. (Tab C). It is impossible to estimate the capacity of the Russians to resist the German advance. Consequently, the strategic situation at the time our air units will be ready to operate in the Caucasus (estimated as January 20, 1943, at the earliest), cannot be forecast, and there is a possibility that a decision may be reached this fall, long before our air force could arrive.

3. A U.S. air force in the Caucasian theater would be under the strategic direction of the Russians. The differences in language and national psychology would increase the communication, liaison and operating problems inherent in a mixed national command and would undoubtedly reduce the effectiveness of our air force.

SECTION III - Availability of Forces.

1. It is taken as axiomatic that an American air force committed to the Caucasus must include bombardment units for striking power, and fighter units for defense of airdromes and counter air force operations. For a balanced force the ratio of fighters to bombers should not be less than one fighter group to one bombardment group. Furthermore, transport aircraft will be essential to meet supply problems.

2. On the above basis, the availability of air units is conditioned as follows:

a. If current operational plans and lend-lease commitments remain unaltered, no air force units are available for allocation to the Caucasus prior to 1 January 1943. (Tab D).

b. If Bolero units, other than those allocated for a Special Operation, are reallocated to allow an assignment to the Caucasus, three fighter groups become available as follows: (Tab D).

1 October 1942	-	1 group
1 November 1942	-	1 group
1 December 1942	-	<u>1</u> group
Total	-	3 groups

Seven H.B. Groups less one squadron and one L/L Group will be available by 1 October 1942. (Tab D). However, the requirements of a balanced force limit the bomber units which could be employed to three, dispatched one each on 1 October 1942; 1 November 1942; and

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1 December 1942. Transport Groups will be available for assignment as needed. (Tab D).

g. If Bolero units, including those allocated for a Special Operation (but excluding those already in the U.K.), are reallocated for assignment to the Caucasus, four fighter groups become available as follows: (Tab D).

1 October 1942	-	1 group
1 November 1942	-	2 groups
1 December 1942	-	<u>1</u> group
Total	-	4 groups

Nine H.B. Groups, 3 M.B. Groups and 2 L/L Groups will be available by 1 October 1942. (Tab D). Again the requirement for a balanced air force limits the number of bombardment groups that could be employed in the Caucasus to four. Transport Groups are available for assignment as needed. (Tab D).

3. Present allocations require that one H.B. Group, two M.B. Groups, and four Fighter Groups be available for the Middle East by 1 December 1942. (Tab D). Of these groups, one fighter and one bombardment group will be available on 1 November 1942. (Tab E). These groups could be reallocated to the Caucasus without disturbing Bolero or the Special Operation. It would, however, be necessary to divert one Transport Group scheduled for Bolero to support this force if it is reallocated to the Caucasus.

4. The United Nations are definitely committed to the Special Operation and air force units allocated for employment in this operation cannot be decreased without jeopardizing its success. Therefore, the diversion of air units from this project is rejected as a possibility.

5. The Special Operation involves a calculated risk, and additional air units may be required to avert a United Nations disaster at a time when a victory is imperative. We are also committed to battle in the Solomon Islands and additional air units may be required to avert reverses in this area. The diversion to the Caucasus of Bolero units, other than those allocated to the Special Operation, would leave no reserve fighter units to meet demands for reinforcements for either the Special Operation or Pacific Operations. Therefore the diversion of Bolero units, while possible, is considered to be unacceptable from a military viewpoint.

6. If the decision is taken to divert the next two tactical air units scheduled for Cairo to the Caucasian area, the following tentative time table will obtain:

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Fighter group available 1 November 1942.
Fighter planes unloaded Accra 1 December 1942.
Fighter planes set up at Accra 15-31 December 1942.
Fighter planes in Caucasian area 15 January 1943.
Bombardment group available 1 November 1942.*
Bomber planes in Caucasian area 10 November 1942.*
Ground elements and supplies in Caucasian area 15
January 1943.
Air units in action 20 January 1943.

A transport group can be diverted from Bolero at any time the decision is taken between now and 1 November 1942. Ground maintenance crews and flight crews for this group can fly to the Caucasian area in the transport planes and be in place ten (10) days after dispatch of the group from the U.S. The remainder of the ground echelon should sail with ground echelons of the Pursuit and bombardment groups.

7. Weather conditions will greatly hamper, if not prevent, air and ground operations in the Caucasian area after 1 November. (Tab B). Favorable weather usually begins between 15-30 April. An American air force emplaced south of the Caucasian during the winter of 1943 could assist in checking a German drive in the spring of 1943 if the Germans fail to penetrate south of the Caucasus during 1942.

8. Units allocated for Bolero during January, February and March of 1943 which could be diverted to the Caucasus are as follows:

January 1943	- two (2) Gps. M.B.	in action by 3/15/43
	three (3) Gps. L/D	" " " 3/15/43
	three (3) Gps. Fighters	" " " 3/15/43
February 1943	- three (3) Gps. H.B.	" " " 4/15/43
March 1943	- two (2) Gps. H.B.	" " " 5/15/43
	two (2) Gps. M.B.	" " " 5/15/43
	three (3) Gps. Fighters	" " " 5/15/43

9. A balanced American air force could therefore be diverted to the Caucasus area in time to support the Russian Army in the spring of 1943. The decision need not be taken now but can be taken at a later date if the Germans fail to drive south of the Caucasus during 1942.

*(Note: while the bombardment group will become available on 1 November 1942 and its planes could be in the Caucasian area by 10 November 1942, the departure of the planes from the U.S. should be so timed that their arrival will coincide with the arrival of the fighter planes).

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SECTION IV - Logistics of Supply and Replacement (Tab F)

1. The initial movement of balanced U.S. air forces of 1 Heavy Bombardment and 1 Fighter Group, with supporting and service troops, would total 12,000 personnel. Assuming fly-away bombers and crated pursuit planes, 90 days supply and 15 units of fire, the initial shipment would total 130,000 ship tons. The movement would require 5 transports and 12 cargo vessels. Replacements and maintenance supply, would require 20,000 ship tons per month, or two cargo shiploads. Because of the 4-month turn-around from the U.S. to the Persian Gulf, 10-12 supply ships would be constantly employed in maintaining the U.S. air forces at their initial strength. None of this shipping would be available, unless diverted from a special operation or modified Bolero commitments, since the latter operations necessitate the utilization of current allocations of cargo ships and entire U.S. troop carrying capacity.

2. The daily port capacity of the Persian Gulf ports of Bushire, Bandar Shahpur, Khorramshar, Abadan, and Basra is rated at 9,400 tons, equal to approximately 20,000 ship tons. Basra, the largest port, with a daily capacity of 6,000 tons (13,000 ship tons) is fully utilized in Lease-Lend shipments to Russia and British supplies to Iraq and Iran.

3. Road and railway lines can carry 2,800 tons (dead weight) per day but the railroad, terminating at Zenjan, halfway between Tehran and Tabriz, would not reach many of the contemplated air bases. American air forces in this region would add a great burden to the transport and port facilities of the Persian Gulf-Caucasus area. The Iranian roads, being of poor quality, would require increased upkeep for additional traffic to the foothills of the Caucasus. Present supply lines would have to be utilized to a considerable extent for the American air forces. Lease-Lend aid to Russia, therefore, would necessarily be decreased if U.S. forces should operate in the Caucasus.

SECTION V - Advisability of British Participation.

Mr. Stalin's attitude and the present strategic situation indicate the Russians may need strong air assistance in the Caucasian Area. However, from the viewpoint of military acceptability, the only U.S. Air Units which can be diverted to the Caucasus prior to 1 January 1943 are the one bombardment group and the one fighter group now scheduled to depart for Cairo on 1 November 1942, and one transport group essential for support of these units. It is very doubtful from the military viewpoint that a force of this size operating in the Caucasian Area could have a decisive effect on the ultimate military decision. A combined United Nations air force operating in this Area in support of the Russians is therefore necessary to afford a reasonable expectation of decisive results. The British air forces are the only source from which air units could be drawn to complete the formation of such a combined air force. British participation appears, therefore, essential to effective air assistance to Russia at this time.

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SECTION VI - Effect on Current and Projected Offensives in Other Theaters

1. The over-all strategic demands on our limited military strength increase daily and will probably continue to increase. Sound military doctrine dictates a policy of concentration of effort within a soundly conceived strategic framework. In reasoned judgment we have launched an offensive operation in the southwest Pacific and are about to launch one in northwest Africa. Each new call must be weighed in the light of our current and projected operations. Will the use of an American air force in the Caucasus contribute more decisively to the success of our major strategic efforts than its use in some other theater?

2. Whereas there is no discernible coordination between the Axis efforts in Egypt and in the Caucasian theater, the broad strategic relationship between the two fronts should not be overlooked. Each prong of the great Axis pincers represents a serious threat against the Middle East, the security of which is an extremely important over-all consideration from our point of view. It is most desirable that an American air force should be sent to the Caucasian front if it is reasonable to suppose that its presence in that theater would be decisive. But, considering our lack of any sound basis for gauging the Russian capacity for continued resistance in the Caucasus, and the time, distance, and operational difficulties, and in the light of the menacing Rommel threat, it is doubtful that available American air forces could achieve decisive results.

3. American air forces are now in operation on the Egyptian front, and these forces are being augmented. A proposal to send air strength to the Caucasian front must be considered in the perspective of the present and future needs of American theaters of offensive action at great distance from this front as well as adjacent thereto. For example, sending the air force under consideration to the Egyptian front, rather than into the Caucasus, might be a more desirable method of serving our fundamental strategical purposes in the general Middle East-Caucasus area.

4. The decision to initiate an offensive operation in northwest Africa has recently been made. This is for the present our major effort. The ultimate scope of this operation is difficult to forecast. A goodly element of calculated risk is inherent in this operation, and strong air as well as other types of reserves should be available if and when needed. A study of schedules of the availability of air units shows that an air reserve of fighter aircraft for the northwest African operation will not be available prior to January 1, 1943, if an air force which includes three fighter squadrons is sent to the Caucasian front. (Tab D).

5. Furthermore, potential demands of the current offensive operations in the southwest Pacific (Solomons) must not be forgotten.

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It is possible that the Japanese reaction may cause this operation to assume far greater proportions. Anticipatory planning must forestall any possibility of the Solomon Islands becoming a second Bataan. Reinforcements for this area may become a demand that cannot be denied.

6. The desirability of providing an adequate air reserve for either the southwest Pacific or northwest African theaters, plus our inability to make a reasoned calculation of the positive results to be achieved by air action in the Caucasus, plus the fact that continuous air operations are impracticable from November 1st to April 1st, all point to the conclusion that an American air force should not be sent to fight with the Russian armies on the Caucasian front in the near future.

7. If a Caucasian front is still open on January 1, 1943, the question of sending an American air force to fight with the Russian armies in April or May of 1943 may well deserve consideration. There is no sound basis at present however for judging the desirability of such a proposition. A study of the relative merits of such an operation will have to be made against the background of the strategic situation that will then obtain.

SECTION VII - Conclusions and Recommendations.

Conclusions.

1. If air units are taken away from the already inadequate air strength scheduled for the Special Operation, the success of that operation will be seriously jeopardized.
2. Air units now scheduled for departure to Bolero prior to 1 January 1943, are available, but their diversion is not acceptable in view of the current military situation.
3. One medium bombardment group and one fighter group scheduled for departure to Cairo on 1 November 1942 can be diverted to the Caucasus area. A transport group essential for the support of these units can be diverted from Bolero.
4. These units might arrive too late to have any effect on the Caucasian decision now pending.
5. Units scheduled for departure to Bolero during the winter of 1943 can be diverted to the Caucasus in time to assist the Russians in the spring of 1943.
6. The British should participate in any air assistance to the Russians.
7. The movement of an air force during 1942 can be supplied logistically only at the expense of Bolero. The availability of shipping

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for the movement of air forces in the spring of 1943 cannot be forecast at this time.

8. Ports, roads, and railroads in the area under consideration are capable of sustaining the operation, but Lease-Lend aid to Russia will suffer thereby.

9. That the use of available American air forces in the Caucasus is not likely to contribute more decisively to the success of our major strategic efforts than their use, or their retention as a reserve for ultimate use, in some other theater.

Recommendations.

1. That no American air force be sent to the Caucasian front in 1942.

2. That the desirability of sending such a force early in 1943 be made the subject of continued study in the light of the developing strategic situation.

3. That the British participate in any active aerial assistance to the Russians.

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Railways
 5' Gauge
 4'-8-1/2" Gauge
 Narrow Gauge

Roads:
 1st Class
 2nd Class

Airports
 Maximum Run 2000-3000 Fighter
 3000-4000 Medium Bomber
 4000-5000 Heavy Bomber
 5000 and longer

More information with reference to airports was not available. The maximum run was determined by taking the longest runway within the dimensions of the field. Caution should be used in relying on the data on information with reference to characteristics, condition and surface of fields, run, etc. was not available in each case.

Airports with runways 500 to 2000 feet are suitable for fighters. All types of fighters can operate from a field with a runway of 2000 feet and up in length.

The volume of aircraft delivered and of ground operations will vary with the number of fighters or bombers which operate from any one airport.

Prepared by Air Intelligence M.I.S. W.D.S. G-2
 Scale

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Regraded Unclassified

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CLIMATIC FACTORS AFFECTING MILITARY OPERATIONS

IN THE

CAUCASIAN REGION

FROM

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

Prepared under the direction of the Climatic Section of
the Weather Research Center.

August, 1942.

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THE CAUCASIAN REGION

I. General Geography

A. Location:

The region, called here the Caucasian Region for lack of a better name, covered in this report is the peninsula between the Black and the Caspian seas. In a north-south direction it extends from Rostov and Astrakhan in Russia to the northern borders of Iran and Turkey on the south. It extends approximately from latitudes 40° to 47° north and longitudes 40° to 48° east.

B. Subdivisions:

Geographically, it is divided into three areas. Most striking is the Caucasus Mountain range extending for 550 miles in a WNW-ESE direction from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. It is 80-120 miles wide from north to south. The range, rising almost everywhere to altitudes in excess of 10,000 feet, is one of the highest, most rugged, and most complete barriers to human movement in the world. Passes across it are few, difficult, and at high altitudes. Its western end drops away abruptly into the Black Sea. Only a very narrow coastal plain, so narrow as to scarcely deserve the name, separates mountains from sea and is followed part of the way past the mountains by a railway. At its eastern end, a flat coastal plain 20-30 miles wide lies between the mountains and the Caspian Sea. This coastal plain provides an easy route around the mountain barrier to the oil fields of Baku, and is followed by a railway. However, wherever one tries to leave the coastal plain in a westerly or southerly direction one is confronted by massive mountain barriers with the exception of one place.

Trans-Caucasia, a Russian province, lies south of the mountains and is itself divided into three parts. On the east, immediately south of the mountains, the valley of the Kura River provides the only easy route from the Caspian Sea coastal plain up to the surface of the high rugged Armenian Plateau to the southwest and Iranian Plateau to the south. The valley is funnel-shaped, with its open end toward the Caspian Sea and the narrow end leading upward and westward. On the west, immediately south of the mountains, a similar, smaller valley leads upward from the Black Sea. The two are separated by a broad plateau-like divide with elevations around 2,000 feet, but lower than the mountains to the north and the plateaus to the south. This creates a trough immediately south of, and parallel to, the mountains, and provides a natural highway connecting the two seas. It is utilized by a railway which leads eastward from Batum on the Black Sea to Baku on the

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Caspian Sea, thence northward into Russia. At Tiflis a branch leads southward to Tabriz and Tehran. South of the trough, the high, rugged Armenian and Iranian plateaus rise to altitudes between 5,000 and 10,000, in many places above 10,000, feet.

On their northern flanks the Caucasus drop rather abruptly into the great plain of Russia which nowhere in the area covered by this report rises over 500 feet above sea level. Its eastern portion, bordering the Caspian Sea, is a saline desert below sea level, its central portion rises to higher altitudes, and on the west it sinks again to the Black Sea. It has scarcely an elevation worthy of the name "hill", and presents no serious obstacle to human movement across it.

II. CLIMATOLOGY

General Climatic Controls

During most of the period from September to December, the Caucasian Region is under the influence of the Siberian High although its effects are rather slight during September. Weak cyclonic disturbances occasionally reach this region during the latter part of the autumn and during December.

Surface Winds

Data concerning surface winds over the region show the prevailing directions, generally, to be east to southeast over the eastern portion of the region and northeasterly along the coasts of the Black Sea. Velocities range from 4 to 12 m.p.h., being highest at stations bordering the Caspian Sea and lowest in the interior valley areas. Gales are relatively infrequent except at Baku, where from 2 to 3 gales per month are recorded for the period from September to December.

Temperatures

Air temperatures during September are generally moderate at all stations, averaging between 58 and 67 degrees in the northern area and 67 to 77 degrees south of the mountain ranges in Trans-Caucasia. During the fall months, however, the temperatures decrease rapidly reaching their minima in December. During the latter month they average between 21 and 41 degrees in European Russia, the highest temperatures being recorded at those stations on the Black Sea. Temperatures during December average considerably higher in the region south of the Caucasus mountains, varying between 38 and 48 degrees.

During the winter period, temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero may be recorded although such extremes must be considered of rare occurrence. Temperatures at higher elevations, however, will remain below freezing during the entire period from October to December.

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Precipitation

Rainfall amounts during the period from September to December are quite variable with respect to both monthly and regional variations but with a slight tendency toward a December maximum at northern stations and a September maximum (associated with summer thunderstorms) in the southern areas. The amounts are highest in the mountain regions of the Caucasus and higher at stations along the Black Sea (Batumi- 12.40 inches in September) than at stations along the Caspian Sea (Baku- 0.63 inches in September).

The number of days with precipitation generally increases from minima at most stations in September (3 - 12 days) to maxima in December (5 - 15 days), the latter maxima coinciding with the advent of the winter cyclonic storms.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms in the Caucasian Region are most frequent during September and more frequent along the southern slopes of the Caucasus than in European Russia to the north. The maximum number for all stations is recorded for Tiflis during September (7.4 days). They occur with greater frequency at higher elevations in the mountains but records from such areas are not available for purposes of comparison.

Snowfall

The number of days with snowfall increases rapidly at all stations from September to October, the greatest number being recorded at the more northerly stations in December as would be expected. Stalingrad reports the greatest number of days with snow for the four-month period (20 days); Gandzha the least (1 day). Although no data are available concerning snowfall in the Caucasus mountains, proper reports indicate that heavy snows are to be expected at the higher elevations during September and in all but the lower foothills during the period from October to December.

Cloudiness

The mean monthly cloudiness increases at all stations from September to December. The amounts are considerably higher in European Russia (70 to 79% in December) than in the Trans-Caucasian Region (48 to 63%).

Fog

Fog is most frequent in the interior portions of the mountain

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region where they occur primarily as winter radiation fogs. They are most frequent in December (Stavropol- 12.3 days).

CONCLUSIONS

Military operations in the Caucasian Region will be mainly limited by weather conditions in the lofty Caucasus mountains. Land operations over or through the mountains will be limited by snow-blocked passes, extremely low temperatures, high winds through the passes, and low visibilities due to clouds and fog. Air operations will be limited by icing conditions at low levels and severe turbulence coupled with low ceilings and low visibilities. Operations of all kinds in the Caucasus would probably be suspended during October; certainly by the first of November.

Military operations in the region north of the Caucasus will be seriously affected by low temperatures during December and by snowstorms during both November and December.

Military operations in the Trans-Caucasian Region south of the mountain ranges will be possible throughout the period from September to December except along the Black Sea coasts where frequent rains will seriously affect the use of mechanized equipment.

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THE CAUCASIAN REGION.

Key

- Altitudes exceed 10,000 ft.
- ▨ Altitudes 3,000 - 10,000 ft.
- Altitudes below 500 ft.



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WAR DEPARTMENT
WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION G-2
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to:
MID. 904 (8/23/42)

August 23, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, O.P.D.:

Subject: Axis Capabilities and Intentions in the
Middle East.

1. The following estimate is furnished in compliance with your oral request of August 22.
2. Existing situations: Axis forces are conducting operations in the North Caucasus and in Egypt. To date there has been little evidence of coordination between the two strategic theaters. In the past, there has been rather good evidence that the German forces in Egypt have been held to a minimum, with a view to concentrating the German effort in Russia. In Egypt, Rommel is preparing to mount and to launch an offensive, the immediate objective of which can be identified as Cairo. In the North Caucasus, the Axis forces are seeking to capture the Black Sea ports of Novorossisk and Tuapse. Simultaneously, they are advancing to the southeast along the foothills of the Caucasus range toward the Caspian Sea. It is not clear whether or not the Germans at present plan to advance into the Trans-Caucasian Valley between Baku and Batum.
3. It is believed that Rommel has a fair chance of success in Egypt. At present it is impossible to estimate the degree of Russian resistance in the Caucasian Mountains if the Germans should attempt to breach this barrier.
4. Position of Turkey: In any Axis operations against the Middle East, the military exploitation of Turkey is of great importance. This importance is not to be assessed in terms of military support; it is not believed that Germany, even if in a position to do so, would make heavy demands on the Turkish military establishment. Furthermore, Turkey offers inadequate overland routes for entry from Europe into the Middle East. However, if Turkey should collaborate with Germany to the extent of permitting aviation to be established within her borders, it would be entirely feasible for the Axis to cover oversea and air-borne expeditions against Cyprus and Syria. The Axis does not possess this capability at present. The Turkish attitude to date has been characterized by neu-



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trality and an anxious desire to avoid becoming a theater of operations. It is believed, however, that if German troops should arrive in Trans-Caucasia, thereby assuring control of the Black Sea, Turkey would be forced to cast her lot with the Axis.

5. On the basis of the foregoing, four possible situations are envisaged:

a. The Germans are held north of the Caucasus and west of the Nile.

b. Rommel is successful, but the Germans do not cross the Caucasus.

c. The Germans cross the Caucasus, but Rommel is not successful.

d. The Germans cross the Caucasus and Rommel is successful.

6. Under a above, no immediate threat to the Middle East exists.

7. Under b above, it is believed that the most probable line of Axis action would be to leave Turkey undisturbed for the moment, to establish a base at Alexandria, and to reinforce Rommel heavily, a matter which would then be easy, with a view to an advance to the east. It may be anticipated that a successful advance of the type indicated would probably result in the eventual adherence of Turkey to the Axis.

8. Under c above, it is to be expected that Germany would seek to force the immediate accession of Turkey to the Axis and would endeavor to break into the Middle East via Iran and Syria.

9. Under d above, it is believed that Turkey would adhere to the Axis and that the Middle East would be practically indefensible, except possibly for a limited holding around the head of the Persian Gulf.

*August 1941
Ship 12000*

for:

GEO. V. STRONG,
Major General,
A. C. of S., G-2.

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WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON

August 23, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL F. N. ROBERTS:

Subject: Estimate of Available Air Forces for
Contemplated Operations.

1. Reference your memorandum of August 22, 1942.

2. Assumption 1. That current operational plans and
lend-lease commitments are not altered, the following forces are
estimated to be available:

	<u>9-15-42</u>	<u>10-1-42</u>	<u>11-1-42</u>	<u>12-1-42</u>	<u>Total</u>
Heavy Bombardment	0	0	0	0	0
Medium Bombardment	0	0	0	0	0
Light/Dive Bombardment	0	0	0	0	0
Fighter	0	0	0	0	0
Observation	0	0	0	0	0
Troop Carrier	0	0	0	0	0

3. Assumption 2. That Bolero, other than the special
operation (2 HB, 3 MB, 1 LB, plus 1 L Sq, 4 F, 2 TC) is available
for diversion:

	<u>9-15-42</u>	<u>10-1-42</u>	<u>11-1-42</u>	<u>12-1-42</u>	<u>Total</u>
Heavy Bombardment	4 - 1 Sq	3	0	2	9 ^r
Medium Bombardment	0	0	0	1	1 ^r
Light/Dive Bombardment	0	1	1	1	3
Fighter	0	1	1	1	3
Observation	0	0	0	2*	2 (?)
Troop Carrier	4 [#]	1	1	0	6

*A-20's will have to be diverted from Russian Protocol.

[#]Includes 2 held up from Bolero for training with ground
troops.



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Tab D

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4. Assumption 3. That all BOLERO units, including the special operation, are available for diversion:

	<u>9-15-42</u>	<u>10-1-42</u>	<u>11-1-42</u>	<u>12-1-42</u>	<u>Total</u>
Heavy Bombardment	9(3)	3	0	1	13
Medium Bombardment	3	0	1	1	5
Light/Dive Bombardment	1/1 Sq (1 Sq)	1	1	1	4/1
Fighter	4d (4)	1	2	1	8
Observation	1a	0	0	2a	3
Troop Carrier	6c (2)	1	1	0	8

() Units in brackets already in BOLERO, but included in total.

- a. Less A-20's - only source Russian Protocol.
- c. Includes two groups training with air-borne ground forces.
- d. Includes two groups equipped with Spitfires.

5. Summaries above do not include one (1) HB, two (2) MB, and four (4) F, to be available for the Middle East by December 1, 1942.

Robert Harper

ROBERT W. HARPER,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Assistant Chief of the
Air Staff, A-3

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August 22, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, OPD:

Subject: Two Groups for Caucasus Operations.

In connection with the attached, the Chief of Staff has agreed tentatively that the next two groups, one fighter and one bombardment, scheduled for Cairo will be considered for Caucasus operations. These groups will be available about the first of November.

If we do go into the Caucasus, I believe for diplomatic and international reasons we should have British representation also. By the time these two groups are available, the Middle East situation should be clarified to such an extent that there will be no question as to whether or not air units will be available to send to the Caucasus from Cairo.

H. H. ARNOLD,
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.,
Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

Incl:
Memo to Gen. Marshall
from The President
dated 8-21-42.

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SPECIAL AIR FORCE - SHIPPING REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Unit	Strength	Vehicles	Initial Move		Ships Required		Curtailment	Maintenance	Maintenance
			Ship Tons	Troop	Cargo	Other Projects	per Month		
						Total # Troops	Ship Tons	Ships Reqd.	
H. Bomb Gp Unit	6,279	1,471	60,806	3	6	15,100	5,800	1	
Total Bomb AF	24,236	5,664	240,923	10	22	58,200	22,400	2	
Fighter Gp Unit	3,948	903	48,157	2	4	9,500	5,300	1	
Total Fighter AF	13,831	3,446	178,207	6	16	33,200	15,600	2	
Entire AF	38,067	9,110	419,130	15	38	91,500	40,000	4	

NOTE:

1. Entire U.S. troop and cargo carrying capacity currently allocated by W.S.A. for Army requirements is needed for accomplishment of reinforcements to overseas bases, modified Bolero and special operation.

2. Basis for above table as follows:

- a. Ninety day's supplies for all units.
- b. Air Force ammunition for average missions in 90 days.
- c. Fifteen units of fire for all ground units.
- d. All gas, oil, and fuel to be procured locally.

3. Heavy bombardment group unit includes:

- 1 Bomb. Gp. (H)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Service Gp.
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Air Depot Gp.
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ Air Base Security Gp.
- 1 M P Co
- 3 Engr. Cos. Avn.
- 3 Bns A W Sep AA

Total Bombardment Air Force includes:

- 3 Heavy bombardment group units
- 1 Sta. Hosp. (250 bed)
- 1 QM Bn Truck
- 1 Ord. Co. Motor H M
- 1 Regt Sig Air Warning
- 1 Regt CA AA Gun Mob
- 1 Ord Co M M

Fighter Group Unit includes:

- 1 Fighter Group (SE)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Service Group
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Air Depot Group
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ Air Base Security Bn
- 1 M P Co
- 1 Engr. Co. Avn.
- 1 Bn AW Sep AA

Total Fighter Air Force includes:

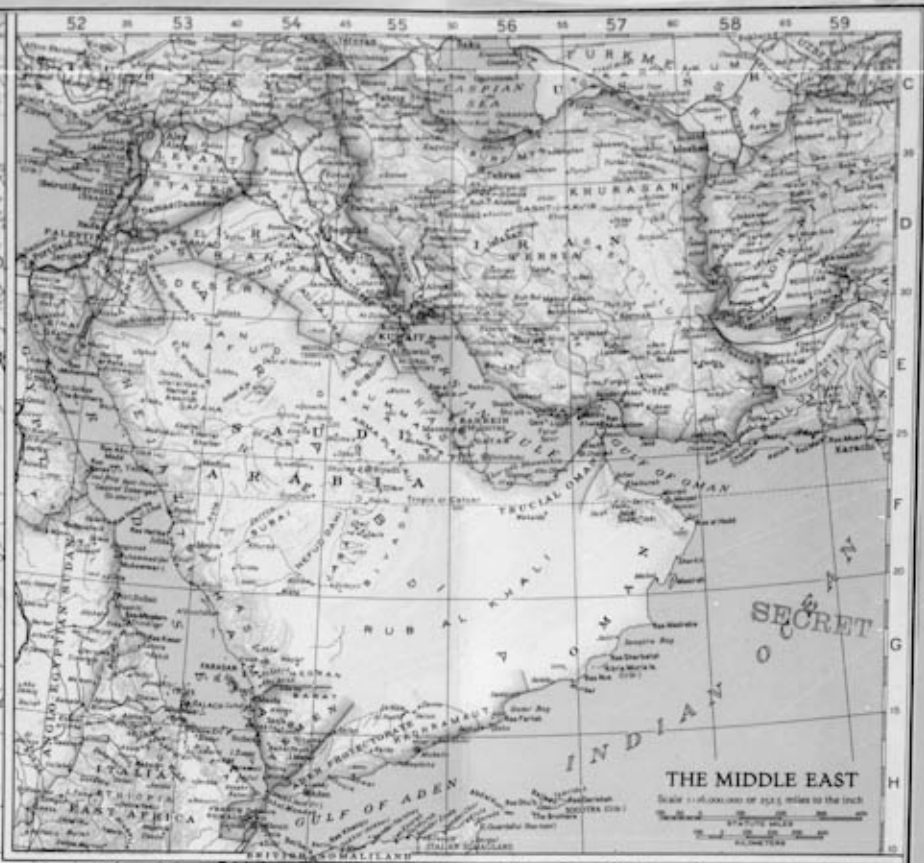
- 3 Fighter group units
- 1 Sta. Hosp. (250 bed)
- 1 QM Bn Truck
- 1 Ord. Co. Motor H M
- 1 Ord. Co. MM
- 1 Bn CA AA Gun Mob

4. Entire Air Force includes: (a) Total Bombardment Air Force, (b) Total Fighter Air Force

5. All bomber aircraft flown to area, all fighter aircraft shipped crated.

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